

Test your Bible Knowledge

1. "The wolf," said Isaiah, shall":
 - a. live with the lamb
 - b. lie down with the kid
 - c. eat with the fatling
 - d. take the day off

2. The Hebrew midwives did not kill the Hebrew male children as ordered by the King of Egypt because:
 - a. the Hebrew women were so lively that they were delivered before they were reached
 - b. they feared God
 - c. the king of Egypt was mean
 - d. the king of Egypt didn't pay them

3. Samson's wife betrayed him to her countrymen out of
 - a. fear
 - b. love
 - c. hate
 - d. greed

Scriptures:

- 1) Isaiah 11:6
- 2) Exodus 1:15-19
- 3) Judges 14:15-18

-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

WALKING IN UNITY AMONG OUR OWN BRETHREN

Are you familiar with John 17:20-23 when Christ said, ***"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word: 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."***

From this passage we learn the importance of unity. It is the Father's will that all, who believe and obey His son Jesus, be one. So how is it that we (brethren in Christ) are so divided, separated or split? Christ's plea was that all believers be one, just as He and the Father are one.

I believe that unity is possible, but in order for this to happen, we must first **stop** judging brethren by our own merits. We read in ***Matt 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."*** We should not just believe what one brother has to say about another brother and draw a conclusion without investigating the issue personally or hearing it from the horse's mouth.

Second, we must study-out the issue, whatever it might be, by the word of God **2 Tim 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** After we have studied the issue with prayer, we can then draw our own conclusion.

One of the biggest problems that brethren are faced with is an unwillingness to admit that they could be in error or that they sometimes

misunderstand what the scripture teaches about a given subject. Some display a hardened attitude, with unwillingness to confess their faults.

We all need to be reminded that we are not perfect, however, the Law of liberty, i.e. the Scripture, is. When we find out that we are not in harmony with God's word, and cannot support our reasoning with book, chapter and verse, than we need to give it up! Let us, re-evaluate ourselves and remember what Paul said in, 1 Corinthians 1:10-11 **"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."**

We must pursue unity at all cost. Why? We must pursue unity because God hates those who "sow discord among brethren." Proverbs 6:19 - Fred Singleton

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

The Free Gift of God

The first clause of Romans 6:23 is separated from the second clause by the adversative particle *de*, rendered "but." The apostle will now show the other side of the redemptive coin. There are five different words in the Greek Testament that reflect varying shades of meaning with respect to a gift. The word here used is *charisma* (found seventeen times in the New Testament), the verbal form of which is *charizomai* (found twenty-three times). It is a lovely word signifying "that which is freely and graciously given" (Danker and Bauer 2000, 1081).

It is, however, a mistake of unfathomable magnitude that so many have adopted the view that this gift does not require a **willing recipient** who happily acknowledges that the gift may be undergirded by conditions. Let us illustrate this principle with examples from the Bible itself.

First, Christ himself was a gift from God to humanity: "For God so loved the world that he gave (*didomi*) his only Son" (John 3:16). But that gift was not unconditional, for the apostle continues, ". . . that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have life everlasting." In the larger context of John's gospel, belief and obedience are synonyms (cf. John 3:36, ASV, ESV). Furthermore, elsewhere John makes it clear that Christ "came unto his own, and they that were his own **received him not**. But as many as **received** him, to them he **gave** the right to become children of God" (John 1:11-12). A gift does not exclude possible conditions.

Second, since there are valuable lessons to be learned from Old Testament precedents (Romans 15:4), let us give consideration to the conquest of ancient Jericho: (a) Jehovah informed Joshua, "I have **given** into your hand Jericho and the king thereof" (Joshua 6:2; cf. v. 16). (b) Yet specific instructions were provided as to how the Israelites were to take the city (6:3ff). (c) The writer of Hebrews declared that the city was not taken until after the divine instructions were obeyed (11:30). (d) In that connection, Rahab was spared because she was **obedient**, in contrast to the citizens of Jericho who were disobedient (11:31; cf. James 2:25). Anyone with a modest level of reasoning ability can deduce that a gratuitous gift and the obedient **reception** of the gift do not imply a contradiction.

An incident in the ministry of Paul illustrates the same principle. On that long and harrowing voyage to Rome (Acts 27:1ff), the apostle had been informed by an angel that God had "granted" (*charizomai*) to him the lives of his sailing mates. Subsequently, however, when the inmates of the damaged vessel began abandoning ship, Paul warned that there was a condition to the preservation of their lives: **"*Except* these remain in the ship, you cannot be saved"** (27:31). A **gift** can be **conditional**!

Third, Christ emphasized that though eternal life is God's gift there is human initiative to be exercised in obtaining such (i.e., obedience is required): **"*Work* not for the food which perishes, but [work] **for** the food which abides"**

unto **eternal life**, which the Son of man **shall give** unto you” (John 6:27).

Finally, it should be observed that those enamored with the Augustine-Calvin theory of the perseverance of the saints—namely, that a child of God can never forfeit his salvation—contend that whenever God provides a gift, such is **irrevocable**. Mounce attempts to apply Romans 11:29 to the matter of salvation (2006, 284), but there are enormous problems with that view: (a) As seen in the shipwreck illustration above, God threatened to withdraw the gift of sailor safety if the inmates of the vessel did not conform to his condition. (b) The context of Romans 11:29 does not deal with the matter of salvation; rather, it refers to God’s use of the nation of Israel as the conduit through whom his Son would come (cf. Cottrell, 2.291-292; Cranfield 1990, 581). (c) The office of an apostle was a gift of God (Ephesians 4:8, 11), yet Judas forfeited his apostolic office (Acts 1:20b) and was lost (v. 25).

Eternal Life

The “free gift” of this remarkable text is that of eternal life. But what is eternal life? It is the opposite of the second death (see above). It is an eternal relationship with God, overflowing with a depository of blessings beyond the scope of present full representation or appreciation. It is not merely everlasting existence (though that is involved); instead, it is a **quality** of living that can only be defined in terms of its relationship with the Godhead. Again, as Torrey observed: “Life is defined in the Bible not merely as **existence**, but as **right existence**—knowing the true God and the life manifested in Christ” (306; emphasis added).

Two important things must be emphasized at this point: (a) eternal life or “eternal salvation” is conditioned upon one’s obedience to the Lord (John 3:36, ASV, ESV; Hebrews 5:8-9), and (b) fidelity must be maintained if one ultimately is to enter heaven (Hebrews 3:12-19; 6:4-8; 10:26-31).

In Christ Jesus our Lord

It is particularly important to notice the prepositional phrase that sets forth the sphere in which eternal life is found. It is “in Christ”—an expression found eighty-nine times in the New Testament (fifteen times in Romans). The phrase signifies “ingrafted as it were in Christ, in fellowship and union with Christ, with the Lord” (Thayer 211). In God’s great plan of human redemption, there is no salvation apart from the atoning work of Christ, and no personal accessing of forgiveness apart from obedience to the Savior (Acts 4:12; Hebrews 5:9; cf. 2 Timothy 2:10).

In this very chapter, entrance into that redemptive relationship is explicitly detailed:

Or are you ignorant that all we who were **immersed into Christ** Jesus were **immersed into his death**? We were buried therefore with him through immersion **into death** [i.e., the benefits of his death]: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life (6:3-4).

In another text, the apostle states the same general truth in slightly different language:

For you are all sons of God, through **the** faith [article in Greek text; objective faith, i.e., the gospel system], in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were **immersed into Christ** did put on Christ (Galatians 3:27).

The sphere of salvation is the in-Christ relationship; the mode of entrance is the culminating act of immersion in water (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16).

The terms “Christ,” “Jesus,” and “Lord” emphasize Jesus’ role as the promised Old Testament “Messiah” (Anointed One), the Lord’s function as Savior (Matthew 1:21), and his lordship (i.e., authority [Matthew 28:18, ASV]) over all (John 17:2).

Conclusion

Romans 6:23 is a goldmine of information; it instructs, warns, and promises. Study this text carefully. Passively yield to it. Teach it vigorously.