



A just weight  
and balance

are the  
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- **THE DEATH  
OF A  
CONSCIENCE**
- **Matthew 14:1-12**

- What's the difference between the words conscience and conscious?

- **“Conscious”**  
is when you are  
aware of something,
- And  
**“conscience”**  
is when you wish  
you weren't!

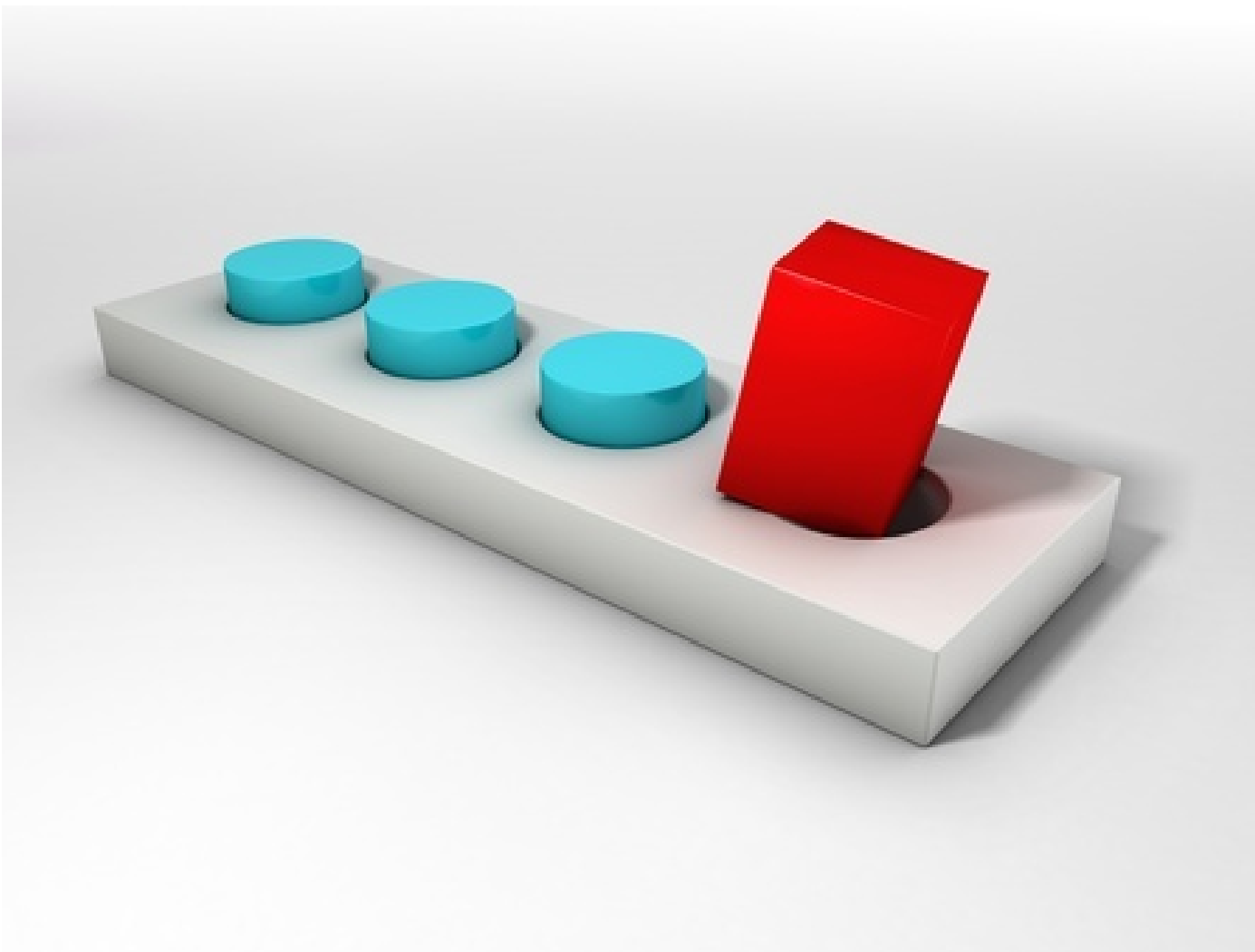
- **Conscience**

is that red warning light  
in your soul.

- **It's a moral beeper**

that goes off when  
you have done wrong.

- **Another definition**  
that is hard to forget  
is that conscience is  
**a square peg**  
**inside the heart**  
**that turns when**  
**you do something wrong.**



**Is your conscience warning you?**

- **As it turns**,  
the sharp edges  
give you the sensation  
that you need to stop.
- **But if you ignore the warning**  
over time then  
the edges wear off,  
and it can freely turn  
w/out you feeling  
anything anymore.



- The IRS has what is known as **The Conscience Fund.**
  - It is used for **voluntary contributions** from people who have stolen from or defrauded the United States Government.

- The fund was created in 1811 and received \$5 during its first year but has grown over the years..

- Donations vary in size and reason.
- **A 9 cent donation** was made by a person from Massachusetts who had reused a **3** cent postage stamp,

- Another donor **sent handmade quilts** in an effort to settle her tax bill.
- Most gifts to the Conscience Fund **are from anonymous donors.**

- Others are forwarded by clergy who have received deathbed confessions.
  - The sincerity of some donors' repentance can be uncertain, as demonstrated by a received letter reading,...

- **"Dear Internal Revenue Service,  
I have not been able to sleep  
at night because  
I cheated on  
last year's income tax.  
• Enclosed find a  
cashier's check for \$1,000.  
• If I still can't sleep,  
I'll send you the balance."**

- Our lesson for today involves a tragic story.
- John the Baptist is murdered by King Herod Antipas in cold blood.
- Jesus said John was a great man, and yet he died an untimely death. (Matthew 11:11)

- But worse than murdering a good man is murdering your own conscience, which is what Herod Antipas did.



- **John the Baptizer** was a special man, chosen for a special mission.
- He was the “**forerunner**” of the Messiah.
  - He was the **fulfillment** of several Old Testament prophecies.
  - He was the **last martyr** of the Old Testament period
- And **the first** of the New Testament.
  - He was a **fearless** prophet.

- Jesus Christ Himself testified,

**“Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist,”**  
**(Matthew 11:11).**

- While the scriptures reveals the details of John's death, it also records the death of something else.
- The death of a conscience.

- The father of Herod Antipus was **Herod the Great.**
  - The king who had been ruling **when Jesus was born.**
  - It was he who had **ordered the deaths** **of all the infants** in Bethlehem, in an effort to destroy the Lord Jesus.

- When Herod the Great died, the Roman emperor divided his kingdom into four parts.
- One part was given to the man in our text, Herod Antipas.

- Sometimes referred to as King Herod.
- However, he was never really a king.
- But, he did demand that his subjects call him “king”.  
(Mark 6:14)

- Herod Antipas and his wife visited his brother, Herod Phillip, in Rome
- Herod Antipas falls in love with his brother's wife, Herodias and marries her.
  - Herodias is both his niece and sister-in-law.
    - It is for this incestuous relationship that John rebukes Herod Antipus.

- Herod Antipas ruled from 4 A.D. to 39 A.D.
- He was banished to what is now France by the Roman emperor for demanding to be made a king in 39 A.D.
- Jesus summed up the character of Herod Antipas once by calling him a “fox”, (**Luke 13:32**).



- What we see in **Matthew 14:1-12** is a picture of how a person **can sin against their conscience** to the point that they are capable of anything.

- It is possible to **ignore** the warnings of your heart, your soul and your mind **until those warnings cease to be heard.**

- That is why some people can do the things they do without remorse or guilt.

(1 Timothy 4:2)

- They have seared their conscience to the point where it feels nothing and no longer warns them about evil.

- **A lot of people are confused** about the conscience and what it does.
  - Many people believe that the conscience was given to us **to help us make decisions** between right and wrong.
  - That is **a false** assumption!

- The conscience will only resist any deviation from the truth,  
it knows.

- For instance,  
if you have been  
raised to believe  
**the Bible is absolute truth,**  
your conscience will  
help you know  
the difference between  
what is right and wrong  
based on the Bible,  
your standard for truth.

- If you start to do something the Bible says is a sin, your conscience will rise up and tell you to stop.

- If, on the other hand, you have been raised to believe that there are no limits in life and you can do as you please, your conscience will not give you any problems.



- That is why so many people are in such trouble today.
- They have adopted a philosophy that says,  
**“If it feels good, do it!”**
  - Such do not live by the Word of God,  
**but by the feelings of their flesh.**
- They do as they please and their **conscience never bothers them.**

- The **most dangerous** thing any person can do is to sin against the truth.
  - Paul tells us that sinning against a **“good conscience”** leads to spiritual **“shipwreck”**.  
(**1 Timothy 1:19**).

- A “good conscience”  
is one that  
knows the truth  
and desires to  
be obedient to it.
  - When people  
know the truth  
and reject it  
they sin against  
a “good conscience”.
- That is what we see  
in our text today.

- The Herod family looms large in history.
  - First of all there was Herod the Great, who had at least 5 wives.
    - He thought nothing of killing them or his own children if they got in the way of his plans.

- Scholars agree that Herod the Great suffered throughout his lifetime from depression and paranoia.

- **Herod the Great,**  
is the one  
**who slayed**  
**all the infants**  
in Bethlehem  
at the time of  
Christ's birth.  
(**Matthew 2:16**)

- The son of Herod the Great **was Herod Antipas.**
- His title was **Herod the Tetrarch** which means **'ruler over the fourth part of the kingdom.'**
- He was well known for living in **luxury** and **materialism.**

- Jesus once warned of the dangers of the 'leaven of Herod'.  
(Mark 8:12)
  - Herod Antipas was a drunken, depraved man.
  - His son was Herod Agrippa, who imprisoned Peter and killed James.
- His grandson was Herod Agrippa II, who tried the Apostle Paul.



- **Mark 6:20**
- **For Herod feared John,**  
**knowing that he was**  
**a just man and an holy,**  
**and observed him;**  
**and when he heard him,**  
**he did many things,**  
**and heard him gladly.**
- At that point his conscience  
is very much alive,  
**but not for long.**

- We can learn much from this passage **about Herod's conscience.**

- **# 1. Herod had a troubled conscience.**  
(**Matthew 14:3-5**)

- Because of **a message from God by a man of God.**

- He felt guilty  
not only for killing John,  
but for what  
John had said to him,  
and he knew it was true...
- He was guilty of  
gross immorality.
- He had coveted  
his neighbor's wife  
and committed adultery.

- **# 2. Herod had a trapped conscience.**  
**(Matthew 14:8-9)**
  - Sin is like a spider  
**that weaves a web of guilt**  
**one strand at a time.**
    - Filled with lust  
**he steps into the trap.**
  - His **passions** led to **pride,**  
**and he is trapped.**
    - He has to keep  
**his promise.**

- **Matthew 14:9**

**And the king was sorry:  
nevertheless  
for the oath's sake, and  
them which sat with him  
at meat,  
he commanded it  
to be given her.**

- Proverbs 29:25

- **The fear of man bringeth a snare:  
but whoso putteth his trust  
in the LORD shall be safe.**
  - Many do foolish things  
because they are afraid  
what their friends will think  
if they don't go along with them.
- Friends can laugh you into hell,  
but they can't laugh you out!

- **# 3. Herod had a tormented conscience.**
- Just hearing about Jesus causes him wonder if John has returned **to extract vengeance!**

- Herod was likely a Sadducee, and would not have believed in the resurrection of the dead.

- Isn't it interesting how desperate times melts away bad theology.



- Many want a religion that's good enough to live by, but facing death, realize that it's
- not good enough to die by!

- The story of Herod is not quite over...

- **Luke 23:8**

- **And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.**

- **Luke 23:9**

**Then he questioned with him  
in many words;  
but he answered him nothing.**

- By killing John the Baptist,  
Herod had  
**silenced**  
**the voice of God.**

- Now with a dead conscience  
Herod Antipas  
(Not Herod the Great)  
shows no sincerity,  
just morbid curiosity.
- He's saying, Jesus,  
do a trick for me.

- **What was Herod's crime?**
- **# 1 It involved a sinful dance.**
  - **Mark 6:21-22**
  - **# 2 It involved a senseless declaration.**
    - **Mark 6:22-25**
- **# 3 It involved a shameful deed.**
  - **Mark 6:26-29**

- **It Involved A Sinful Dance**

- **Mark 6:21-22**

- **Herodias** had been biding her time and saw her chance **at Herod's birthday bash.**
- This supper was nothing more than a **drunken party for Herod and his men.**
- When they were drunk with wine, **Herodias put her plan into action.**

- She sent in her teenage daughter Salome to dance for Herod and his friends.
  - This particular dance would have been a suggestive, sensual, dance.

- This act reveals the wickedness in the heart of Herodias.
- Imagine putting her daughter on display in that fashion.
- Sending her out to dance for a man who was both her uncle and step-father!
- What wickedness!



- **It Involved a Senseless Declaration**  
**Mark 6:22-25**

- **Herod's promises**  
to give her anything she desires,  
up to half his kingdom!
- It was a foolish boast  
designed make Herod  
**look good in**  
**front of his guests.**

- The girl runs to seek her Mother's advice.
- . Her mother requests the head of  
John the Baptist.

- **It Involved A Shameful Deed**

- **Mark 6:26-29**

- Herod realizes immediately **that he has made a mistake.**

- **Afraid of losing face,**  
so he sends the executioner  
and John is immediately beheaded.

- **As we watch Herod**  
in these verses,  
we are witnessing  
the death of his conscience.
- **He refused to accept  
the Word of God**  
and change his ways.
  - Now, he has  
**crossed the line**  
and done the unthinkable.

- There are several lessons for us here, if we are willing to listen to them.

- These verses reveal  
the devastating power of  
hatred, bitterness  
and unforgiveness.

- It is better to forgive  
than it is to be

- consumed alive by  
bitterness and hatred.

(Eph. 4:32; Matt. 18:21-22; Luke 17:1-5)

- **And finally we have Herod's confession.**

- **Mark 6:15-16**

**15** Others said, That it is Elias.  
And others said, That it is a prophet,  
or as one of the prophets.

- **16** But when Herod heard thereof,  
he said, **It is John,**  
whom I beheaded:  
he is risen from the dead.

- Herod  
is confessing  
his guilt,  
but he is  
not seeking  
forgiveness.



- There is confession,  
but there is no repentance!

• So  
there is  
**no salvation!**

- The death of a conscience is a tragic event.
  - As it usually leads to the death of a soul.
  - When one refuses Jesus and the Gospel, there remains no hope for salvation.

- So, as not to end  
**on a negative note:**

## **Hebrews 4:7**

**To day  
if ye will  
hear his voice,  
harden not your hearts.**

**The doors of the church  
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride  
Say  
“Come”.**

**Revelation 22:17**



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