

Though we can be forgiven of our sins, there will still be consequences. David could not bring back Uriah—he was dead. David’s child died. His house was in disarray for years to come and nothing could change that. Yet, he was forgiven (2 Sam. 12:13). We may face similar results from our sins. We urge you; do not allow the consequences, though painful, keep you from repenting.

- Steven F. Deaton

Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the LORD,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.

- Isa. 55:6, 7

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Sleeping In Jesus

The word sleep is used two different ways in the Bible. One is the way we normally think of it; getting rest in our beds (Matt. 8:24). The other indicates death, as when Jesus said, “Lazarus sleeps” (Jn. 11:11-14). The context determines the meaning. In light of this, we want to consider the idea of “sleeping in Jesus.”

Paul said when the Lord returns there will be “those who sleep in Jesus” (1 Thes. 4:14). The thrust of his argument is that they will not be hindered by the living on the resurrection day. In fact, he said, “And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them...to meet the Lord” (1 Thes. 4:16, 17). Therefore, there is no reason to be troubled (1 Thes. 4:12-18).

“Those who sleep in Jesus” are the men and women who died in a righteous condition. They are ones who served God, obey His commands, had their sins forgiven, and were gathered to their fathers in peace. The idea of sleep, then, is rest. Their labors and toils are done. They await the return of the Lord and entrance into heaven.

We need to live so that when we die we sleep in Jesus, which brings us to our next point.

If your closest friend in the Lord was arrested and put to death, and the same people then arrested you to put you to death, how would you feel and act? In the days you waited for the sentence to be carried out, do you suppose you would get much rest? Peter did.

In Acts 12 we read of the arrest and beheading of James and Peter. Herod then went after Peter. He was arrested, but the death sentence was delayed till after the Days of Unleavened Bread. We then read of an angel coming to him at night. What was Peter

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doing? He was fast asleep so that he was “struck” to be awakened (Acts 12:6, 7).

This is another sense in which we can “sleep in Jesus.” Though our life be in jeopardy, we can rest well in Christ. He told us not to fear those who can destroy the body, but do nothing else (Matt. 10:28). Rather, we are to rest assured that Jesus will take care of us and never forsake us (Heb. 13:5, 6).

To sleep with Jesus here and hereafter, we must live faithfully to Him. Without faithfulness, there will be no rest. If your conscience troubles you, won't you repent... and rest?

- Steven F. Deaton

Unchangeable Results of Sin

In Matthew 27:3-10, we read of Judas and his remorse. He betrayed Christ, then realized his sin. When he went back to the Jews to somehow fix it, it was too late. The die was cast and Christ was headed toward death. This account shows us that some sins cannot be undone no matter how badly we may want it so.

How do you undo murder? You cannot. It is permanent. Can adultery ever be wiped clean from the slate of the marriage, or will there not always be that crack? Will a simple apology from a rapist give a woman her dignity back? Is it possible to grab the insult in mid-air and stick it back in your mouth?

Sin often cannot be undone. However, that does not mean we are to be like Judas and kill ourselves. Rather, we are to repent and not repeat.

The Lord has promised to forgive those who humble themselves before Him (Jas. 4: 8-10; 1 Jn. 1:8-10). Jesus even prayed that those who mocked and/or murdered Him would be forgiven (Lk. 23:34). This was realized for some on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:23, 36-41). Saul was guilty of murdering the children of God, but was forgiven when he submitted to God (1 Tim. 1:12-16). We can be forgiven of our sins too!

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Challenge Your Friends

“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (Prov. 27: 17).

All of us have friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, and others with whom we have regular contact. At times the subject of religion comes up and the church they belong to (whether they attend or not) is mentioned. On such occasions, we can kindly ask them why they are a member of a particular church and then ask them why we ought to be; insist on a Bible answer. We might even say:

“Show me from the Bible where it teaches anyone how to become a _____, and I will seriously consider it.”

Fill in the blank

Methodist	Presbyterian
Baptist	Lutheran
Pentecostal	Roman Catholic
Mormon	Nazarene

You get the idea.

You see, if my friend is a member of the Baptist church, then it would seem logical that he would recommend it to all people—if not why not? If he does recommend it to others, then why? Since his church is not in the Bible, what possible reason could there be for joining it? Whatever reason is given is inherently extra-biblical.

Since there is a Church we can read about in the Bible, does it not make sense we should want to be a part of it? Jesus said He would build His church (Matt. 16:18). He died for it (Eph. 5:25). The apostles and others were part of it (Acts 2:47; Col. 1: 13). That same Church still exists today and we can be part of it, that is, we do not need another church in its place.

Perhaps this reasoning will open the eyes of our friends. It may cause a few sparks as when iron sharpens iron, but it needs to be done.

- Steven F. Deaton