

Test your Bible Knowledge

1. When Peter escaped from prison, Herod ordered the guards to:

- a. find him
- b. be put to death
- c. search for Paul
- d. remain in prison until he was found

2. Don't be _____, said Paul, for one against another:

- a. happy up
- b. looking down
- c. puffed up
- d. looking around

3. "With the Lord," wrote Peter,

- a. one day is a thousand years
- b. a thousand years is as one day
- c. a thousand years is as one year
- d. one hour is as a thousand hours

Scriptures:

- 1) Acts 12:18-19
- 2) 1Corinthians 4:6-7
- 3) 2Peter 3:8

-Fred Singleton

Schedule:

Sunday Bible Study - 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship - 11:00AM

Sunday Evening Worship - 5:00 PM

Wednesday Night Bible Study - 7:00 PM

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"Tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"-1King 22:16

The Wages of Sin and the Free Gift of God (Part Two)

Conscience Violation

In Romans 14, Paul admonishes that when a Christian engages in a certain action, he must "be fully assured in his own mind" (v. 5) that what he is doing does not violate his own conscience. The conscience is a sensitive instrument and is a person's most valuable endowment in nudging him in the proper direction as he grows in knowledge. The conscience is not the final arbiter of right and wrong (Proverbs 14:12). It must be educated. Yet, in its proper place, it is a prized gift from God, and the Christian must guard against it becoming hardened (cf. Ephesians 4:19; 1 Timothy 4:2).

This is why, at the conclusion of the chapter, Paul cautions that any practice in violation of one's conscience (even in religiously or ethically neutral matters) is sin. One must be able (in the case of eating meat, for example) to eat or drink "of faith," i.e., with a clear conscience (v. 23). A clear conscience does not make a wrong act right, but a violated conscience can make a right act (in its basic nature) **wrong** for that individual.

A Matter of Wages

The Greek term *opsonion* is found but four times in the New Testament. Twice it is employed of a soldier's pay (Luke 3:14; 1 Corinthians 9:7), once of the support Paul received from certain churches—a support that should have come from Corinth, but didn't (2 Corinthians 11:8)—and, finally, in a figurative sense for the **consequence** of sin (Romans 6:23). It suggests the idea of that which one has earned; thus morally it **must** be paid if justice is to prevail. It hints that there is a very high price tag attached to sin.

The text under consideration has a narrow focus, namely the “wages” of sin earned by the human family as the result of sin’s introduction into earth’s environment by our original parents. Before we concentrate on that, however, it is worth mentioning that the cost of rebellion against God has had even a broader range of consequence: (a) Angels that rebelled against their Creator paid a horrible price (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Hebrews 2:16). (b) The “whole creation” labors under the degenerative process that leads to death (Romans 8:20-22; Hebrews 1:10-12). The earth itself especially bears the scars of sin’s ravaging blows—in the curse of Eden and the aftermath of the global deluge of Noah’s day (Genesis 3:17-19; chapters 6-9; 2 Peter 3:5-6).

Our point of emphasis, however, is primarily upon the effect of sin on those creatures who were made in Jehovah’s spiritual image (Genesis 1:26-27). Our text in Romans employs a solitary term—“death.” **Death!**

Death – The Grim Reaper

In biblical parlance, “death” always conveys some absolutely inflexible truths: (a) Death is never associated with the concept of **non-existence**. (b) Death is never viewed as a strictly **natural** biological process; it is portrayed as the **penalty** for sin. (b) Death always carries the idea of a **separation**—whether in a physical sense or a spiritual sense.

Physical Death

Normal physical death may be described in two ways. First, it is the cessation of the body’s biological processes as a result of progressive degeneration (John 11:14, 39; Acts 2:27; 2 Corinthians 4:16; 5:1). Second, death signals that the spirit, or soul, has left the human body. The body apart from the spirit is dead (James 2:26; cf. Acts 9:39; 2 Peter 1:14). Physical death is the consequence of humanity’s reckless venture into sin. All have sinned (Romans 3:23), either in fact or in prospect (children will sin as they mature), hence all will experience death (Romans 5:12)—with the exception of those who are alive at the time of Christ’s return (1 Corinthians 15:51; 1

Thessalonians 4:15). (See [The Divine View of Death](#).)

Spiritual Death

Spiritual death is the state of being separated from fellowship with God by virtue of a life of sin. All accountable people who have not been reconciled to their Creator by means of Christ’s redemptive plan, are dead spiritually (Isaiah 59:1-2; Ephesians 2:1; 1 Timothy 5:6; Revelation 3:1). Only by the process of the new birth can one be made alive again in the **spiritual** sense (John 3:3-5; Romans 6:4, 11, 13; Ephesians 2:4; cf. 5:26).

The Second Death

The second death is an **eternal separation** from God in that horrible abode known as hell. In referring to the judgment of the ungodly, Jesus depicted it in this fashion: “Depart from me” (Matthew 7:23; 25:41; Luke 13:27). Paul described the destiny of the wicked as the “eternal destruction **from the face of the Lord** and from the glory of his might” (2 Thessalonians 1:9). The same state is called a “death” (Romans 1:32), which was not merely capital punishment, as evidenced by the fact that not all the sins catalogued in the previous context warranted the death sentence (see Cottrell 1996, 1.166-167).

James spoke of the condemned soul who is rescued from death (5:20), which, of course, cannot refer to physical death. The book of Revelation uses the expression “second death” several times (2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8), which is the obvious equivalent of the “lake of fire” (20:10). Thayer defined this sense of “death” as “the miserable state of the wicked dead in hell” (283). R. A. Torrey once described the second death as “not mere non-existence, but wrong, wretched, debased, devilish existence” (1933, 306). Wayne Jackson – *We will come to the close of this article next week, if it be the Lord’s will-Fred Singleton*

DID YOU KNOW

Caesars were a number of ancient Roman rulers, many of whom were descendents of Julius Caesar,

the first ruler.-Fred Singleton