

~JAILER (135)

[Greek, *ba-sa-ni-stes'* tormentor, *de-smo-phy'lax* band or fetter and guard]

- One having in his custody persons accused of breaking the law, a prison keeper. Two Greek words are translated in the Scriptures as jailer: *ba-sa-ni-stes'*, meaning tormentor, and *de-smo-phy'lax*, a compound of *de-smos'*, band, fetter and *phy'lax*, guard.
- Jailers often inflicted cruel tortures on prisoners, hence were called *ba-sa-ni-stes'*. For example, debtors were sometimes thrown into prison, for failing to pay what they owed.
- There the jailer might scourge and torture them, and they would not be released until, as Jesus said; They paid over the last coin of very little value.
- Be about settling matters quickly with the one complaining against you at law, while you are with him on the way there, that somehow the complainant may not turn you over to the judge, and the judge to the court attendant, and you get thrown into prison. (Matthew 5:25)
- I say to you for a fact, You will certainly not come out from there until you have paid over the last coin of very little value. (Matthew 5:26)
- This also was the point of Jesus illustration about the unmerciful slave. When the master learned what his ungrateful slave had done, he delivered him to the jailers, *ba-sa-ni-stais'*, until he should pay back all that was owing.
- With that his master, provoked to wrath, delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay back all that was owing. (Matthew 18:34)
- In like manner my heavenly Father will also deal with you if you do not forgive each one his brother from your hearts. (Matthew 18:35)
- And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever, and day and night they have no rest, those who worship the wild

beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.
([Revelation 14:11](#))

- Where **torment** is translated from *ba-sa-ni-smou'*.
- If the prisoners escaped, **jailers** were held liable for the penalty imposed on the escapee, according to Roman custom. Hence, when Peter was set free from prison by an angel, we read that Herod examined the guards and commanded them to be led off to punishment.
- Herod made diligent search for him and, when not finding him, he examined the guards and commanded them to be led off to punishment, and he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent some time there. ([Acts of Apostles 12:19](#))
- In Philippi, Paul and Silas were dragged before the civil magistrates, who commanded that they be beaten with rods, and after they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the **jailer**, *de-smo-phy'la-ki* to keep them securely. Because he got such an order, he threw them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks.
- And the crowd rose up together against them, and the civil magistrates, after tearing the outer garments off them, gave the command to beat them with rods. ([Acts of Apostles 16:22](#))
- After they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the **jailer** to keep them securely. ([Acts of Apostles 16:23](#))
- Because he got such an order, he threw them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. ([Acts of Apostles 16:24](#))
- Then in the middle of the night a great earthquake opened all the prison doors. This caused the **jailer** to imagine the prisoners had escaped, and realizing what severe punishment would be meted out to him if this were so, he was about to kill himself when Paul informed him that they were all there.
- These events, together with Paul's instructions, caused this **jailer** to exercise faith, and he and his household became baptized believers.

- But about the middle of the night Paul and Silas were praying and praising God with song, yes, the prisoners were hearing them. ([Acts of Apostles 16:25](#))
- Suddenly a great earthquake occurred, so that the foundations of the jail were shaken. Moreover, all the doors were instantly opened, and the bonds of all were loosened. ([Acts of Apostles 16:26](#))
- The **jailer**, being awakened out of sleep and seeing the prison doors were open, drew his sword and was about to do away with himself, imagining that the prisoners had escaped. ([Acts of Apostles 16:27](#))
- But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying; Do not hurt yourself, for we are all here! ([Acts of Apostles 16:28](#))
- So he asked for lights and leaped in and, seized with trembling, he fell down before Paul and Silas. ([Acts of Apostles 16:29](#))
- And he brought them outside and said; Sirs, what must I do to get saved? ([Acts of Apostles 16:30](#))
- They said; Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will get saved, you and your household. ([Acts of Apostles 16:31](#))
- And they spoke the word of Yehowah to him together with all those in his house. ([Acts of Apostles 16:32](#))
- And he took them along in that hour of the night and bathed their stripes, and, one and all, he and his were baptized without delay. ([Acts of Apostles 16:33](#))
- And he brought them into his house and set a table before them, and he rejoiced greatly with all his household now that he had believed God. ([Acts of Apostles 16:34](#))
- When it became day, the civil magistrates dispatched the constables to say; Release those men. ([Acts of Apostles 16:35](#))
- So the **jailer** reported their words to Paul; The civil magistrates have dispatched men that you two might be released. Now, therefore, come out and go your way in peace. ([Acts of Apostles 16:36](#))

