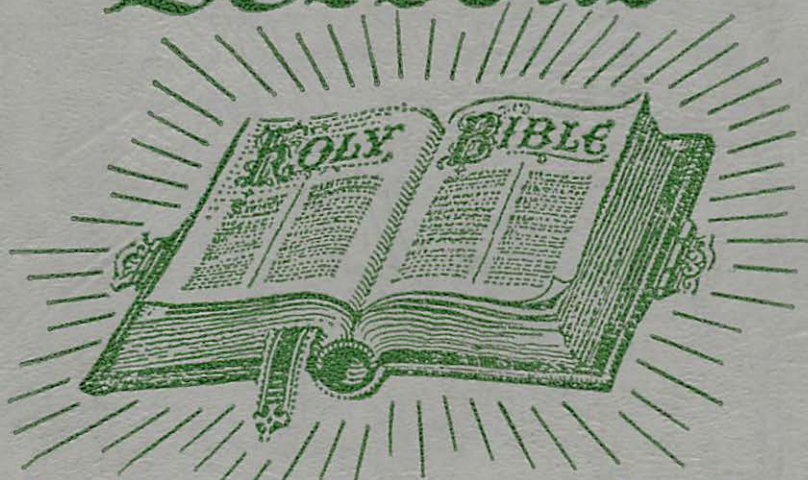


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Bible Lessons



"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 2, No. 3
July, August, Sept.,
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Volume 2

July, August, Sept., 1970

Number 3

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THEME FOR THIS QUARTER

We will continue to study about Paul and his labors. We do appreciate his untiring zeal and devotion to the cause of Christ. Through his labors strong churches were established. He wrote letters to these churches which we have recorded in the New Testament. He set forth doctrines that are precious to us today. We would indeed be at a great loss without his writings and the record of his life of dauntless courage in pioneering the gospel to the Gentiles.

As you study his life, notice the times the different letters are written to the brethren at Corinth, Rome, and Thessalonica.

We still want you to remember that Paul and the ministers were fighting in a spiritual warfare against the dragon, paganism, which was an anti-God, anti-Christ spirit. This power was crumbling under the power of the gospel. Remember that the "great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan." Rev. 12:9. There came a time when most of the then known world believed in one God, even if they did not worship Him in truth. The anti-God belief crumbled. But, before the end, that same old power of anti-God belief will be loosed for a season. "Satan shall be loosed for a season." Rev. 20:7. Who was called Satan? The old dragon anti-God power was. Can you not see that anti-God spirit working today at a rapid pace? Saints, we must become fortified in Christ.

We know that all the material that is presented here cannot be covered in the short time spent in Sunday School. It is our purpose and aim to stimulate your interest and excite your curiosity enough that you will continue this study at home.
—Marie Miles

OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF PAUL

Third Missionary Journey—Acts 18:23 to 21:17

The journey lasted four years, A.D. 54-58.

Paul goes through Galatia and Phrygia to Ephesus. Acts 18:23; 19:1.

At Ephesus he spent nearly three years. Compare Acts 19:8, 10 with Acts 20:31.

At Ephesus he probably wrote Galatians. Its date, however, is uncertain.

He wrote 1 Corinthians in the spring of A.D. 57. See 1st Corinthians 16:8.

He went to Troas and Macedonia. 2 Cor. 2:12, 13; Acts 20:1.

He wrote 2 Cor. from Macedonia in the summer of 57.

Spends the winter of 57-58 in Corinth. Acts 20:3; 1 Cor. 16:5, 6.

Wrote Romans just before leaving Corinth, very early in A.D. 58. Rom. 15:25, 26.

Returns by way of Macedonia, Troas, Miletus, Tyre, Caesarea, to Jerusalem arriving there late in May shortly before Pentecost.

Paul in Bonds

Mobbed, arrested, taken before the Sanhedrin, taken to Caesarea. Acts 21 to 23.

Defense before Felix, twelve days after reaching Jerusalem. Acts 24:1-23.

July 5, 1970

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS GIFTS

Acts 19:1-6; 1 Cor. 14:3; Eph. 1:13, 14; 1 Cor. 12:4, 28; Acts 19:8, 10, 12.

Acts 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

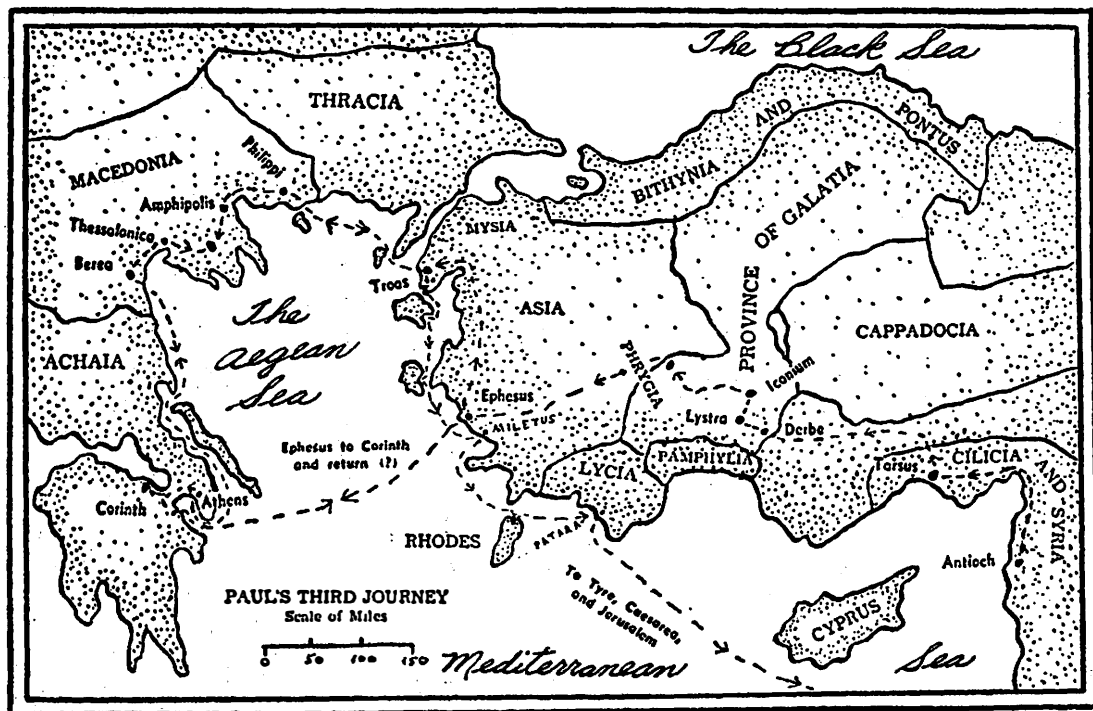
4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

1 Cor. 14:3 (Paul says) But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation, and comfort.

Eph. 1:13 In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,



14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

1 Cor. 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Acts 19:8 (Luke relates) And he [Paul] went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus both Jews and Greeks.

12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Memory Verse: But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 1 Corinthians 12:18.

Central Thought: We need to be "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" so we can keep the sweetness of salvation. Impurities cause spoilage.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul's third missionary trip led him through Cilicia, Lycaonia, and into Galatia and Phrygia. He revisited the churches and helped them to become established. Then he went to Ephesus. Apollos, an eloquent speaker, and well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures, had come to Ephesus before Paul arrived. Apollos was preaching only the message of John the Baptist, but Priscilla and Aquila "expounded unto him the way of God more accurately." He then became a powerful preacher for Christ. Paul found some others who had not heard about Christ.

Paul preached for about three months in the synagogue to the Jews who kept only the law of Moses. Many converts were made, but some opposed him and he moved to a hall in the school of Tyrannus. Here he disputed "daily in the

school" for about two years. "And all that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."

Ephesus was the key city of western Asia Minor, and capital of the province of Asia. It was the principal seat of the worship of the goddess Diana.

There are three places in the New Testament where it speaks of those who received the Holy Spirit as speaking in tongues, or the gift of languages, but other places they didn't. Tongues means language, which gift was needed then more so than here in the U. S., as there were many different languages spoken in those parts. (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6.)

Lesson References: Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:8; Acts 21:11.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Perfect salvation means the forgiveness of sins which brings justification before God, and then the infilling or baptism of the Holy Spirit. God did not intend for one to stay in a justified state, but to go on to perfection and be filled with the Holy Spirit, which is a definite work of grace. It is a blessed experience and a person should never stop short of receiving the indwelling Spirit. God has this experience for everyone who has been truly forgiven of all volitional sins.

Sometimes those who have been blessed with a definite experience of sanctification or been baptized with the Holy Spirit will find they do not feel Him working in their souls or checking them as He once did. The enemy is right there to take advantage and tell them that they have lost the Holy Spirit. One cannot lose the Holy Spirit without losing justification. Only sin cuts one off from God. If you have not sinned since you were justified and sanctified, you are still God's child. Remember mistakes are not volitional sins. The reason you do not feel or recognize the Holy Spirit working as He once did could be that you have been careless about watching and praying. If a person came to your home for a visit and you would begin ignoring your guest, I am sure he would feel that you did not want him. Your guest would not feel free to speak to you or ready to comment on your hospitality. Just so the Holy Spirit will work only as He is wooed, or as He is allowed full control and freedom in your life. The Apostle Paul tells us in one place, "Quench not the Spirit." It means much not to quench the Spirit, but one must yield to Him and obey His slightest check.

When we receive the Holy Spirit, He gives gifts to each of us according to our place in the body of Christ. We must be busy working for God as He leads us. We notice that Paul

had the gift of miracles. Some have the gift of helps, teaching, giving, visitation, etc. Let us each one be faithful to labor for God. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The plan of salvation for mankind is not complete without the infilling of the Holy Ghost. It seems almost as though some feel that being sanctified or filled with the Holy Ghost is an elective sort of thing that can be indulged in or refrained from just as the individual chooses. Such is not the case if one would retain a lasting experience of salvation. Neither is it an experience that cannot be lost. The Holy Ghost will only take up His abode within the heart of man when all self as far as is known and understood has been moved out. Then all self must be kept out if the Holy Spirit is to remain. A continual dying out to our ways and a constant yielding to His ways must take place in us if we expect to retain the gift of His Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost is a gift from God to forgiven man whose hearts are made white in the blood of the Lamb, and He will place those yielded to Him in the body where He is pleased for each one to be. If special gifts or callings are needed in order for the man to fill that place, the Holy Ghost will bestow them, but if and when at any time the man ceases to retain the Holy Spirit, the Spirit and the gifts will depart, leaving the man empty. —C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did Paul go on his second missionary trip? (Check the map.) 2. Why were there some in Ephesus who knew only the teachings of John the Baptist? 3. Were some baptized with water again? Why? 4. What is the difference in being baptized in water and being baptized with the Holy Spirit? 5. What gifts were manifested by Paul that he had received after being filled with the Holy Spirit? 6. Are handkerchiefs still sent today from the elders to the sick?

GIFT OF DISCERNMENT

I will relate a remarkable vision given to a sister at that meeting. (1887 campmeeting) She saw a cemetery, in the midst of which rose a stone building, clean and white as snow. She cast her eyes toward it, when she saw a little golden railroad track from this white building unto heaven. Soon she saw a little golden train come out of this white building, and start up the track, moving rapidly. Suddenly it stopped, the engineer and fireman poked their heads out of the cab windows and looked forward as though they saw something on the

track. At this moment the sister looked in the direction they were looking and saw a large black wedge lying upon one of the rails. Near the wedge were four black stakes, driven between the ties. It was evident that an enemy was trying to wreck the little train. God then spoke to the sister, saying: "This train can go no further until that wedge and those stakes are removed." Soon after this the church openly renounced J. C. Fisher (a fallen minister who had forsaken his wife and eloped with a widow) and those who were clinging to him, and the work moved on again with power as before. It was not until June, 1888, that I was permitted to attend the first of these general campmeetings. At this meeting I witnessed the manifestation of God's power in many ways. The altar was crowded with seekers in every service. The sick were healed, devils were cast out, and the miraculous power of God was manifested in many ways. Bro. D. S. Warner and company had just returned from a tour in the western states, and we all listened with interest to the relation of their successes and persecutions on that trip. At St. James, Missouri, they met some people who were influenced by a supernatural power known as the "jerks." They would hop about on one foot, twist their bodies into almost every conceivable shape, and act very unseemly; they also claimed to have those among them who possessed the apostolic gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues. Bro. Warner took a stand against the spirit by which they were actuated and ascribed their manifestations to the spirit of the devil, and forbade the devil, in the name of the Lord, to proceed any further with his work. Their manifestations soon came to naught, and nearly every one of them was delivered from that influence that had caused them to act so strangely. Many of them were found to be possessed with devils, and had to have them cast out before they were able to get salvation. This defeat of the devil caused him to stir up the baser sort against the brethren, and before their series of meetings closed a mob came upon the campground, at a late hour of the night, and demanded that the ground at once be cleared of all the saints, which orders, under the circumstances, had to be obeyed. The ministers were sought for by the mob, but by the aid of the brethren and the protection of Almighty God, they escaped. A great many churches had been raised up under the labors of Bro. Warner and his co-laborers during their western tour. Also during this trip Brothers Warner and Warren were preparing the manuscript for the second song-book that was published by the saints, the "Anthems From the Throne." Their first song-book, "Songs of Victory," had been compiled by J. C.

Fisher, and since he had now fallen it was thought best to prepare a new book. —Wm. G. Shell—1900

Taken from "History of Church" by Wickersham.

July 12, 1970

MAGNIFYING THE NAME OF JESUS

Acts 19:13-20; Deut. 18:10-12a; Eph. 4:14

Acts 19:13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Deut. 18:10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.

11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12a For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord:

Eph. 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

Memory Verse: [Christ is] Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: Eph. 1:21.

Central Thought: The name of Jesus today is magnified when a born again child of God lives a life in which Christ is seen as ruler of the heart and a conqueror of the devil.

Word Definition: Exorcist is one who through some verbal formula or ritual claims to drive out a supposed evil spirit. "Vagabond has a very bad acceptance among us; but literally vagabundus signifies a 'wanderer,' one that has no settled place of abode." (Clarke Com.) Abomination means anything that is hateful and disgusting, loathsome, vile, very bad.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It is supposed by some that the father of the seven sons may have been a deposed chief priest or may have pretended to be a chief priest.

Paul spent three years in the city of Ephesus. See Acts 20:31.

Don't forget the time in the history of the church in which this took place. In Revelation it is the time of the dragon, or paganism fighting against the truth and Christ. We see the truth conquering and the dragon or anti-God spirit being overcome by the "blood of the Lamb and the Word of their testimony." It was a fierce battle and God used the apostle Paul in a mighty way. In this war the dragon was cast out for a season at that time.

Fifty thousands pieces of silver would be "summed up to be about \$8,000 to \$10,000."

Lesson References: Matt. 8:29; Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28; Isa. 47:13; Dan. 2:27; 4:7; 5:7.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Every person, whether young or old, is motivated by some power. Influences are working in various ways to lead or guide people. Through the five senses the mind is influenced by spirits working through others or speaking directly to a person through the mind. Everyone is serving a master. The power and suggestions given by these spirits or masters of the soul are from only two sources. One is the spirit of the devil and all evil, of which he is the author, and the other is God who is the author of good. God, through His Word and

Spirit makes His will and ways known to mankind. In other words, there are two main spirits working in the world today and they are God and Satan, or the devil. Any spirit that leads away from the Trinity and God's Word is evil and from the devil. If the name of Christ is not magnified and His Word and power are not working in one's life, he is motivated by the devil. It means more than just saying we are magnifying the name of Christ. Where Christ is ruling a person, there is power. Our lesson attests to that fact. Those men did not have Christ's power although they used the name of Jesus. We must receive Christ and obey Him to become the sons of God. Then we have power. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." (John 1:12.) Christ's power will work in us to overcome evil.

Our memory verse teaches us that Christ is magnified "far above any power," might, or principality in this world. Many claim to have much power today. There are many fortune tellers, charmers, masters of black art, jugglers, astrologers, etc., who claim to foretell the future by studying the supposed influence of the moon, sun, and stars on human affairs. All of this is brought about through the influence of the devil. One person testified that before she was saved she lived daily by the horoscope, but after she was saved she lived by the Bible and the direction of the Holy Spirit. None of this magnifies the name of Jesus nor teaches His Word. It is an abomination in the sight of the Lord and should also be abhorred by God's children.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

To magnify means to make bigger or to enlarge. Then if we as God's people are to magnify His name, we must pay to it all allegiance, honor, reverence, respect, etc., that would belong to the King of kings and Lord of lords. His wishes and desires would certainly take priority above our own. Watch the new bride who is very much in love with her husband. He is far and away ahead of everyone else in her eyes and she respects and submits to him accordingly. How much more must we as the Bride of Christ see to it that He is given His proper elevated place in our eyes and worshipped and revered and adored with all of our hearts. At the same time we have the assurance of knowing that we are His chosen one and that beside His Bride there is none other in His eyes nor in His heart. She is the only one of her mother.

Oh, how it must grieve His great heart of love to see folks allow their affections to go out after false movements and worship other gods that are no gods when He longs for that

love to be His own! The enemy would like for us to think that all are worshipping the Lord regardless of what movement they are in or what teaching they follow, but it is not so. The Word now is they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. He is not married to any bride who is honoring some other head.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Is there danger in using Christ's name unlawfully or without being filled with the Holy Spirit? 2. What involuntary testimony was given about Christ by His foe? 3. What will certainly happen to all who oppose either Christ or His gospel? 4. What does the power of the truth excite in those who witness it? 5. Is there danger in reading a daily horoscope in the newspaper and going to fortune-tellers? 6. How does the Bible classify these?

THE WORKINGS OF FALSE SPIRITS

The devil works in many ways to deceive people. We are naturally curious and the devil will work through that sometimes to lead people astray. Take for instance the ouija boards with the alphabet and symbols that are used in fortune telling. Some have been tempted through curiosity to try to get messages from it. I believe God's people should never tamper with such things. In fact, it is dangerous for anyone, because they might become under a false spirit. The workings of hypnotism are also dangerous. Today this is being used by doctors in treating their patients. To become hypnotized one has to yield your will and self into the hands of another person. The hypnotist can then bring you under a "sleeplike condition psychically induced, in which the subject loses consciousness but responds with certain limitations to the suggestions of the hypnotist." All of this is dangerous and it is controlled by the spirit world and saints should not yield themselves to anyone in that manner. I have been told that a person under the power of hypnotism can be induced to do some terrible things that he or she would never do at any other time.

There are many books today on the market that were inspired by the devil in the writing and his evil spirit will work through the reading thereof. Be careful what you read and believe. One sister said she bought some books at a special offer, not knowing what they contained, and when they received the box the Lord caused a shudder to come over her. She felt right then that the books were filled with evil; and she found it to be true. The books were destroyed.

One time I was riding on the train, going to Chicago. A lady was sitting across and one seat back from me who had boarded the train the evening before when I did. I began a conversation with her and led it on to spiritual things. In the course of our talk she told me that several years before she had been seeking truth. She went to different groups to learn of their teachings. She got mixed up with some Spiritualists. She began to follow their instructions. She was told to sit every afternoon at her writing desk with a pen in hand and wait for the spirit to move her hand and it would give her a message. She did this for some time, waiting and expecting. One afternoon a loud rumble came rolling down the stairs and her hand began to write a message. But it left her arm limp. She said she did not tell her family what had happened. She said part of the message came true but she didn't want to have any more to do with that because her arm was limp. One day while in the basement washing clothes, she was praying. A voice spoke to her saying that if she would expose to her family what had happened she would regain the use of her arm. She did this and her arm was restored. She said she then went another place seeking truth. I tried to tell her what the Bible teaches but she was so filled with false teachings and unbelief received from visiting the many different places that she could not accept the whole truth. It was indeed sad to see how she had become deceived by many false spirits. One had better look into God's Word and be taught by Him and not by man. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." It pays to yield to God and His Spirit only. The Bible tells us that "many false spirits are gone out into the world." There is the "spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

1 John 4:1-6. —M. Miles

July 19, 1970

OPPOSITION AND SUCCESS

Acts 19:24-32, 37-41

Acts 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

37 [Ephesian Townclerk said] For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

Memory Verse: If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. John 15:18.

Central Thought: The workings of the Holy Spirit will stir up the devil whenever it is manifested.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Ephesus was the capital city of a Roman province of Asia. Today the modern traveler to the ancient site of Ephesus can view the ruins of the temple of the goddess whom they worshipped. This temple was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. This structure, approximately 150'x350' in dimensions with massive 60 foot Ionic pillars could seat almost 25,000 people. This is the theater mentioned in Acts 19:29.

It is generally believed that at this period of time Paul wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians in the spring of A.D. 57. He had a longing to go to Rome as he said, "I must also see Rome" after going to Jerusalem.

"Silver shrines mentioned here were small, portable representations of this temple which were bought by strangers as matters of curiosity and probably of devotion." (Clarke Com.)

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Suppose you had lived in the day of our lesson and were a resident of Ephesus. You would have had to make a choice on the day of that riot. Would you worship Diana or Jesus? There is great power in the desire (from the devil) to be like everyone else and follow the crowd. It takes great boldness to dare to be different, especially when there is danger of physical violence. A dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a live fish to swim upstream. The way of least resistance is to follow the crowd. It takes the grace of God and a strong determination to be like Jesus and go against the tide of the world and the opinion of the majority. Today the fads and fashions, hippies, careless living, anti-God teachings of

false religions are leading many souls down the broad way to destruction. One must be alive with the power of God to stem the tide. Dare to be different. Dare to stand alone, if necessary, for truth and right. Dare to be a child of God and follow Him. Dare to lift up the blood stained banner of Christ as Paul did.

The many fads, false teachings, false worship, etc., come and go. Just as the temple to Diana the goddess to whom thousands of people shouted praise and honor for the space of two hours now lies in ruins, just so the works of the devil now on display will give place to some new fad or trend in the future. People must have a change and the devil knows that, so he brings in something new to hold their attention. Thank God, the gospel is still being preached the same as Paul preached it. Jesus is the same today. His name is still exalted above all other names. Jesus is the Almighty One, the Maker of the universe. Jesus is the Word which became flesh and dwelt among men. The temple Jesus now occupies is the hearts of His believers, and He dwells within them by His Holy Spirit. All Asia and the world worshipped Diana, said Demetrius; but today the name of Jesus is adored by more people than at that time inhabited the globe. The devotion, honor and love shown to Jesus is more real than any Diana received. Jesus so far outshines Diana that there really is no comparison. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

On what terms would we be willing to base our concept of success as regards our Christian endeavor? How much visible result would we require for, say a ten-day meeting, before we would be willing to term it a success? Upon examination, it becomes apparent that humanity is not very well qualified to evaluate spiritual matters, especially when it pertains to a group. Too often we conclude that unless there was considerable altar work, the meeting was somewhat less than it should have been, but let us keep in mind that even the Saviour did not plan on winning the multitudes. He said that strait is the gate and narrow the way and few would be able to find it. The multitudes, He knew, would pursue the broad way. We speak glowingly of the conquests of the gospel and how it has circled the globe with its influence, which it has, but it is rather startling to realize that at no time in history when compared to the population of the world as a whole has there been more followers of Christianity than non-followers. Jesus did not place the emphasis on numbers, but rather on individuals. A ten-day meeting that did nothing but edify and encourage one trial-weary soul was worth the effort and in His eyes the meeting was a success.

Paul did not nearly convince the howling mob who supported Diana of the Ephesians in its entirety, but he was able to present the gospel in its purity to a few honest souls who were willing to accept and obey it to the saving of their souls. To Paul, that made the entire affair a glowing success. One soul is worth all the world—worth saving and keeping saved. Let us be assured that our labor of love is not in vain in the Lord.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does the gospel disturb people? 2. Do you think the main desire of Demetrius was to further his own selfish interests in gaining more wealth? 3. What was the unconscious testimony given by the world to Christianity? 4. How did flattery appease the mob? 5. Compare Diana and Jesus in importance and duration. 6. What effect does the opinion of the majority have on people, even Christians if they will let it?

DO NOT SELL WHAT YOU DO NOT OWN

Frederick the Great was at his Cleves palace with Voltaire, the noted philosopher and atheist as his guest. At the dinner table the philosopher began to mock God and good people, and said, "I will sell my seat in heaven for a Prussian thaler." Among the many guests present was a councilor, who was a very modest, devout Christian. He was very much shocked at Voltaire's words, and he at once arose and plainly spoke his mind.

"My dear sir," he said, "you are in Prussia where we have a law, according to which anyone who wishes to sell anything must prove his ownership. Will you be kind enough, therefore, to prove that you have a seat in heaven? and I will take it at any price." Those words had a wonderful effect upon all present. Voltaire did not prove his ownership, but he had nothing more to say. His lips were sealed.

When the seventy returned to Jesus with joy, because even the devils were subject unto them through His name, He said, "Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." God's children can prove their case, which is a great one. Their names are in the Lamb's Book of Life, and His name shall be in their foreheads.

—Selected

MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I was born in a wonderful Christian home on June 28, 1939. My home was in a small coal-mining town (Robertsdale) in

Huntingdon Co., Pa. We went to church services in my home town. My father and mother lived for God and I had everything a child would need.

My father died when I was almost 14 years old. I held a grudge against God because of this. I remembered seeing other men drunk, sleeping on the street. They were still living with sinful habits. I would think, "What good did it do Daddy to live for God? Daddy is dead and all these drunks are still living in sin!" I had a very bad attitude toward God for things that happened. You have to learn that God knows best. I learned the hard way because of doing sinful things I knew I shouldn't do. My father told me many times, "If you can't do what you are told, you will have to learn the hard way."

When I was 15 I went to a trade school away from home. One Saturday evening one boy's parents had a beer party and invited four of us from school. When I saw his parents drinking, I thought of my home. This was the first time I ever drank alcohol. I got real drunk, and started smoking, too. I went to many beer parties after that.

I married a girl whose hometown was close to mine. We got along fine until I got to drinking more. We had a little girl at the time. After graduating from high school I worked on highway construction. I started drinking more then. During the summer of 1960 I got drunk every night. I carried a pint of brandy to work every day. My nicknames were alky, boozitus, bourbon breath, and guzzler.

I was unemployed the first part of November. At home I went on a bender until the first part of April. During these five months I slept on the streets and did other shameful things. I smoked three packs of cigarettes a day. I pawned my wrist watch, rings, and other personal belongings for beer money. One night I sold my jacket for 50c to get beer. When I had enough money I bought a half-gallon of wine.

One Saturday morning before my wife left me, my daughter spoke to me while I was drinking coffee. She was four years old. She said "Daddy, may I ask you a question?" I asked her what she wanted. She said, "Daddy, do you think you will ever quit drinking?" I jumped off my chair to see if anybody was close to hear her. Then I asked, "Why do you ask this?" She said, "Daddy, you know I love you, and I tell you that I'm Daddy's little girl. You never take me down town with you anymore, and you always come home drunk." I froze, and had nothing to say. The words of an innocent child put me to shame. This was the first time. But I went on living in sin. People tried to talk to me, but I wouldn't listen. I got so bad that most people didn't want me around.

One Saturday night I was picked up off the street and laid in the hall outside the apartment my family was in. On Sunday morning I awoke, hearing my neighbors go out. I got up and went down to the club. Having no money and one pack of cigarettes, I leaned against the pool table with my back to the crowd. Right then God brought conviction upon me for living in sin and hurting others. I thought, "Look what I've done to my family and how I have hurt Mother. What if Daddy would see this? I am only 21 and I have to get my life made right. Only God can help me. I want to be saved. I want a real man of God to talk to. Nobody here can help me. I'll go to see my grandfather."

I hitchhiked to his home seven miles away. After going in, I said, "Pop, look at me! I'm a drunkard! You know what kind of home I had, and now I'm living in sin! I want to go to church tonight and get saved! Please pray for me to make sure I get there." I was crying. "I'm afraid something might happen and I'm not ready to go!" He said, "Come in the room and we can sit down and talk." He talked to me. Then we got on our knees and he prayed for me. I phoned my mother to tell her where I was.

After getting to Mother's home, she said, "Jerome, please don't leave. Sit here while I get you something to eat. You haven't eaten for days." I got Mother by the arm and asked her to sit down with me. When she sat down, she asked, "Jerome, what is wrong? Why do you act this way?" I said, "Mother, look at the dirty life I've been living! You and Daddy taught me better! Look how I hurt all of you! What if Daddy would see me?" I was crying with guilt and shame. "I got Pop to pray for me. I'm going to church tonight and get saved!" Mother cried and said, "Oh, Jehome, I'm so glad to hear this!"

I went to church and God had the man with the message. The sermon was about the prodigal son. (Luke 15:11-32.) I was so deeply convicted that I almost went to the altar while he preached. As soon as they started singing for the altar call, I went to the altar, crying for God's mercy. The minister came and talked to me. I cried, telling him I wanted to be saved. We both prayed, with faith and Jesus came into my heart. After leaving the altar I went right outside to throw my cigarettes away. I felt the reason God led me to go to church to get saved was because of the sermon. It hit and it fit. I truly thank God for this.

I went to see my wife after church to tell her Jesus had saved me from drinking and all other sins. I asked her to forgive me for what I had done. God brought my family back

to me. My wife repented after I did. But she backslid and left me. With the love of God in my heart I was able to endure it.

The following Saturday I was sitting on the steps outside the apartment. I was tempted to smoke. I thought, "Why can't I smoke? People with bad nerves smoke." The devil was trying to get me back in sin. I went out and bought a pack. Then I went back to the steps. I lit a cigarette and God convicted me immediately. Hoping nobody had seen me, I threw the cigarettes away and went right into my bedroom. I got on my knees beside the bed and asked God to forgive me and never let me do that again. God forgave me and I haven't been tempted to smoke since.

Through my testimony people learned what God had done for me. The construction company re-hired me. It took faith in God to prove to men who had worked with me previously that I was saved.

I am giving my testimony to tell how I was taken from a drunkard's gutter and made a new man through Jesus Christ. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17. Now I'm serving God.

You may be living a good moral life, but if you haven't repented, you do not have Jesus in your heart. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Now we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Romans 3:23, 24. You have to experience this to know how wonderful Jesus is. You profit much more living for God than you do in sin. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23. You must be "justified by faith" to have peace with God. This brings true life and happiness, which I am still enjoying in this month of August, 1969.

—Jerome Park

July 26, 1970

A SUNDAY NIGHT SERVICE

Printed Portion Acts 20:1-3, 6-14

Acts 20:1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

Memory Verse: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:25.

Central Thought: Prepare your soul for worship service through prayer, fervency of spirit, and hunger for God's Word.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul revisited the churches in Asia Minor after his long stay at Ephesus. At Troas Paul expected Titus with good news from the Corinthian church but was troubled when he did not come. Paul had written a letter to them but had not received a report that they had changed from their practices that had been displeasing to the Lord. When Paul left Ephesus he went into Macedonia which is barely mentioned in our lesson in verse 2, but it would be well to read the first two chapters in 2 Cor. We find that Titus arrived with a good report and Paul was relieved. (2 Cor. 7:5-9, 13-16.) Paul urged the Corinthians to give an offering to the poor saints in Jerusalem. He wrote his second letter to the Corinthians from Macedonia in the summer of A. D. 57.

At this time Paul spent the winter in Corinth—A.D. 57, 58. Here before leaving he writes a letter to the Romans. He expressed a desire to see them and this letter prepares the way for his visit there. (Rom. 1:11) In this letter Paul expounds the way of salvation more fully than he does anywhere else. In this letter Paul seems to regard his work in the eastern part of the Roman world as completed and longs to take the collection made for the poor saints to Jerusalem.

Several of the brethren, including Luke who wrote the book of Acts, accompanies Paul into Philippi and on to Troas where our lesson continues with verse six. During this time it is believed that Paul also wrote the letter to the Galatians. Paul's movements for about a year are summed up in Acts 20:1-4.

"A paved road extended from Troas to Assos . . . 20 miles distant." (Hackett)

"The days of the unleavened bread" meant the Passover week. The "first day of the week" is Sunday. The breaking of bread is the "communion of the body of Christ." 1 Cor. 10:16.

Lesson Reference: The covenant which contained the Sabbath commandment is abolished. Gal. 4:21-31; Heb. 8:6-13; 10:9, 10. Lord's Supper and feet washing Luke 22:15-20; John 13:1-17.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

My soul is stirred as I think of the false doctrine being taught in the world today by the many false prophets. Little

by little the devil has in recent years brought much confusion to the minds of the people. There was a time when it was popular to believe there was a God even if one did not live according to the Bible, which they knew was true, but today it is becoming unpopular to even believe in God. We are living in perilous times. I urge everyone to become established in the truths of God's Word and not be "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine" that is given out. Jesus said, "Have faith in God" and today we must hold fast to that faith or it will be taken from us. Recently I heard a man proclaim himself to be the Messiah and that Joseph Stalin was his older brother, the wicked son who had been cast out of heaven and is the head of all evil forces. How sad! Yet people were accepting this from this man who predicted many things he said would come to pass in the future. It is a work of the devil. This man said that Jesus was not the Christ. The Bible brands him as a false prophet. "And every Spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye heard that it should come." (1 John 4:3.)

Another false teaching is the keeping of the Sabbath or Saturday as a day set aside by God in this gospel dispensation. We read in our lesson the example of the early morning church where they met on the "first day of the week" (Sunday) and Paul preached to them. All days are alike in God's sight, but the disciples began to meet on Sunday, the first day of the week, the day that Jesus arose, to worship together. Sabbath means rest. When Jesus came He was the great Sabbath Giver. He gave us rest in our souls for every day. Paul instructs us not to "forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; . . . so much the more, as you see the day approaching." What has become of the Sunday night service? Many sects have discontinued it and it seems some among the saints feel they can skip that service, also. What if they had missed the late Sunday night service where Paul was preaching? They would have missed a miracle. I believe that the time is not far off when we will not be able to meet openly. Saints, take advantage of the opportunities afforded us today.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is encouraging sometimes to be around the saints and behold the zeal they display concerning the attending of service. They wouldn't think of missing one, which is good and commendable, but the sad part comes after the service is reached. It seems as though by the time service gets started

good heads begin to nod over and eyes become heavy and minds dull until the Word goes right on by unnoticed. For all practical purposes the meeting can be missed and folks sitting right in the middle of it!

A man related to me one time an experience he had when Bro. Fred Pruitt was holding a meeting in his community. The man had attended the service and fallen asleep. After the service was over he approached Bro. Pruitt to offer his apology, stating that he had been working long hard hours and was just unable to stay awake. Bro. Pruitt assured him that it was quite all right, stating that he had learned long ago that it was not hard for folks to stay awake when they were interested in what was going forth! Think about it for a moment. Our eternal destiny depends on what we hear and how we receive it. Let us give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard lest we let them slip.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What uproar did Paul refer to in verse one? 2. What letters were written to other churches about this time by Paul, which are recorded in the New Testament? 3. What is the duty of the saints on the "first day of the week"? 4. Explain what the "breaking of bread" of the Lord's Supper refers to. 5. How long was Paul's message? What happened to the man who went to sleep?

THE DEVIL'S CONVENTION

"Now, my good imps, what have you done today to weaken the Church of God?"

"We have been very busy today, making empty seats in church houses," began one.

"Nothing could please me better," answered their king.

"I persuaded one man that he had a headache and kept him from a sermon that might have changed his whole life," said one.

"I induced one good man to slip to his store and fix up his books," said another.

"Good!" said the king. "He'll soon give up public worship altogether."

"I was able to get one pure young man to use tobacco, attend the movies, dances, card parties, etc., also led him to visit some old friends," said one imp.

"Hallelujah!" roared Satan. "Work all you can, and stir up sinners to visit Christian people on Sunday and make them think they must stay at home."

"I worried a good sister about her old hat until she decided to stay at home," said the imp labeled pride.

"And I made several poor women who were hungry for God's Word stay at home to repine over trials."

"I induced a good many men and women to believe they were not strong enough to attend church services," said one called "indifference." "Of course, all these folks will be at their business on Monday, even if they feel worse."

"Very good," said Satan, "a Sunday headache is one of the best excuses for absence from church services."

"I am the weather imp," said one fellow. "I go around making people believe it is going to rain, or that it is too cold, too damp, or too hot to venture out. The same people start out the next day in the worst weather imaginable. One would think it a sin to carry umbrellas and wear rubber coats to meeting."

"I make members overwork on Saturdays. I just keep them rushed with neglected things till late at night and then they oversleep, or are sick the next day, and can't get out."

"Splendid plan," cried Satan.

"A social gathering late Saturday night helps to empty seats," said one imp.

"You are doing finely, my imps," his majesty said warmly. "Preachers may work and pray over their sermons all week, but there will be no results in preaching to empty seats. Your plans are excellent, but I might suggest another good point. All preachers have human imperfections—some fault of manner or speech. Get Christians to criticize their pastor, especially before their children. If you can stir up a spirit of fault-finding against the preachers, or among the members, it will help empty seats. If the seats are empty the minister may be very good and preach like an angel to no purpose. See the result of your labors in the churches today. As soon as a Christian begins to stay at home from one excuse or another, I know I have a 'mortgage' on his soul which, if he does not pay off, I will foreclose on the Judgment Day."

—Selected

August 2, 1970

PAUL'S TENDERNESS AND COURAGE

Printed Portion Acts 20:17-27

Acts 20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 And now, behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Memory Verse: My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Cor. 12:9.

Central Thought: We should be true to the souls of all men, always manifesting a heart filled with love for all.

Word Definition: Move means "to arouse the emotions; to change.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul took ship from Assos to Mitylene which was 30 miles from Troas and then on to Chios, Samos, Trogyllium, and then to Miletus. He passed by Ephesus as he was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost. But he sent for the elders of Ephesus to come to Miletus, which was about 36 miles, to meet him. Paul uses the term "elder" and "bishop" interchangeably in his writings.

Paul's farewell address to the elders from Ephesus is his third long speech in the book of Acts. This speech gives us an insight into the tenderness of Paul, and his love for those whom he had brought to Jesus. It is an example for other ministers and for the laity. They should be closely knit together that they can have mutual feelings one for the other, and a better understanding of each.

Lesson References: 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Rom. 8:35-39.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We think of Paul as being brave and courageous, and he was—but he was still human. In our lesson we see what it cost him to face the many, many severe temptations and afflictions that awaited him in every city. God had revealed to him that this would be. It brought many tears and hours of praying and laboring before the Lord to be able to be strong and face those hard places. His deep love and devotion to the Lord caused him to put God first and not to count his own desires of life dear unto himself. What an example for us! God is calling for the same devotion from us. We, too, must serve the Lord with all humility of mind. We have the promise that the Lord will give grace to the humble. We must feel our nothingness and our whole dependence upon the Lord. We, too, must be willing to lay down our life rather than fail our Lord by disobeying His Word. Even if the Lord had made known unto him that troubles awaited in every city, yet he said, "None of these things move me." We, too, must have that settled determination and decision to go through, regardless of all the hard things the devil may put before us. We have to strip for the race. It might mean going alone and leaving home and family. It might mean giving up a well-paying job or business. We, too, want to be like Paul and "finish my course with joy." Then we can look back, at the end of life,

and know that what we did was for the name of Jesus and for the sake of the gospel. What a grand entrance there will be in heaven for the faithful few who have left all to follow Jesus! I want to be among that number. We must stand before all and declare that we are "pure from the blood of all men" because we did not "shun to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Paul, just as everyone else who names the name of Christ, had a responsibility to those about him to make known to them the mysteries of salvation. To that charge he was faithful as he testified in the lesson, but the last two verses of the lesson reveal the underlying motive of the entire effort. Man's first and paramount aim and purpose in his Christian experience must be the salvation of his own soul. Paul ministered to others, not only because he loved them, but also because he realized full well that his own spiritual welfare depended on it! That is why he exclaimed "Woe is ME if I preach not the gospel." God had called him on to perform that duty and to refrain or neglect would have damaged his own experience with the Lord. Whatever duty we as Christians perform it must be with this motive of heart else we reduce the effort to a human endeavor. Any other approach will render it hard indeed to commit the results to God's hand, whether they be encouraging or discouraging. We cannot afford to base our success or failure on obvious results, but rather upon our having done the will of our Lord and Master. Whatever the result, if we have been faithful we will in no wise lose our reward.

—C. W. Wilson

THE VALUE OF TEARS

"Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him." Do you think the Jews would have realized how much Jesus loved Lazarus had He not wept? Tears speak and mean that the very inner emotions of a person are stirred to the depth. Yet we do know that this may not always be true. There are some who are touched deeply, but they have abused their privilege of tears by withholding them when they should have released them. When this is done over a period of time a person will not weep as easily as before. It is not good to stifle deep emotion for it is hard on the nervous system, nor is it good for the effect it might have on others.

Sometimes tears will be the means of sparing a life or helping one to survive. Bro. Richard Madden preached a message several years ago on the value of tears. He told about his brother David and some of his experiences in the U. S.

Marine corp during the war. (David went to his eternal reward about six years ago after contracting a disease in Africa where he had gone to see about the church mission.) David was in Okinawa, and he said the natives there were very treacherous. They did everything they could to kill the marines. Even women would act as if they were pleading for mercy and then deceive the men. The marines were told to be on guard and kill if necessary. One day a group of marines came to the mouth of a cave where some people were hiding. One woman, with her son, came and fell down at the feet of a marine, and with tears begged for the life of her son. The child was spared, but the woman was killed before the other women were able to convince the marines that she was only begging for the life of her child. Tears was the only thing that caused the child's life to be spared.

Bro. David told Bro. Richard about another time when two groups of combat hardened marines who had been fighting in different locations, found their food supply very low. One company had been out of food for three days. The captain or company commander of this group came upon the other company as they were eating their very last bit of food. He asked them to share with his company but was refused. As he begged with tears in his eyes for some of the food for his men, they divided and gave to them. Tears will help. Some might feel that tears are to be withheld, but that is not the plan of our Creator, or He would not have given them to us. Salvation, we must remember, is given to the "broken and contrite" ones. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance."

—M. Miles

August 9, 1970

PAUL'S COUNSEL AND FAREWELL

Printed Portion Acts 20:28-38

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul' neck, and kissed him.

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

Memory Verse: Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Eph. 5:21.

Central Thought: Our aim should be to endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" and know how "to behave ourselves in the house of God."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today continues with the talk that Paul was having with the elders who came to him at his bidding from Ephesus to Miletus. There is much more in our lesson than can be brought out in a class, but we trust that it will be a blessing to you as you give it further study; which should be done with each lesson.

Notice the great love Paul had toward them and their love for him. This is God-given and is in the heart of every child of God today. Paul felt this would be the last time he would see them and this was his farewell. Some believe he visited them once more but this is not certain.

Our lesson took place in A. D. 60.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Below we have a list of duties and responsibilities of the saints to ministers and of the ministers to the saints or the laity. We must each give an account to God for ourselves.

MINISTERS:

1. "Take heed to yourselves." (a) "being ensamples to the flock." 1 Peter 5:3. (b) First partakers of fruit.

2. Take heed to "all the flock." (a) No partiality shown. (b) "be gentle unto all men . . . patient, in meekness instructing." 2 Tim. 2:2, 25.

3. "Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" (a) "Neither being lords over God's heritage." 1 Pet. 5:3.

4. "Feed the Church of God" (a) "Study to shew thyself approved unto God . . . not ashamed, rightly dividing word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:15. (b) "Meditate . . . give thyself wholly to them" "profit appear to all." 2 Tim. 4:16.

5. "Grievous wolves enter in." Of your own selves shall men arise . . . draw away. (a) Have discernment. (b) Watch for compromise and fanaticism. (c) "Earnestly contend for faith which was once delivered to the saints." Jude 3. (d) "Warn them that are unruly." 1 Thess. 5:14. (e) "False apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." 2 Cor. 11:15. (f) "His blood will I require at the watchman's hand." Ezek. 33:8.

6. "Coveted no man's silver, or gold or apparel." (a) Taking oversight . . . not for filthy lucre." 1 Pet. 5:2. (b) "My hands have ministered unto my necessities . . . shewed you . . . ought to support the weak . . . words of Jesus, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

LAITY:

1. "Know them that labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you." 1 Thess. 5:12.

2. Be willing to be admonished. (a) "Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." 1 Thess. 5:13.

3. Recognize the gifts given by God. (a) Gifts of ministers are for the "perfecting of the saints . . . edifying the body of Christ." Eph. 4:12. (b) "Obey them that have the rule over you . . . they must give account." Heb. 13:17.

4. "Not forsaking the assembling . . . together." Heb. 10:25. "Doers of Word and not hearers only." James 1:22. (b) The Word is a "savor of death unto death . . . or savor of life unto life." 2 Cor. 2:16. (c) God uses human instrumentality, the Spirit, and the Word to feed us.

5. Be sure you have Holy Spirit discernment and not fault-finding. (a) "I have set thee a watchman" Ezek. 33:7. (b) Jesus said that we would be "sheep in the midst of wolves . . . be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." (c) "Submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls." Heb. 12:17.

6. Our duty to the ministry: (a) "Sown spiritual things, . . . reap your carnal things." 1 Cor. 9:11. (b) "Lord ordained . . . preach the gospel should live of the gospel." verse 14. (c) Giving—"see that ye abound in this grace also." 2 Cor. 7:7.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Paul's admonition and warning to the church in his day is still timely and in order yet today, for the same basic elements are still present. The truth is here now just as it was then and men's souls are here and in contact with the truth now as they were then. The great truth that Paul realized and that is still true today was that everyone would not be honest with the truth nor with themselves nor yet with their fellowmen or "the flock." Thus his admonition for each to take heed unto himself. Holy Ghost-filled people will not destroy nor scatter the flock. They will not use their office and calling before the Lord to influence people unto themselves. In order to do that it would be necessary to pervert the gospel for Christ taught us to lift Him up, not ourselves. No one can gather a following of his own without having first drawn attention unto himself and consequently away from Christ! The Holy Ghost-filled man's life will be lived out in such a manner that all who behold him and his good works will automatically glorify the Father which is in heaven, not the man. Any other reaction means self is on display somewhere and it will work havoc among the people. A church well fed by Spirit-filled ministers will be better able to cope with such problems. It is imperative that we all follow closely the leading of the Holy Ghost.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. If God has given duties to the ministers, then He also has given duties to the saints. What is the duty of a minister to the flock and their duties toward him? 2. Where did the Church of God gets its name? (Eph. 3:14, 15.) 3. What are "grievous wolves"? 4. Tell about the love the ministers and the laity have for each other.

GOD CHOSE THE MINISTERS

The church of God in apostolic days was a perfectly organized institution. Even its officers were called to their of-

official positions by the Spirit of God—"the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." They did not enter the ministry as a profession, and seek training in theological seminaries in order to be fitted for the work; but they were saved men, filled with the Holy Ghost, and under the anointing and inspiration of the Spirit of God they governed the church and converted the multitudes. I do not wish to be understood as opposing education; for when education is used, not abused, it is indeed a great blessing. But no amount of mere human education can fit a man for the position of a New Testament minister. In addition to all natural endowments and acquirements such a position requires the reception of the Holy Ghost—the leadership and instruction of the Spirit Himself.

No conference of men gave Paul his position in the church; but the Lord Jesus said unto him, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister" (Acts 26:16). Therefore Paul asserted that he was "an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:1). However, he was not independent of the church of God; for he afterwards went up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before him, and submitted himself "privately to them which were of reputation" (Gal. 2:2). But it was the province of the Holy Spirit to appoint the apostolic ministers. The church and the older ministers had nothing to do but to recognize these appointments of God, which they did in an official manner by the laying on of hands by the elders; and this was called ordination.

—"What the Bible Teaches" —F. G. Smith

August 16, 1970

READY TO DIE FOR JESUS

Printed Portion Acts 21:3-16

Acts 21:3 We . . . sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

Memory Verse: We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:8.

Central Thought: Our lesson shows us some of the inner motives and deep convictions of a man whom it would be well for us to follow as a pattern.

Word Definition: Carriages here meant things to be carried, i.e., baggage of necessary things and also the contributions gathered for the needs of the poor. The girdle was an article of dress in the East worn on the outside by men and women. Sometimes it was made of leather but other times of linen. Sometimes they were used as pockets, being folded back for that purpose.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul left the Ephesian elders and took a ship and went by Coos, Rhodes, Patara, Phenicia and to Cyprus, then landed at Tyre. You can trace his journey on the map. Our lesson begins at Tyre. Paul arrived at Jerusalem as was his desire, by the time of the Feast of Pentecost.

In many of our lessons we have more material than can be discussed in a short time in Sunday School. For this reason it is good to have your own book so you can study at home. Many write us that they do this; and also that they use it for part of their family worship time. There is no book like the Bible and there are great blessings to be had from studying it. We are serving the same God today.

Remember that the book of Acts was written by Luke.

Lesson References: Acts 21:23, 24; Acts 2:16-18; Acts 20:6; 5:8; 8:26.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In reading our lesson we notice how the Lord fully prepared Paul for what he was to meet in Jerusalem. Luke, who wrote this account, must have marvelled at the leadings of the Lord. God even let others know what Paul was to meet. They warned him with tears, but he already knew through the Holy Spirit, even years before, that "bonds and afflictions" waited for him "in every city." (20:23) He had consecrated to "die

... for the name of Jesus Christ." What could cause a person to be willing to face sufferings with such fortitude and courage? It would have to be that he was fully persuaded that God was able to take care of him and in the end would take him to be with Him in glory. He did not doubt for one moment his eternal destiny and his faith was strong in God's wisdom to guide his life. How precious it is to get to that place! It brings such peace and rest to the soul. There would not be any room for worrying or fretting. This kind of implicit faith in God is for all of us.

Others might try to turn us away from obeying God. Paul was deeply touched by the love, care, and concern of his brethren in the Lord. It almost broke his heart for them to be so grieved for him to go to Jerusalem when God had revealed to them that he would be in trouble there and then would be given into the hands of the Gentiles. Paul would not let them move him from the course he was sure God had planned for him, although he deeply appreciated their concern. We, too, must obey God and not those who mean well but would try to hinder us. Many have fallen through the persuasions of others. One time the disciples asked Jesus what they would receive since they had left all to follow Him. He answered them, "No man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother or wife or children or lands for my sake and the gospel's but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." Mark 10:28-30.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Determination is a commendable quality and most certainly it is desirable in a reasonable degree but to the honest Christian it soon becomes obvious that something more than human determination is necessary to maintain a successful Christian experience. If determination is all that is required, we needed no Christ. Exercise all the determination you can muster, live just as carefully as you are able, but you are still under the influence of a carnal nature and will manifest it under the proper conditions. Nothing but the power of the blood of Christ can erase that blemish and free us from its effect. Even with our sins gone, it requires a yielding of ourselves to Him and His will and being filled with His Holy Spirit in order for us to be able to keep victory over the enemy. Jesus sent the Comforter to give us power over all the power of the enemy, so we must recognize that something more than the power of determination alone is necessary for us to stand.

Neither will we find it sufficient motive to be followers of Christ simply because we want to be saved. That in itself can become a selfish obsession. We must follow Christ because we love Him supremely, with heart and soul and mind and strength. Jesus said if ye love me ye will keep my commandments, not if ye want to be saved. Divine love is a stronger force than human desire, just as divine grace is more powerful than human determination. Paul proceeded to Jerusalem in the strength of the love and grace of God. — C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think Paul prayed about when he knelt down on the seashore with the families who accompanied him to the ship? 2. What did the four daughters of Philip have as a gift from God? 3. Does God give the gift of preaching to women today? 4. Did Paul let tears move him from obeying God? 5. What did the brethren finally say when they saw that Paul could not be turned back from going to Jerusalem?

WOMEN TO SPEAK OR NOT TO SPEAK?

Question: The Bible tells us that the women should keep silent in the church. It also says that in the last days your sons and daughters shall prophesy. Is this a contradiction?

Answer: The following is an excerpt from an article which appeared in "The Gospel Trumpet" issue of Dec. 28, 1905, entitled, "The Labor of Women in the Gospel."

"Through the distribution of these gifts [gifts of the Spirit], offices are constituted in the church. Without these gifts, neither men nor women are fit for office in the church. God made no discrimination of sex on Pentecost—all alike were baptized with the Holy Ghost. Cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them and they spake as the Spirit gave them utterance. They (men and women) spake in tongues and prophesied. Phebe, a sister, was a servant (minister) of the church at Cenchrea. (See Rom. 16:1.) Also the daughters of Philip prophesied. Priscilla and Aquila, wife and husband, became helpers with Paul in his ministerial work. Romans 16:3. Priscilla and Aquila helped Paul, and on a former occasion instructed a young preacher by the name of Apollos. See Acts 18:24-28.

"The church at Philippi sent a bounty to Paul at Rome, by the hand of Epaphroditus, in which he says, "And I entreat thee true yoke-fellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlaborers." Phil. 4:3. This epistle is addressed to all the saints at Philippi with the bishops (overseers) and deacons.

Evidently those women which labored with him in the gospel were included among the overseers and deacons, for that was their mission according to the nature of the offices mentioned.

"In Rom. 16 several women laborers in the gospel are mentioned, and in verse 7 a woman's name is referred to as an apostle. Paul discusses the propriety of the oriental veil in connection with praying or prophesying. The custom of the veil he declares to be a custom of the people and not of the church, etc. See 1 Cor. 11. Had the church and the apostle been opposed to women praying and prophesying, Paul never would have been given directions for their service in that line.

"What office may women hold in the church? Any office wherein God sets them, by virtue of the gifts He bestows upon them, and they may hold no office for which they have no corresponding gifts from God. The same is true with men.

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

("Faith and Victory" July, 1969) —G. L. Coplin

August 23, 1970

CHRISTIANS IN A CLOSE PLACE

Acts 21:17-25; 1 Cor. 9:22b, 23; Acts 21:26, 27

Acts 21:17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

22 What is it therefore? the multitudes must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them:

24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and

all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

1 Cor. 9:22b (Paul later writes) I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

Acts 21:26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him.

Memory Verse: For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 1 Cor. 9:19.

Central Thought: Confusion genders compromise, which is never successful.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson takes place in about A. D. 60. It was written by Luke.

James is the brother of Jesus Christ.

The four men were under the vow of the Nazarite, who, at the end, after letting their hair grow, would shave their heads and offer a sacrifice in the Temple. Be sure to notice that Paul must not have offered the sacrifices because it says, "And when the seven days were almost ended" the trouble was stirred up.

We notice that Luke does not hesitate to tell of the errors, faults, and mistakes of even the most distinguished first believers as well as the working of God through them. It makes us know of the truth of the records.

Lesson References: 1 Cor. 9:19-23; 2 Pet. 3:16; Nazarite vows—Numbers 6; 2 Pet. 3:18.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Our lesson is hard to understand but we must keep in mind that this was a transitory time of the Jews turning from the rigid keeping of the law to the gospel teachings. It had been only about 25 years since Jesus had arisen from the grave and it was hard for the tens of thousands of Jews to change so quickly. Many of them believed on Jesus, but they still kept parts of the law.

When Paul appeared in Jerusalem it presented a problem to James and the elders. They knew that thousands of the Jews had come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. Most of them labored under the wrong idea that Paul was out on a crusade mostly trying to do away with the customs of Moses, when in reality Paul was teaching that through Jesus Christ men were justified before God and not by the law. We are sure that the Jewish Christians who had come to the knowledge of the worthlessness of the outward keeping of the law, had gradually laid it aside. But many had not, as the ritual was not completely done away with until the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, and God seemingly was patient with them.

What James and the elders asked of Paul, no doubt, was from a good motive. They wanted to avert trouble, yet we notice they said, "Do therefore this that WE say to thee." They did not say that God said nor that the Holy Spirit had dictated their course. Paul now was in a close place. The Bible teaches us to be subject one to the other. In his heart it did not hurt him to keep this vow of the Nazarite. Paul once said, "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." (1 Cor. 6:12) Another place he says that "unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews." (1 Cor. 9:20) But we see that with all the efforts of James, the elders, and Paul, that trouble came later anyhow, which we will study about in our next Sunday's lesson. We do not understand all about why this was done, but we feel it was a mistake. This also makes us know that a person who loves the Lord can make mistakes, yet not lose his contact with God. Yet we know that mistakes must be repented of. Many times this is the way the Lord teaches us good lessons.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

People seem to be rather a peculiar factor, sometimes hard to be understood. Let someone get an idea fixed in his mind and it is a difficult procedure usually to even change the idea, much less eliminate it. But notice this: when a change is

effected, it is brought about by patient, sound reasoning and presentation of fact upon fact that cannot be denied, proving beyond doubt that the former thinking was in error. An honest man will then recognize his mistake and recover himself. A man who refuses to receive sound reasoning and plain fact will never be convinced and so will never change. This is true on an individual basis. Now, complicate this by applying it to a multitude! Just a few agitators can instill a false idea into the minds of a crowd and the turmoil and confusion and clamor of the mob will obliterate any chance of sound reasoning or coherent presentation of facts. If facts can be presented in a logical manner to clear-thinking men, they would be convinced of their merit and truth. There is very little chance of reasoning with a mob, especially when there are a few who make it their business to see that the opportunity to do so does not arise. The tragedy lies in the fact that all too often under these conditions judgment is laid, sentence passed and even executed without ever having heard the entire story. Many a mob looks back in horror at the awful injustice of the acts it has committed simply because it was either uninformed or else misinformed, but the action has already taken place. Perhaps the apostles at Jerusalem were attempting to give the multitude time to think clearly about Paul.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of welcome did Paul receive in Jerusalem?
2. Why did James and the elders propose that Paul take the vow of the Nazarite? 3. Was the course taken wrong, although the motives were seemingly right? 4. How did the Christian Jews consider Paul from the standpoint of his teachings among the Gentiles? 5. Was Paul's action according to his principle of becoming all things to all men to gain some? (1 Cor. 9:20.) 6. How can we learn from mistakes?

IMPRESSIONS

Just as the Holy Spirit may tell us by impressions what the will of God is concerning us, so also will Satan tell us by impressions what he would like to have us do, though of course not revealing his identity. We might also receive impressions from people. Impressions come through fleshly appetites, self, bad or good reading, providential circumstances, dreams, etc.

Impressions from the devil cause perplexity, unwise actions, disappointment, undue hurry, and despair.

A person was once cheated out of \$100.00. A man told this person a pitiful story, presented in such a way as to work on

his sympathy, and then asked for a loan of \$100.00. Just the night before this person had spoken to the man about his soul, and he feared to refuse the request might cause the man to harden his heart toward God, so he loaned him the money. A week later the man who had received the loan, after getting money from others in the same way, deserted his family and left the country and was not heard from again. Had this person waited and prayed, then made his decision as to what was right to do, he would have been spared this way of bidding a thief "God speed."

One time a sister was continually faced with strong impressions that she had to consecrate to go to Africa as a missionary. She felt torment as she tried to do so. She confided in a sister minister who helped her uncover the devil. This sister had four small children and a husband to care for. God does not call us away from present duties to do duty for Him afar off. Such would not be reasonable.

The expression has been made, "Knock impressions on the head and see if it has any sense."

The Bible tells us to "try the spirits." Jesus told us in John 10:4, "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice." We must be sure that it is the Lord that "putteth" us forth, and then we can be assured that He will go before us and open and close the right doors for us. When we follow Him, He will fight our battles for us. Look at the Word. Jesus often referred to the Word. Impressions from God and the Word agree. Always remember this. They are always in harmony with God's will as revealed in man's moral nature. Impressions from God will be in harmony with spiritually enlightened judgment or reason. Impressions from God never push, but give time for consideration and prayer. The devil talks loud and pushes. Be sure to give all impressions a good test.

—M. Miles

August 30, 1970

FALSE ACCUSATIONS CAUSE SUFFERING

Printed Portion Acts 21:28-39

Acts 21:28 (Jews from Asia laid hands on Paul) crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

Memory Verse: Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! James 3:5.

Central Thought: It is the devil's business to scatter false reports to stir up trouble.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson takes place in the temple court.

"The chief captain of the band was a military tribune whose name was Claudius Lysias (Acts 23:26) who resided in the Castle of Antonia, a gigantic fortress on a rock or hill, about 85 feet high, at the northwest angle of the temple area, which communicated with its northern and western porticoes, and had flights of stairs descending into both, by which the garrison could at any time enter the court of the temple and prevent tumults." —Homiletic Commentary.

"Two chains meant bound by a chain to a soldier on each side."

Josephus mentions an Egyptian, a false prophet, who, having deluded several thousand men, led them round about from the Wilderness to the Mount of Olives with the view of breaking into Jerusalem from that place and states that Felix, having fallen upon them, either destroyed or captured alive the greater portion of his followers, and dispersed the rest, while he himself escaped with a small number.

Lesson References: Luke 23:18; John 19:15; Acts 12:6; 1 Corinthians 15:32.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We can easily understand today the error of a mob spirit. Our United States only recently witnessed such demonstrations. Saints can't be partakers of a mob spirit. That spirit is very contrary to the spirit of Christ working in the soul of every regenerated person. Saints have the spirit of Christ, which also was in Stephen. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) We are taught to "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matt. 5:44. This is far from the hatred that is in a mob bent on doing evil.

Notice what touched off this mob. It was based on a false report. Some Jews from Asia who had been acquainted with Paul's missionary activity in Asia Minor, and more especially

in Ephesus, had observed Paul in the city, accompanied by Trophimus, an Ephesian, who was a Gentile, whom they supposed Paul had brought into the temple. (Gentiles were never allowed in the temple.) This was not true. Others believed this false report when it was shouted out in the temple court. This inflamed the crowd and threw them into confusion and turmoil. They dragged Paul out to kill him. How damaging false reports can be, whether uttered in public or in private! Many times a false tale will go a long way before it is stopped. How careful we all need to be to know what we are talking about! Mistakes will be made, but the child of God will suffer greatly over his mistakes, which become lessons to him. How good God is to chasten those whom He loves!

No doubt, Paul now understood what Jesus had faced from their fathers over thirty years before when they cried, "Away with him!" He understood the beating Jesus had suffered. But God was helping Paul. How calmly he requested to talk to his accusers! Only God could give such courage.

What had been prophesied for Paul had come to pass. In our last few lessons we notice how Paul was warned by others and by the Holy Spirit of what was coming to him in Jerusalem. It is precious how God warns us of things to come and prepares us for it.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is a little surprising to realize that the conduct of the Jews here at Jerusalem is almost identical to that of the heathen Greeks at Ephesus. The Greeks refused to allow their goddess Diana to be defamed or spoken against, and now, here in the same manner, the Jews rose up to defend their own religious system. At the outset of the old Law system, God had designed it to be a practice that would keep men's hearts tender and keep them in closer contact with Him. But man's carnal, greedy, selfish nature reduced it to an enterprise for human gain. Jesus told them they had turned His Father's house into a den of thieves! The Jewish system had, by then, degenerated so far from what God had intended, that actually for all practical purposes, their ritual which they performed was not a worship of God, but rather a practice of a system for human gain. This is just what the heathen Greeks were doing at Ephesus. Now it becomes obvious why both were so aroused when the gospel came along and exposed them both. It was the same spirit motivating both! Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." It behooves us today to be sure we worship God in spirit and in truth.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What did one false report, shouted aloud, cause? 2. Was Paul prepared for this trouble? 3. How long did it take for a lie to take possession of this town? 4. How was Paul rescued? 5. Who gave Paul the courage to talk to his persecutors in the face of such grave danger?

RESCUED

A young man was walking as quickly as he could through a dense forest in Africa. He had made a plantation and built a house in a little valley, and was hurrying to get back to his young bride. They had not long been married and she was alone, except for the native servants. The path was narrow and winding, and though he knew it by heart in daylight, he knew also the dangers of the darkness. And the swift tropical night came while he was still a long way from home.

Soon he heard behind him quick breathing and the tread of the stealthy padded feet of some wild animal. He was being followed by a panther, the most fierce of all the beasts of the forest.

How he longed for his rifle, or the electric pocket lamp which he had left at home! He knew the danger of running, so he walked steadily on and prayed more earnestly than he had ever prayed in his life.

Every moment the young man expected the beast to spring upon his neck and inflict upon him a terrible death.

Then the trees of the forest seemed thinner and at last the young man came to the ravine before his home. All was in darkness. Risking all, he shouted in English and in the native language, "Show a light, quick! A light, a light! Show a light!"

His young wife heard, and throwing back the bamboo shutter, she snatched the lamp from the table and held it out from the porch. The native boys also heard and lighted torches. Then they ran shouting in the direction of their master's voice, and he was saved.

Life is a dark road to many, and there are fierce enemies always on the watch for souls. Satan himself goes about like a "roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." —Selected

The devil pulled a quick calamity on Paul. Just as the panther followed the man, the Jews followed Paul. Had he not been forewarned, he might have been greatly confused, but God had prepared him for being falsely accused and abused by the mob. As he prayed, God sent a rescue team. God will never fail to hear and answer our cry. Jesus not only turns

back the foe, but He also makes the way bright, for He truly is "the light of the world." He will make His will plain. It is wonderful how God gave Paul such courage. —M. Miles

September 6, 1970

GOD SILENCES THE MOB

Printed Portion Acts 21:40; 22:1-16

Acts 21:40 And when he [the chief captain] had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

Acts 22:1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

6 And it came to pass, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came unto Damascus.

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Memory Verse: This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 1 Timothy 1:15.

Central Thought: When God speaks, he can silence the mob or stop the man on his road of sin.

LESSON BACKGROUND

"Gamaliel . . . was Paul's master, and the 35th receiver of the traditions. . . . He was one that kept and handed down the Cabala received from Mount Sinai [the law given to Moses at Mt. Sinai]. Gamaliel died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem, his son Simeon succeeding him in the chair, who perished in the ruins of the city."—Lightfoot.

Paul's conversion took place about 34 or 35 A.D. Our lesson took place about 58 A.D. in Jerusalem where Paul talked to the mob from the stairs of the castle.

"The Hebrew tongue, or dialect, was the Syro-Chaldaic or Aramean, as in John 5:2; 19:13, the mother tongue of the Jews in Judaea at that time." —Homiletic Commentary.

Josephus, the great early historian, calls Tarsus the most important city in all Cilicia.

Lesson References: Acts 9th chapter; Gal. 1:13-24.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Paul was a highly educated person, but one does not receive the power and grace of God and the ability to control

oneself from education, nor is it inherited. The courage, meekness, simplicity, and great love manifested by Paul as he turned to face his persecutors and murderers proves he was in close contact with God. He addressed them as brethren and fathers, because of the covenant and promises of God. It had not been very long before this that these same people had been beating him, bent on his death. Paul looked beyond all this and saw souls whom he loved headed for eternal damnation. Oh, if he could just help them to understand that Jesus loved them and died and arose again for their salvation! How can we apply this same principle to our own life? Can we look beyond an individual who mistreats us, and have a love and concern for the soul that will constrain us to forgive and manifest our love for such an one? Was not Jesus our example? Our cry should be, "Lord, increase my love for all mankind, and especially for those who persecute me." Is there not a Scripture that says, "Love covereth all sins"? (Proverbs 10:13.) It is not that the sins are not there, but one who has God's love in his heart will look beyond the sins and see a soul who needs to understand how to get rid of sin. The children of God will not shun nor look down upon that person because of his sins, but will teach him of God's love for him. The saints love him and desire him to come to Jesus and find peace. Love—"charity suffereth long, and is kind." (1 Cor. 13:4).

A man was lying in the gutter when some saints passed by. One sister said to the brethren, "You ought to help that man, for if it were not for the grace of God, you might be there today." How true! None of us have anything to boast of. Only by God's help can we live right. There are good moral people in the world today, but if the devil wills to take them captive or drag them down, they do not have power against him. The Bible speaks of those who are in the "snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." (1 Tim. 2:26). It is only God's grace that keeps us from sin.

Our lesson shows the power of God to control a dangerous, fanatic mob. Today we hear much of mob violence. But when God speaks, man has to be still. We see how the power of God had changed Paul, who was at one time, on his way with murder in his heart. My soul magnifies such a great and mighty God. I want to keep in favor with Him, don't you?

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When the time comes that God is ready to speak to a people, whether the group be large or small, He knows how to bring them to attention and hold them there until He has said

to them what He had in mind to say. Let us put ourselves in Paul's place for a few minutes and see a little of what he experienced. He had just been dragged from the clutches of an angry mob who were abusing him physically. What word could he say that might change the attitude of the multitude? Perhaps if he would humble down and express a regret that he had been an offense and beg pardon for any misdeed, it might appease the wrath of his persecutors and quiet their anger, as well as the violence toward him. But consider the consequences of such a move. That action would be saying in effect that he had taught them an untruth and that they were justified in feeling toward him as they did for he was in error. That move would have betrayed the Lord and the truth of His Word to the people. Paul might have stopped his own suffering, but the cause of Christ would have suffered. Instead, he simply began to testify of what the Lord had done for him and why he conducted himself as he did. He walked as he did because he knew it was truth. Can we afford to do less? —C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. How does Paul's youth, education, and his "persecuting the church of God beyond measure" (Gal. 1:13) compare with youth today in our universities? 2. What would such a change of heart as Paul experienced do for our youth today? 3. Discuss the mobs of today and the power of God in silencing the mob for Paul when he turned to speak to them. 4. What desire in his heart caused Paul to be willing to face his would-be murderers? Who gave him this power? 5. What work did Ananias say God chose for Paul? Have we studied about him doing this work?

"THE ROYAL PATH OF LIFE"

We point to two ways in life, and if the young man and maiden, whose feet are lingering in soft green meadows and flowery paths, will consider these two ways soberly and earnestly before moving onward, and choose the one that truth and reason tells them leads to honor, success, and happiness; they have wisely chosen the "Royal Path of Life." The other way is too well known to need description. It is a sad thing, after the lapse of twenty years, to find ourselves amid ruined hopes—to sit down with folded hands and say, "Thus far life has been a failure!" Yet, to how many is this the wretched summing up at the end of a single score of years from the time that reason takes the helm! Alas! that so few who start wrong ever succeed in finding the "Royal Path"; life proving, even to its last burdened years a millstone about the neck.

Every youth should give his heart to God and should form, at the outset of his career, the solemn purpose to make the most and the best of the powers which God has given him, and to turn to the best possible account every outward advantage within his reach. This purpose must carry with it the assent of the reason, the approval of a pure conscience, the sober judgment of the intellect. It should then embody within itself whatever is vehement in desire, inspiring in hope, thrilling in enthusiasm and intense in desperate resolve. Such a plan of life will save him from many a damaging contest with temptation. It will regulate his sports and recreation. It will go with him by day to trample under foot the allurements of pleasure. It will hold his eyes waking as he toils by the evening lamp. It will watch over his slumbers to jog him at the appointed hour, and summon him to the cheerful duties of his chosen pursuit. Those who labor and study under the inspiration of such a purpose will soon soar out of sight of those who barely allow themselves to be carried along by the momentum of the machinery to which they are attached.

Some, because they have once or twice met with rebuffs, sink in discouragement. Such should know that our own errors may often teach us more than the grave precepts of others. We counsel the young man never to despair.

Look first, midst, and last to God, to aid you in the great task before you; and then plant your foot on the right. Let others live as they please—tainted by low tastes, debasing passions be a moral putrefaction. Be ye the salt of the earth; incorrupt in your deeds, in your inmost feelings. Nay, more, incorruptible like virtue herself; your manners blameless; your views of duty, not narrow, false, and destructive but a savor of life to all around you. Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with the salt of truth, honor, manliness, and benevolence. Wait not for the lash of guilt to scourge you to the path of God and heaven. Be of the prudent who foresee the evil and hide themselves from it; and not of the simple, who pass on and are punished. Life, to youth, is a tale just opened; to old age a tale read through, ending in death. Be wise in time, that you may be happy in eternity.

September 13, 1970

PAUL'S SPEECH AND ITS EFFECTS

Printed Portion Acts 22:17-30

Acts 22:17 (Paul's speech) And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

Memory Verse: What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31.

Central Thought: Paul's earthly citizenship protected his body and his heavenly citizenship protected his soul.

Word Definition: Trance or ecstasy—[Paul] while thus withdrawn from the contemplation of things seen and temporal, with his soul's eye open to the unseen and the eternal he beheld again the same glorified form . . . and recognized it as that of his exalted Lord.—Homiletic Commentary. Read Numbers 24:4.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul is continuing his speech of defense on the steps of the castle in Jerusalem after he was rescued from the mob who had beaten him. He told about his conversion, and also of his youth, how he was taught by one of the greatest teachers of the day, Gamaliel.

Our lesson was written by Luke and took place about 58 A.D. in Jerusalem.

In verse 17 Paul speaks of coming again to Jerusalem. After his conversion, Paul went from Damascus to Arabia for three years before he returned to Jerusalem. Gal. 1:18.

"Bound him with thongs" meant they tied him up to a post, ready to be whipped with thongs, or straps.

Lesson References: Gal. 1:17-20; Acts 16:37; Acts 7:28 (Stephen) Numbers 24:4, 16 (trance).

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Paul loved his countrymen. He said one time, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel [the Jews] is, that they might be saved . . . they are ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." Rom. 10:1-4. In Paul's speech he tells of the Lord speaking to him, while in a trance, to leave Jerusalem

with all speed. This was, no doubt, painful to Paul. It almost seemed to him that Jerusalem's fate had been sealed. "They will not receive thy testimony concerning me," Jesus told Paul. It seems Paul tried to reason with the Lord thus: "They surely will see the change in me. They know how I stood by when your servant, Stephen, was killed, and how I beat the Christians," but Jesus knowing the hearts of the people, told Paul, "Depart and go to the Gentiles."

In our lesson Paul is talking to his people, doing all he can to cause them to see the change that had taken place in his life years before, and how he still held to those views. But his mentioning that he was sent by God to the Gentiles caused the suppressed wrath of the Jews to be unleashed. This was a startling statement to them. To them it was impossible that their expected Messiah would speak to Paul in their own temple and send him to the Gentiles. Their Messiah would send him to the Jews, they thought in their minds, so they cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live." Paul was suffering with Christ when they rejected him.

Paul's earthly citizenship protected his body, but heaven's citizenship protected his soul. We need to walk worthy of that citizenship.

Notice the effect the death of Stephen had on Paul. No doubt Paul realized the effect it had and in his mentioning it to the Jews he hoped his changed life would touch them. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Last week we studied the first part of Paul's address to the multitude and this week we study the conclusion. The folks didn't listen until he had said all he wanted to say, but when he got about so far the uproar broke out again, and so he had to quit. At first glance we might conclude that his efforts were in vain, but such a conclusion excludes the office work of the Holy Ghost. Jesus, in His explanation of the parable of the sower, said that the seed was the Word (Mark 4:14) or the truth. Now here was one of God's sowers who had sown seeds of truth into the hearts of this multitude. When the truth, or the Word, enters the heart, the Spirit has material to work with, and He begins to witness to that soul that this is truth. Remember we discussed in a former lesson how hard it is to reason with a mob and how much less difficult to reason with clear thinking individuals? This mass sowing of truth that Paul did put the truth in the hearts of individuals, and the Holy Ghost, dealing on an individual basis, was able to bring every soul involved to a recognition and acknowledge-

ment of that truth. Many refused to accept it and stubbornly pursued right on in their own deformed thinking, but every honest heart who wanted to walk in the light could be led out and salvaged just as Paul was. This is why it is so important that we not in any way betray the truth, even though it may bring us reproach and reviling, and perhaps even physical persecution.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss Paul's trance. Could you say that as he was in prayer and meditation, it was as though he looked through a window into the unseen and the unseen shined into his soul?
2. Did Paul convince Jesus, through his reasonings, where he should work for Him?
3. Could the many persecutions of Paul be a fulfillment of the Scripture, "We reap what we sow"?
4. How did Paul use the law, or his legal rights, to protect himself?
5. How did the captain override his authority? Do we have that today in our land?

BE CONTENT WITH SUCH AS YE HAVE

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have."

Mae read the above words for the third time before she closed her Bible. It was time for her to go to bed after she had read that passage. Instead she went to her window facing the beautiful Graylin valley.

Mae was tired and depressed. Yes, she was tired of being the oldest daughter of poor, unimportant Laban Reed. In utter dejection she reflected upon the twenty-one years of her existence. It seemed since Mae could recall anything, her dear mother had been a semi-invalid, and the burdens of the household were put on Mae's shoulders. With the arrival of each new Reed those cares and duties increased. There was no end of milking, cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing, and patching.

Her heart filled with bitterness when she recalled that at the age of twelve she had to give up going to school while her friends went on to high school and college.

Mae could not even go away from home any length of time to visit with friends because there was too much to do.

She felt she was the most poorly-dressed girl in the valley. It was not her lot to have pretty dainty clothes. Mae's wardrobe had to be sensible and practical to keep within her father's meager income.

Mae felt she had no talents, and no time to develop them even if she would have been fortunate enough to have them.

Poor Mae, she felt worse than miserable as she meditated upon life and what it had meted out to her.

The clock in the distant sleeping village struck the hour of one. Mae started! "Tomorrow," Mae said to herself, "I must take that hooked rug to Mrs. Lane that I made for her."

The next day Mae stepped into the shabby old family car, and took the hooked rug to Mrs. Lane. At the Lane residence Mae was ushered into the gracious presence of Mrs. Lane by a trim maid. Mae gave Mrs. Lane the rug and tremblingly hoped it would be satisfactory.

Mrs. Lane did think the rug satisfactory, and profusely showered compliments upon Mae. She shocked Mae by asking her to be seated, and visit with her for a few minutes. At first Mae felt ill at ease to be seated in the most magnificent drawing room in Allen County with the wealthiest and most prominent woman. But Mrs. Lane soon made her guest feel comfortable. She asked Mae a great many questions. It seemed she wanted to know all about Mae, her father, her mother, her brothers and her sisters.

The rich and pampered Mrs. Lane marveled that this twenty-one-year-old Mae Reed had so long assumed heavy responsibilities. "Why, think of it," she later told a friend, "that girl who made this lovely hooked rug could sew, cook, and my dear, do almost anything a person could think to do, when she was a mere child! And she is so sweet and modest about it all."

Mae left the Lane residence with mixed feelings. That night she again read, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have." She turned down the light, and knelt by her bedroom window facing the valley. Tonight Mae was really aware of the lovely scene before her. She thought the valley never looked so enchanting, and wondered why. "I can't understand," she said to herself, "why Mrs. Lane said some of the things she did. It seemed she actually envied me, and she has almost everything heart could wish for. She thought I was an accomplished girl, and that I was needed and useful."

"Well," Mae further soliloquized, "I do have a great deal for which to be thankful. I have never been ill, and how glad I should be that I am strong so as to be a help to poor Mother, and I did not realize, until Mrs. Lane brought it to my attention, what a great satisfaction it is to be capable of managing and keeping house. Indeed I have been discontented and ungrateful. God has given me much, and I want to do what He has for me to do gladly, and willingly."

"O God," Mae sobbingly prayed, "help me to be content with such things as I have. And make me willing to submit to Thy plans for me for Thou knowest what is best." —Sel.

September 20, 1970

PAUL FACES THE COUNCIL

Printed Portion Acts 23:1-10

Acts 23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

Memory Verse: For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.
1 Corinthians 4:4.

Central Thought: It is a good thing to have a clear conscience when facing foes, friends, or God.

Word Definition: Conscience is that faculty within us which decides as to the moral quality of our thoughts, words, and acts. It gives consciousness of good of one's conduct or causes feelings of remorse at evil-doings. A conscience can be educated or trained to recognize good and evil but its action is involuntary. A good conscience is one which has no feeling of reproach against oneself, does not accuse oneself of wilful wrong. —Crudence Concordance.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Sanhedrin was the highest religious tribunal of the country, composed of priests, elders, and scribes belonging to the two principal parties of that day, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the high priest of the time, Ananias, the son Nebadaeus. —(Hom. Com.) Ananias filled the place from 47-59 A.D. He was a ruthless ruler and had a haughty disposition. Later Josephus, the historian, tells us that he was assassinated by soldiers in the revolutionary war in Jerusalem. His palace was burned and he and his brother were dragged and both murdered. This reveals the kind of people who were holding to the law of Moses and binding it on the people, and who would not accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Messiah, which was to come.

We must keep separate the many men named Ananias in the book of Acts. One Ananias spoken of in Acts 5:1 was an insincere disciple. Then Ananias of Damascus was the one to whom Paul went, who was a devout follower of Jesus. (Acts 9:10; 22:12). Then we have the Ananias in our lesson today who was the high priest.

It is easy to remember that it was the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead because it is so sad.

Lesson References: Acts 24:16; Heb. 10:22; 1 Pet. 3:16, 21.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

That was quite a testimony that Paul gave to the council. He said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." What a good support this is in the day of trouble! He felt clear before God and mankind that he had done right in all of his affairs of life. This gave him faith and assurance that God was caring and looking on. He knew that God would not permit anything to come to pass nor touch him except it

be for his good, for the good of others, or for the glory of God. God can work through this kind of person to help others and to clear Himself so that when they stand before Him in judgment He can tell them they had a chance to accept the truth because they saw it lived before them or presented to them. God needs vessels like that today for His use. He needs "a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use and prepared unto every good work." 2 Tim. 2:21.

Notice how quickly Paul corrects his hastily spoken words. It seems Paul did not know that Ananias was the high priest as he must have been installed while Paul was out of the city, or it may have been he didn't understand who gave the order for him to be smitten. Nevertheless Paul realized that he needed to apologize.

We notice that Paul called attention to the fact that he preached the resurrection of the dead through Christ, although he did not mention Christ's name. This brought forth a disagreement between his enemies. Jesus became the firstfruits of them that sleep. Because He arose, we will arise also. What a glorious hope of the soul this is! This is the gospel message—"Christ in you, the hope of glory." One of these days and it seems it will be very soon, Christ will "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4:16-18.) —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In our study of Paul's early conversion and the preparation the Lord took him through getting him ready for the work He had for him to do, we mentioned the time spent in the desert and what he accomplished there, pointed out that there was where Paul became familiar with God and the way God works with man and there was where Paul learned to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit. Let us observe now as we study these various lessons how adept Paul was at handling himself under various circumstances. Before the mob, before the council, judges, magistrates, false brethren, true brethren, among the saints, everywhere,—he seemed to be able to say the right thing at the right time. So then, we hear people conclude that the apostle Paul was indeed a learned and well-educated man having been raised up at the feet of Gamaliel and been in close relationship with those of the Sanhedrin, etc., so of course he would be able to handle himself in any situation. Such conclusions leave out completely the influence of the Holy Ghost.

If education makes a man spiritual or able to handle the truth, then the world is far ahead of the saints. But keep this in mind: Education, inherited ability, acquired ability, experience, nothing will take the place of the Holy Ghost in directing our lives and dictating our words. Figure it any way you want to—without the Holy Ghost all men are spiritual failures!

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Can a person always rely on his conscience to direct him right? What is a seared conscience? (1 Tim. 4:2) 2. Did Jesus call the Pharisees and scribes hypocrites and say they were like "whited sepulchres" that appear beautiful on the outside, but inwardly were full of uncleanness? (Matt. 23:27) 3. What does history tell us about the high priest? What happened to him later? 4. Does the resurrection of Jesus give us hope of arising? 5. What was the outcome of the question that Paul presented to the council about his belief in the resurrection?

WALKING THE ROPE

Over one hundred years ago, the world's greatest tight-rope walker, Charles Blondin announced that he would walk above the thundering Niagara Falls, with only the assistance of a 40-pound pole. Naturally the news soon spread like wild-fire. Special trains from Toronto and Buffalo were run to bring the crowds who wanted to see this man defy death and the law of gravity. At last the big morning arrived (June 20, 1858). An eleven hundred foot tight rope had been stretched from bank to bank.

"I'll walk across it!" Charles Blondin said proudly. Suddenly the voices of the great crowd were hushed as he began his breath-taking adventure. They watched him place one foot after another, one foot after another, until finally he placed both feet on the bank at the other end—the American side of the falls!

Above the noise of the mighty Niagara rose the cheers of thousands of on-lookers. He waved his hand in thanks, and then shouted: "I don't want to go back to the other side by myself. I want to carry a full-grown man on my back. Who will volunteer?"

Finally in desperation Blondin turned to his manager, named Henry Colcord. "Do you believe I can carry you across?" "I have no doubt about it at all," he replied.

"Then, will you trust me?" asked Blondin.

"I will," answered his manager.

"All right. Let's start!" said Blondin. The 38-foot pole is balanced, the great rope tightens beneath their weight. The two men move along slowly but confidently. They reach the center. All is well, but as they near the Canadian side of the falls they pause. Some gambler has cut the guy line and the rope is swaying fearfully. "Dismount," says Blondin to Colcord. This he does, standing with one foot on the rope and his hands on Blondin's shoulders.

"Harry," says Blondin, "you are no longer Colcord. You are now Blondin. Be a part of me. If I sway, sway with me. Do not try to balance or we will both be dead." Colcord climbs back. The rope sways wildly and Blondin begins running. How he keeps his balance, no one can understand. But he does it! With Colcord on his back, he steps on Canadian soil. The nerve-wracking experience is over! The spectators go wild with excitement!

This is a true story. It really happened. And it is a perfect picture, I feel, to show what Jesus did for you and me at Calvary. His cross spanned the great gulf between time and eternity. No other "ROPE" could span it. No other one could die and then rise from the grave in three days, alive, triumphant! Do you believe that? Of course you do! But—have you repented of your sins and put your own heart and soul in His hands? Have you, like Henry Colcord, trusted your whole self to the Saviour? Or are you still standing on the shore, trying to do right in your own strength? refusing to put your whole trust—for time and eternity—in the Lord Jesus Christ? Oh, I urge you—put your whole trust in the Son of God. Repent and make this your prayer, "Come into my heart, Lord Jesus."

—Selected

September 27, 1970

PAUL'S FOES AND FRIENDS

Printed Portion Acts 23:11-19, 23-30, 34, 35

Acts 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him; and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13 And there were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me?

23 And he [the chief captain] called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

24 And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting.

27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.

34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

Memory Verse: In this world ye shall have tribulations: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. John 16:33b.

Central Thought: God will not permit our life to be taken until He is through with us here on earth.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In verse 20 of our chapter the Sanhedrin or council consented to the plan of the forty who banded themselves together. The Sadducees and Pharisees must have agreed to forget their differences and deal with Paul when he should be brought a second time before their council, but God, working through the chief captain and Paul's nephew, did not permit this to take place.

It would be hard to keep a secret when nearly half a hundred knew it.

Felix was a Roman Procurator of Judea. History tells us that he was appointed to the office in 53 A.D. He ruled over Judea for seven or eight years and was recalled by Nero about 60 A.D. and was succeeded by Festus.

Antipatris was about forty miles from Jerusalem. The "third hour of the night" would be 9:00 o'clock, when they left,

and on a forced march they would travel four miles an hour, arriving at Antipatris about 7:00 or later the next morning. The soldiers returned to Jerusalem after passing the most dangerous part of the journey. It was twenty-six miles on to Caesarea.

"Herod's judgment hall" was a palace then used as an official residence by the Roman governor. It seems that Paul was not treated like a common criminal, which was a blessing from God.

Lesson References: Job 5:13; 2 Cor. 9:23; 1 Cor. 4:3.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Paul suffered greatly because of his belief that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. It is wonderful to know that God was with him through it all! There is much suffering in this world because of sins committed. Many suffer because of false rumors spread about them, and they suffer unjustly. Regardless of how one suffers, it is real. Today many are suffering who do not have a Comforter. Paul received strength from the great Comforter Jesus promised to send to those who believe on Him. How important today that we have this Comforter! He is real. It is precious to have the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, dwelling within your heart, ever leading and guiding you through the problems of life. Do you have Him today abiding within?

It is real good to have friends and loved ones to comfort you when you are in sorrow or trouble. But no one can comfort like the great Comforter of God.

Our lessons shows how Paul's foes and his friends were. His foes were stirred up by Satan, but his friends were raised up by God. We notice what a courageous young man can do to help. He was not sleeping nor dreaming, but had his eyes and ears open. He was moved with affection for his uncle and made a bold attempt to rescue him. He was quick to act when needed. Had he been fearful he would have shrunk from the difficulties of what had to be done. He forced his way into the castle to talk to his uncle and then boldly faced the governor. Then last of all he was dependable and kept the secret, while Paul was taken to safety.

It was the divine purpose and plan of God that Paul should preach at Rome, and now he was on his way with the government paying the expenses. Our first verse assures us that Paul knew the Lord would spare his life. —A. M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Any time a man makes a forthright decision for himself to abide by, he automatically "lines up" with those of like mind, and "opposes" those of the contrary part. If I like a certain make automobile and someone else likes a different kind, we are opposed to each other on that point. Folks are constantly indulging in this sort of choosing, but these decisions are not serious and no one makes any commotion much over them, for, after all, everyone has a right to make up his own mind for himself. But when it comes to religion and that which has to do with matters pertaining to the soul, you have a different proposition entirely on your hands! Man is not given the privilege of selecting what he likes or dislikes for the conduct of his life, nor is he provided a variety of courses to follow in order to gain heaven, but rather we must all accept and submit to God's way and follow it or be lost. Those who accept His requirements and measure up to His teaching soon find themselves bound together in a bond of Christian love and fellowship that becomes a witness to all men. Those who refuse to accept God's proffered mercy and reject His prescribed course often become active opponents to those who do because a fully consecrated life makes a selfish life look pretty shabby. There is not much communication between people who serve the Lord and those who serve Him not. The degree of contrast between the two has definite bearing on the amount of conflict between them.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think Paul was comforted in knowing that Christ sympathizes with those who suffer when he remembered that He had spoken to Paul and said on the road to Damascus, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"
2. How was the depths of Satan's work manifested in the religious leaders of the day?
3. Discuss the safety of those whom Christ shields.
4. Is it all right to use the rights you have as a citizen so long as it does not conflict with the laws of God?
5. How can the youth be of service to God and help in the furtherance of His cause in helping older ones?

