

The purpose of this publication is to spread the truth, to sow God's good seed, the Word of God, and to confront religious error for the good of men's souls. Editor: Allen Dvorak

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though we recognize that we are headed down the wrong path. Sin is laid upon sin, until it seems impossible to ever get back on the narrow path that leads to life (Mt. 7:13-14). King David began with the sin of lust and added adultery. Rather than change course, he compounded his sins by arranging the death of Uriah (2 Samuel 11). It was David who would later write about the need to willingly accept instruction from the Lord – “be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you” (Psalm 32:9; ESV).

A course change begins with repentance. Jesus illustrated this point with His parable of the two sons who were told by their father to go and work in the vineyard (Mt. 21:28-30). One son responded that he would not, but “changed his mind” and went. The word *repentance* literally means “after mind” or “change of mind.” The person who is headed down the wrong path and decides to change course, to get back on the right path, has repented.

Of course, the decision to change course must be followed by an actual change in course.

Bible Challenge Question - Answer

By instruction from the Lord, the prophet Jeremiah made “straps and yoke-bars” as a visual aid for his message to the neighbors of Judah: serve the Babylonian king (Jer. 27:1-7). Later, the false prophet Hananiah broke the wooden yoke-bars from the neck of Jeremiah. Jeremiah's response? “Thus says the Lord: You have broken wooden bars, but you have made in their place bars of iron” (Jeremiah 28:13).

Jesus illustrated this point as well in His parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). In the parable, the younger of two sons chose the wrong path, an ungodly lifestyle that ultimately led to poverty and misery. However, he “came to himself” (v. 17) and decided to return to his father's house and confess his sin. His change of mind about his conduct resulted in a change of course – he followed through on his decision. He returned home and his father welcomed him.

Like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, if we change course in order to leave or avoid sin, our heavenly Father is always there to welcome us!



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Changing Course

By Allen Dvorak

“He should have thrown him in a lion's den.” We were studying in Bible class about Herod Antipas' treatment of John the Baptist. Herod had imprisoned John because of John's condemnation of his marriage with Herodias. Luke's gospel informs us that Herod had John beheaded, but the gospels of Matthew (14:3-12) and Mark (6:14-29) relate the events surrounding John's death with greater detail.

Herodias had been married to Herod Antipas' brother, Philip, but she had divorced Philip and married Herod who had likewise divorced his wife. John preached that Herod's marriage to Herodias was unlawful and so Herod had John put into prison. Herodias “had a grudge” against John and wanted him to be executed (Mk. 6:19) and it appears that initially that was Herod's intention as well (Mt. 14:5). But Herod also feared John, knowing that the prophet was a righteous man, and protected him from Herodias (Mk. 6:20).

The situation changed, however, when Herod gave himself a birthday party and invited the

nobles, his military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. Herodias' daughter danced for Herod and his guests and, pleased with her dancing, Herod impetuously promised her anything she wished, vowing to give her “up to half of my kingdom.” Instructed by her mother, she asked Herod for the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

“And the king was exceedingly sorry” (Mk. 6:26), but fulfilled his vow by having John beheaded. My question to the Bible class was, “What *should* Herod have done?”

One of the class members answered, “He should have thrown him in a lion's den.” His response surprised me...until I realized that he was referring to the action of king Darius in the book of Daniel, a book we had just recently studied. Trapped by a foolish law he had made, Darius had Daniel put into a lion's den, even though the king clearly did not want to do so (Daniel 6). Darius hoped that

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The Suffering of Christ

By Allen Dvorak



The trial of Jesus:

- E _____
1. Before _____ (only recorded by _____)
 2. Before _____
 3. Before _____
- C _____
1. Before _____
 2. Before _____ (only recorded by _____)
 3. Before _____

Scourging was called “the intermediate _____.”

The Law of Moses limited the number of lashes to _____.

Pilate’s soldiers gave Jesus a _____, _____ and a _____.

The “patibulum” was the _____ of a Tau cross.

List some of the things Jesus suffered:

1. Bound in the garden
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

“Love means different things to different people and the definition any one person gives to love tells more about that person than it tells about love itself.”

-- Roland Lewis

“A year from now, you may wish you had started today.”

-- Karen Lamb

Daniel’s God would protect him (v. 16) and the prophet was indeed delivered by God from the mouths of the lions!

I doubt that Herod had a lion’s den conveniently at hand, but I know that Herod and Darius are not the only two individuals who have ever felt trapped by their own actions/words. Darius was being used by jealous men whose real purpose was to destroy Daniel and the king accommodated their plan with his self-aggrandizing law. They reminded him that he “had no choice” but to carry out the sentence of death against Daniel because “it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed” (Daniel 6:15; ESV).

In Herod’s case, the king felt compelled to behead John because of his foolish vow made in front of his guests. If he didn’t keep his

promise, he might look weak. Perhaps they would think that Herod’s word couldn’t be trusted. Even Scripture says that vows should be fulfilled (Ecclesiastes 5:4-6; the gospel texts don’t indicate if Herod’s vow was made to God)! And so a foolish vow was followed up by a sinful act.

What *should* Herod have done? The lion’s den would have been an easy way out of his predicament (although not technically a fulfillment of his vow); he would get to save face by ostensibly committing John to death and yet putting John’s ultimate fate in the hands of the Lord who could save him miraculously as He did Daniel.

What Herod should have done was admit that he had made a foolish promise and refuse to compound his foolishness with the additional sin of putting to death an innocent man. When we discover that we have taken the wrong course, our spiritual condition is not improved by picking up speed!

What we need in those circumstances is a course change. Unfortunately, pride is often a hindrance to admitting that we have chosen the wrong path. “This is what I said that I would do...and I’m not going to change it now.” To save face before others, we stubbornly refuse to change course even

Bible Challenge Question

Which prophet in the Old Testament turned wood into iron? (Hint: metaphorically-speaking!)

The answer to this question is on the back page.