

# Romans 7:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid.  
But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that  
which is good; that sin by the commandment might become  
exceeding sinful.

## Analysis

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**Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid.**—Paul anticipates objection: if law is good (v. 12) but produces death (v. 10), isn't good itself deadly? *Mē genoito* (μὴ γένοιτο)—his strongest negation—emphatically denies this. Law remains good; sin bears sole responsibility for death.

**But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good**—*Hina phanē hamartia* (ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία, "that it might be shown to be sin") reveals law's purpose: unmasking sin's true character. Sin's ability to pervert even God's good law into death's instrument exposes sin's exceeding malignity. **That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful**—*Kath' hyperbolēn hamartōlos* (καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλός, "sinful beyond measure") intensifies sin's vileness. Law's function is diagnostic—revealing sin's lethal nature and desperate need for remedy.

## Historical Context

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Paul concludes his defense of law's goodness while explaining its condemning ministry. The purpose wasn't arbitrary condemnation but accurate diagnosis. Only when sin appears 'exceeding sinful' do people abandon self-righteousness and flee

to Christ. Law serves God's redemptive plan by demolishing false hopes in human ability.

## **Related Passages**

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## **Study Questions**

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1. How has law functioned to make sin appear 'exceeding sinful' in your life rather than merely disappointing or regrettable?
2. What might it reveal about your view of sin if law's exposure doesn't drive you to desperate dependence on Christ?
3. How does understanding law's diagnostic purpose help you receive conviction without condemnation?

## Interlinear Text

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Τὸ	οὕν	ἀγαθοῦ	ἐμοὶ	γένηται	θάνατον	μὴ	
G3588	Was then	that which is good	unto me	made	death	God forbid	
	G3767	G18	G1698	G1096	G2288	G3361	
γένηται	ἀλλὰ	ἡ	ἀμαρτία	ἵνα	φανῇ	ἀμαρτία	διὰ
made	But	G3588	sin	that	it might appear	sin	by
G1096	G235		G266	G2443	G5316	G266	G1223
τοῦ	ἀγαθοῦ	μοι	κατεργαζομένη	θάνατον	ἵνα		
G3588	that which is good	in me	working	death	that		
	G18	G3427	G2716	G2288	G2443		
γένηται	καθ'	ὑπερβολὴν	ἀμαρτωλὸς	ἡ	ἀμαρτία	διὰ	
made	exceeding	G5236	sinful	G3588	sin	by	
G1096	G2596		G268		G266	G1223	
τῆς	ἐντολῆς						
G3588	the commandment						
	G1785						

## Additional Cross-References

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**Galatians 3:21** (Word): Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.