

The Argument of Romans 7

1. Our Death to the Law (1-6)
2. A Defense of the Law (7-13)
3. The Weakness of the Law (14-25)

I. All Unbelievers

A. Arguments For

1. It has strong support throughout church history.
2. By referring to the "flesh" (14, 18, 25) Paul must mean unbelievers who are "in the flesh" (7:5).
3. The Holy Spirit is not mentioned once in this section.
4. The strong expressions Paul uses can only describe unbelievers.

B. Arguments Against

1. It doesn't explain the change from past to present tense in v. 14.
2. What Paul says in Rom. 7 about himself doesn't match what he says about himself before Christ in other passages.
3. Unbelievers don't delight in and desire to obey God's law.

II. Only Unbelievers under Conviction

A. Arguments For

1. At times Paul uses “I” as a rhetorical device without referring directly to himself.
2. The indwelling Holy Spirit is not mentioned.
3. The passage does not accurately describe the normal unregenerate person or the regenerate person.

B. Arguments Against

1. It doesn't explain the change to the present tense.
2. The person in these verses already knows the solution—He already knows who can deliver him.

III. Immature Believers

A. Arguments For

1. 7:7-13 – Paul is still under the rule of sin as an unbeliever.
2. 7:14-25 – Paul is a believer that truly hates his sin but is still immature.
3. 8:1ff – Paul is a mature believer now relying on the Spirit.

B. Arguments Against

1. It again ignores the present tense verbs.
2. Scripture presents the mature believer as the one who is most deeply troubled by his sin.

IV. All Believers

Arguments For

1. It has the greatest support of the greatest teachers throughout church history.
2. The grammar of the passage best supports this view.
3. There are no statements in this passage that cannot legitimately describe all Christians.
4. There are statements here that are only true of Christians.
5. The two other times Paul uses "the inner man (22) he is referring to Christians (2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16).
6. After Paul mentions deliverance in Christ (24), he concludes the passage by reiterating an ongoing struggle (25).