

## SENTENCE OF DEATH

Paul had faced the SENTENCE OF DEATH many times in many different places and ways as a missionary ambassador for Christ (2 Cor.5:18-21). “Indeed, we had the sentence of death (ton apokrima tou thanatos) within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.” (2 Cor.1:9)

Paul gives a list of occasions when he faced the Sentence of Death (2 Cor.11:23-28). These were dress rehearsals for the main event – BEING SENTENCED TO DEATH.

During one of these missionary trips, Paul was stoned to death and resuscitated back to life (Acts 14:19-20; 2 Cor.11:25; 12:1-3, 10). It was NOT his time of departure (Heb.9:27; Eccl.3:2).

In our lesson text, Paul is sitting on death row in a Roman prison in the main event – SENTENCED TO DEATH as a martyr for the Christian faith (2 Tim.4:6).

**We will study five aspects of the Sentence of Death upon the active ambassador for Christ.**

### **1. Paul shares with us how he faced the Sentence of Death in confidence with God (2 Tim.4:7).**

I have fought (agonizomai / perf.m.ind) the good fight – Angelic Conflict (Phil.1:29-30; 1 Tim.6:12)  
I have finished (teleo / perf.a.ind) the course – Ph.II of the plan of God (Acts 13:25; 20:22-24)  
I have kept (tereo / perf.a.ind) the faith – reaching and maintaining spiritual growth maturity (Phil.3:7-14)

The sentence of death has become Sentenced to Death for Paul.

### **2. In 2 Cor.1:9, Paul shared with us why God allowed the sentence of death within his life and others who become active witnesses for Christ.**

“Indeed, we had the sentence of death within OURSELVES in order that we should NOT trust (me peitho / a.a.ptc) in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.”

**Question:** Why do we have various trials in Christian Way of Life (CWL)?

**Answer:** We should NOT trust in ourselves. But trust in God. (1 Cor.10:31; 1 Pet.1:6-8; James 1:2-5)

**Question:** Why we should trust God?

**Answer:** Because God can raise the dead (2 Cor.1:9).

### **3. When the Christian dies physically, he passes from zoe life of phase II (living grace) to zoe life of phase III (dying grace)**

“Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.” (1 Pet.4:19)

This was Abraham’s doctrinal conclusion when tested with sacrificing Isaac (Gen.22; Heb.11:17-19)

“He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.” (Heb.11:19; Rom.4:21)

Because of ultimate spiritual growth maturity (SG) capacity, Abraham was able to put together different doctrines to reach the right conclusion under enormous stressful conditions in confidence with God.

**4. God has equipped spiritually mature believers with His Grace Operating Assets (GOA) to handle the Sentence of Death with a winner's attitude (1 Cor.9:24) [run to win].**

“According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Phil.1:21)

We will mention four GOA that are beneficial to dealing with the sentence of death.

- First is the comforter ministry of Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, 26-27; 16:7).
- Second is the inner comfort and peace that categorical bible doctrine (CBD) brings (1 Thess.4:13, 18; John 14:1-6).
- Third is the edifying ministry of spiritual gifts to those under the sentence of death (1 Thess.3:2-4, 7; Rom.12:8 (4 gifts); 2 Tim.4:2).
- Fourth is the ministry of effective prayers of the church (2 Cor.1:8-11; Phil.1:17, 19; James 5:15-18).

**5. Paul's great concern is NOT if, when or how the sentence of death might come, but HOW WELL will he be prepared to embrace dying grace to glorify God?**

(Phil.1:20-30) “For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and hear to be in me.”

(2 Tim.4:6) “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.”

(1 Cor.9:24-26a) “Do you not know that those who **run in a race** all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath (crown), but we an **imperishable**. Therefore run in such a way, as not without aim.”

(2 Tim.4:8) “In the future there is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to ALL who have loved His appearing.”

(Phil.1:23-24) **The Sentence of Death has changed to SENTENCED TO DEATH for Paul.** He is no longer hard-pressed from both directions, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.”

(2 Cor.5:6) “We are of good courage, I say, and prefer to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”

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