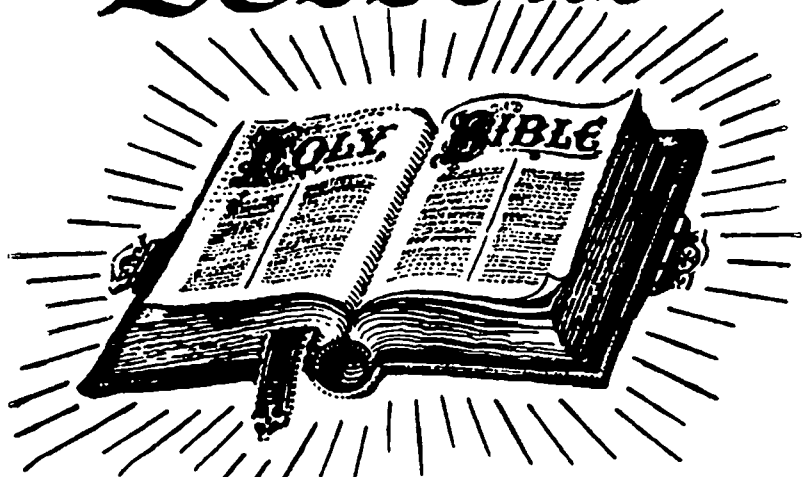


# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Vol. 2, No. 4  
Oct., Nov., Dec.,  
1970**

**Faith Pub. House  
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# **Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People**

**Vol. 2      October, November, December, 1970      No. 4**

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Jesus Christ and His Church.

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## **THEME FOR THIS QUARTER**

We will conclude the study of the Book of Acts, whose writer was Luke. We noticed that many seemingly important things were passed lightly over and some unimportant things were mentioned. In all, we recognize that the Holy Spirit was the writer. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3:16. There was a definite purpose for this inspired book to be left for us. Each of us can, through the Holy Spirit, understand more of its depths as we study it.

In studying Acts we noticed that other great characters, such as Stephen, Philip, Peter, James, Barnabas, and Apollos are successively dropped from the narrative. There must be a reason why the Apostle Paul and his works through the Holy Spirit, are the main theme. Could it be that Paul was one whom God could use to help discharge His responsibility to the Jews? Paul was a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee of Pharisees, zealous for the law of Moses beyond them all before he was converted. (Phil. 3:4-6) God was, in His mercy, giving His last call to Israel through a man who had seen a light from heaven and was convinced that Jesus was Christ. If they hated that light that Paul proved he saw, it is because they hated all light from heaven. (John 3:19, 20).

Paul was well established in Rome, sent there by the hatred of the Jews, when the last words written in Acts 28:25-28 concerning the prophecy of Israel was fulfilled in Paul's day. Jesus also said, "Your house is left unto you desolate." Not many years later Titus came with his warriors before the gates of Jerusalem and its destruction was made. God in His mercy, slowly and reluctantly left them to their destined fate when they rejected mercy.

—Sis. A. Marie Miles

## **PAUL IN BONDS**

In prison in Caesarea from June, 58 A. D. to the summer of 60. Acts 24:27. Festus succeeded Felix in 60 A. D., as we know from extra-Biblical sources. This is the crucial date from which much of the chronology of Paul's life is reckoned. If Festus succeeded Felix in 59 A. D., which

some scholars think is possible, then most of the dates in this outline must be put one year earlier.

Defense before Festus, and before Agrippa. Acts 25 and 26.

Sails for Italy, summer of A. D. 60. Acts 27.

Shipwrecked at Melita, autumn of 60.

Winters in Melita, 60-61 A. D. Acts 28:1-11 (note especially v. 11).

Journeys to Rome, arriving there early in 61. Acts 28:11-29.

In Rome in his hired house two years, 61-63 A. D. Acts 28:30. Acts closes with the spring of 63, and was probably completed at that time.

Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon were written near the close of this first Roman imprisonment. See Phil. 2:23, 24; Philemon 22. The last three were sent at one time by Tychicus and Onesimus. Compare Col. 4:7-9; Eph. 6:21; Philemon 10, 11.

### **PAUL'S LAST YEARS**

References in Paul's Pastoral Epistles show that he was released (doubtless in 63 A. D.) and made further missionary tours.

He went to Ephesus, and to Macedonia, where he wrote 1 Timothy. 1 Tim. 1:3.

He visited Troas (2 Tim. 4:13), Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20), and doubtless Colosse (Philemon 22).

He labored in Crete. Titus 1:5.

He visited Corinth (2 Tim. 4:20), and wrote the Book of Titus probably from there, or possibly from Nicopolis, where he expected to winter (Titus 3:12).

Clement of Rome says Paul went "to the boundary of the west," doubtless meaning Spain. Compare Romans 15:24, 28.

Paul was again arrested, examined, and imprisoned. 2 Tim. 4:6, 16, 17.

While in prison he wrote 2 Timothy, his last letter.

He was martyred before the death of Nero, which occurred June 29, between 66 and 68 A. D.

**October 4, 1970**

**CLEAR CONSCIENCE BEFORE GOD AND MAN**

**Acts 24:1, 5, 6, 10-16, 20-23**

Acts 24:1 And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

5 [Tertullus accused Paul] For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said,

When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

**Memory Verse:** Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. Matt. 16:24.

**Central Thought:** There will be one final court held in the last day and you will be there.

**Word Definition:** Pestilent means pest. Bible margin states "plague." Sedition means "a stirring up of rebellion against the government." World used in verse 5 meant the Roman Empire of that day.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Prosecutors of Paul before the governor Felix were Ananias, the high priest with his elders who five days before had conspired with forty ruffians to assassinate Paul, who escaped their hands. They brought their lawyer, Tertullus, who in the unprinted part of our lesson starts out his indictment with great flattery to Felix who was just the opposite to what he ascribed to him. It is said that Felix was immoral, tyrannical, covetous, and unjust. (Hom. Com.)

Notice the three charges made against Paul, which were falsehoods. They were sedition, heresy, and sacrilege or profanation of the temple. Paul was a preacher of the gospel of peace and did not promote civil tumults. Acts 21:28, 29 proves he did not profane the temple as accused. The charge of heresy was made through calling him of the "sect of the Nazarenes." By this phrase they sought to pour contempt upon the followers of Christ, because of Jesus' supposed birth at Nazareth, which, in their judgment, stamped Him as a false Messiah. Notice in our lesson the accusations made against Paul and his answer to them.

Our lesson took place about A. D. 58.

**Lesson References:** Phil. 4:11; Rom. 13:1; Acts 27:7.

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Let us not think of Paul's trouble as being something that could never happen to us. Often down through the years the saints have been brought up before the courts of the land and

falsely accused. Those are serious times. Notice in our lesson the consolation that Paul had which was a hope within his soul. Pressures were building up all around him, but he had a way out of them through Christ. Sad is the person who might be in a similar condition but is not acquainted with Jesus, and does not have the Holy Spirit as his comfort in times of trouble. Paul had a "hope toward God" and he knew that if death came to him he believed in "a resurrection of the dead, both of just and unjust." (Notice he said "a" which means just one resurrection of the dead.) We want to be sure we have a hope in our soul of a life beyond the grave and that we, too, are living so that we have "a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men." Living in this manner causes our hope, confidence, joy and comfort to be sufficient in the day of trouble. Paul was ready to face God and face man. He had been born again and was living clean, honest, and right. Regardless of what they thought about him, he knew in his own heart that he was clear because he was obeying God's Word. Oh, what a glorious privilege it is for each of us to be able to know our own hearts! Never let the enemy of your soul cause you to be deceived. Never excuse yourself in any wrong doing. Face each mistake or any conduct in the light of God's Word. Measure to it. Only then can we keep a clearness to stand before God.

There will be a final trial for all on the last day. The Judge who will preside on that great day will be Jesus Christ, who is our Lord and Saviour today but then He will be our Judge. It will be too late to pray then. Mercy will have passed and justice will be meted out. The Revelator, John, saw Jesus in a vision and he said, "His eyes were as a flame of fire." (Rev. 1:14) Those eyes will pierce through your soul. Can you then say with Paul, "I have a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men"? Today is the day to get right with God. After death is the judgment. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Conscience within itself alone is not a very reliable gauge of one's spiritual condition. While the conscience does have a part in every heart and life and is very useful and beneficial when used in its proper place, yet care must be taken to see that it remains in its proper place. The law of the conscience was given to those who knew no other law and to them alone. For those of us who have access to the Word, the Word becomes a law to us and by it we will be judged in the last day, and not by the condition of the conscience. (John 12:48) The Word is fixed and forever settled in heaven so that there is no variable-

ness in it. We either meet its condition and receive salvation or else we refuse it and go on down the broad way. Not so with the conscience, however, for it acts in accordance with whatever information has been supplied to it by the intellect. The conscience is subordinate to and dependent upon the intellect. When we with our intellect perceive what we believe is truth, our conscience will obligate us to that perception whether it be right or wrong. Paul, no doubt, felt clear in his conscience when he was persecuting the saints, for he felt they were offenders before the old Mosaic Law, but when more knowledge was given him and he realized that he was offending the Son of God, his conscience would no longer clear him in that activity.

Conscience can also be altered by constant, conscious contradiction. We may know what the will of the Lord is and our conscience be faithful to uphold that knowledge, but if we willfully and knowingly over-ride the warning of the conscience and ignore its signal long enough it will cease to warn us, and before long we can, without any qualm of conscience at all, go ahead and do what just a short time before would have appeared wrong to us. The Word refers to this condition as a conscience that is seared as with a hot iron. Scar tissue usually has little or no feeling in it and so our conscience, if it is abused long enough will cease to possess its ability to warn us. But a well-protected conscience sensitive to the requirement of the Word, testifying to the honest soul that all is clear before God and man is a treasure of untold worth.

—C. W. Wilson

## QUESTIONS:

1. Can a person have a defiled conscience? a seared conscience? How can you know you have a clear conscience?
2. What false accusations did they bring against Paul?
3. If we are falsely accused, should we be surprised?
4. Discuss Paul's defense in the manner of being courteous, definite, without enmity, and his confession.
5. Compare the court, judge, etc., with the judgment in the last day and what we will say or do.

## "STANDING ROOM ONLY"

Standing room only, not even room to kneel and pray,  
Standing room only, on the Judgment Day.

Last night I had an awful dream,  
That the end of time had come;  
The trumpet had been sounded,  
And life on earth was done.



An Angel stood, one foot on land,  
The other foot on sea;  
And as I tried to kneel and pray,  
A voice said unto me:

"There's standing room only;  
It's too late now to pray:  
There's standing room only,  
This is the Judgment Day!"

People filled each church and church yard,  
Just as far as I could see;  
I heard a pitiful cry for mercy  
And then I realized it was me.

I saw the Savior then appear  
As He split the eastern sky;  
I saw tears of joy on a Christian's face  
And I heard the sinner's cry.

And as I tried to touch His hand,  
With one last feeble plea  
I cried again  
"Have mercy, have mercy, Lord, on me!"

I saw a tear come to His eye  
As He turned my soul away;  
I didn't know Him yesterday,  
And He knew me not today.

The earth was burning all around  
The world went up in smoke  
And as the flames engulfed me  
Thank God I awoke!

Then I got out of bed  
And got down on my knees  
And you should have heard me pray;  
For in my dream I witnessed  
**GOD'S GREAT JUDGMENT DAY!**

**Standing Room only on God's great Judgment Day.**

October 11, 1970

## **RIGHTEOUSNESS, TEMPERANCE, AND JUDGMENT**

**Acts 24:24-27; Acts 25:1, 6, 7, 10-12**

Acts 24:24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix's room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Acts 25:1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days, he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.

**Memory Verse:** But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:13.

**Central Thought:** He who deliberately turns from the light will stumble on and down into deeper darkness.

**Word Definition:** ..Righteousness means "upright and holy living, both toward God and man, which the Divine Law of God demands." (Hom. Com.) Right means genuine or real. Temperance means self-restraint in conduct; appetites, etc. (Self-control through the power of God and submission to God's laws. ) Judgment is a tribunal over which Jesus Christ will preside in the last day.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We have already studied that after the riot in Jerusalem, Paul was secretly sent to Caesarea by the chief captain whose name was Claudius Lysias and chief captain, he appeared before Felix, the governor. After Felix heard his case he could not find any fault in him. Paul was kept by the centurion and was allowed some liberty, such as visits by his friends.

Our lesson today starts with Paul being sent for by Felix and his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. She was acquainted with the Christian teachings since she was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I, who was smitten by God and eaten of worms mentioned in Acts 12:21-23. Probably his tragic end brought serious thoughts which partly was her reason for wanting to see Paul. She was the sister of Herod Agrippa II mentioned in Acts 25:13. Drusilla had "married at an early age to Azizua, King of Emesa, who in order to marry her had become a Jewish proselyte." Felix desired to have her because of her great beauty, so he engaged and paid Simon, the Jewish magician, to seduce her from her husband. So she deserted her lawful husband and became the third wife of Felix, who had formerly been a slave, but had received his freedom from the emperor Claudius, and was now the governor of Palestine. Felix was a ruthless person and very immoral. He ruled over Judea for seven or eight years, being recalled by Nero in the year of 60 or 61 A. D. He was succeeded by Festus. Tradition reports that Drusilla, Felix, and their son perished in an eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, in the days of Titus Caesar. Felix never decided his case nor Paul's at that time.

Festus was the new governor who took the place of Felix. While he was in Jerusalem, the Jews who had brooded over their plot having been hindered and the failure of Felix to execute Paul, turned to Festus, asking for a new trial for Paul, and that he should be brought to Jerusalem, but Festus did not fall for their plot. In our lesson we read of Paul's enemies coming down from Jerusalem and pressing their charges against him before Festus.

Caesar was the ruler of the Roman Empire, which covered the then known world. —M. Miles

Lesson References: Acts 12:21-23; Prov. 1:23-33.

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

When Paul first came before Felix we notice that he recognized his office and the merits of it. Even though Felix was a wicked man, Paul lived up to what he taught us in Titus 3:2, "to speak evil of no man." Therefore he laid a groundwork for the call that he received from Felix and Drusilla in our lesson today. Paul was a fearless preacher that day when he was asked "concerning the faith in Christ Jesus." This is the highest need of the human soul regardless of what kind of body it lives in or what kind of sins that might be laying upon it. The Spirit of God visits every human soul some time in life. The Bible tells us that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for the blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the Son of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:11-13.) In this verse we find Paul's sermon in a nutshell. He points Felix and Drusilla to righteousness which is given to all who repent of their sins, confessing Jesus as their Saviour, and turn away from all evil. Their soul is made clean and pure through accepting Jesus as the propitiation for their sins. Salvation is only given through faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Next he reminds them of temperance, the bringing into subjection to Christ the lower appetites and passions, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts." Felix and Drusilla were sadly lacking in this sacred chastity. Only through the power of God can one live a godly life. Little by little the morals of the sinner are broken down and they become powerless in the devil's hands. It is very dangerous to put off salvation.

Last but not least, Paul brought home to Felix and Drusilla the judgment to come. The last day is coming and the trumpet of God will sound. Jesus will burst through the clouds, no longer our Saviour, but Judge. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him . . . all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Rev. 1:8. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ . . ." (Rom. 2:16.) "Who shall render to every man according to his deeds." (Romans 2:6)

What effect did it have upon Drusilla? Did she think of her evil ways? We do not know her thoughts, but Felix trembled at the picture drawn before him. No doubt he could

see the Judge (Christ), whose "eyes were like a flame of fire," piercing through his soul with his sins bared before him. He grew terrified with terror such as touches every soul when the Holy Spirit reveals to the sinner his true condition and doom. Duty was clear to him, but he put it off when the devil whispered, "Wait a while until a more convenient time." We see the results of such a move. "Today is the day of salvation." Do not do as Felix did. We never heard that he ever found that convenient time.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Our God is faithful to every soul regardless of position or station in life or anything else. God's own sense of justice would not allow Him to condemn a soul to eternal banishment without ever having an opportunity to recover himself. The conditions and circumstances surrounding the offering of mercy take on some rather peculiar settings sometimes, just as this one did, but nevertheless the opportunity is given. There was probably no hope of ever getting Felix and his unlawful wife to attend a gospel meeting where they could hear the truth, but God was faithful to them, anyway. Imagine for a moment what must have been the attitude of Felix's mind and heart as he started out on the duties of that day. He was a ruler, a judge, a magistrate who held the power of life and death for a multitude of people in his hands. Whether people lived or died, were acquitted, or condemned depended upon his decision. His authority was absolute, his position unassailable by his subjects, his word was law and HE would sit today in judgment to hear the case of this fellow Paul. His greedy heart within him lusted after this world's goods and he saw here a golden opportunity. Paul was not worthy of death that he knew of, but he also knew that all he had to do was turn him over to the Jews and they would do the dirty work whether the accused deserved it or not. He knew Paul knew this also and so he let it be known that for a monetary consideration Paul could be acquitted. It must have been somewhat of a shock to him when he mounted the judgment seat that day and confronted his prisoner and suddenly realized that HE was the one upon whom the judgment of the Lord was falling! Righteousness could do naught else but condemn his own wicked life. Temperance was the direct opposite of his own excess of fleshly indulgence and judgment to come made him know that for all this he was responsible before a just and holy God. Little wonder he began to tremble for he had come face to face with the great Judge of all the earth and he stood condemned! God's proffered

mercy was also extended, but as far as we know, it was refused. How sad!

—C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. Are Christians barred from defending themselves against persecution and oppression by lawful means? 2. Do we have any promise that lost opportunities and the call of God will return to us if we reject it? 3. What effect does it have upon those who reject the call of God? Are they the same after that as before? 4. Tell something about the lives of Drusilla and Felix and the effect the gospel had on them. 5. How does righteousness, temperance and judgment affect us today?

### GOD'S LAST CALL

In Springfield, Ohio, one night there was powerful conviction. Several came forward; others were deeply convicted; and a strong appeal was made for them to surrender to God. The altar was well filled. I was moved by the Spirit to say, "I feel sure someone is getting his last call tonight." I turned to the pastor and said, "Brother B——, I want you to write me if this prediction comes true." In less than two weeks I received a letter from him stating the man who sat in a seat in this service was deeply convicted. He trembled and wept but refused to move. He was killed instantly that day by a train on a railroad trestle. His remains were scattered over a space of four or five miles along the railroad track and were picked up in a basket. The poor man had said "No" one time too many.

In Salem, Oregon, a few had come forward that night for prayer. It was one of those services where there was a lingering conviction and a loathing to close the invitation lest someone be lost finally. I said, "We have all done our best and the Spirit has convicted souls and someone has said 'no' for the last time tonight." In less than one month from that night a young lady who was that night under deep conviction was instantly killed in an automobile wreck and went out into eternity to meet the Lord. She had rejected the greatest and most precious gift that is in the power of God to give—conviction of sin. Sinner friend, when you turn down this gift you are doing so at the risk of your soul. It may be your last call. If it should be, you are lost forever. —M. A. Monday

**October 18, 1970**

**PAUL PREACHES TO KING AGRIPPA**

**Acts 25:13, 14, 18, 25, 26; Acts 26:1-8**

Acts 25:13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus.

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:

19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

Acts 26:1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

3 Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

7 Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

**Memory Verse:** But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. Acts 9:15.

**Central Thought:** Jesus Christ, the hope of the world, was dead, but now is alive forevermore.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

"A freeman of Rome, who had been tried for a crime, and sentence passed on him had a right to appeal to the emperor (Caesar) if he conceived the sentence to be unjust; but, even before the sentence was pronounced, he had the privilege of an appeal, in criminal cases, if he conceived that the judge was doing anything contrary to the laws." (Clarke's Com.)

Festus took the place of Felix as governor of the province of Judea. King Herod Agrippa II was king over a number of provinces, one of which was Judea. "Bernice, or, as she is sometimes called, Berenice, was the sister of this Agrippa, and of the Drusilla mentioned in Chapter 24" (Clarke Com.) King Agrippa was the son of the Herod Agrippa I who had James killed and Peter put in prison. He was eaten of worms sent by God. Read Acts 14.

When Paul was brought before King Agrippa he had formerly been twice snatched from the Jews, been brought to Caesarea two years before as a prisoner. He had been tried once before the Sanhedrin (the Jewish court) and once before the governor of the province. And at this time he had been in prison for two years, yet the Jews and their leaders were demanding his death. King Agrippa was more acquainted with Christianity than Festus.

—M. Miles

**Lesson References:** Acts 24; Acts 2:32-38.

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Wherever Paul went he had one theme to preach about and that was Jesus—whether it was to kings, governors, poor people, rich people, mobs, sects, Jews, Gentiles, Greeks, Romans, or the high priests and members of the Sanhedrin. Jesus Christ is the promise made by God to the world for their salvation. Jesus is the hope of the world. Jesus Christ is the answer to every problem. He is truly the Lily of the valley, the Bright and Morning Star. He is the King of kings, Lord



of lords, the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, our only hope of an entrance into heaven. He is the Chief Shepherd of God's sheep and our Protector from the devil. He is the chief corner stone of the church and the Door. He is our Healer, our Keeper, and our all in all. Surely praise and honor are due Him. He is the One who can satisfy every longing of our soul.

Our memory verse tells us the purpose that God had in Paul's life. God spoke these words to him when he was first saved. He was "a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." In our study of the life of Paul we have found this to be true. He would always go to the Jews in any country first on his missionary trips. He preached to them and then to the Gentiles, who were steeped in superstition and idol worship. He preached Jesus to them and that through Jesus Christ they could have access to the Father, God. In our lesson today he is preaching to the governor, Festus, and King Agrippa. What was the theme of his message? It was Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is a living active force contained within an experience of salvation that reaches out with zealous yearning to communicate to someone else the wonders of that marvelous experience. It is upon the working of this force that the gospel depends for its distribution to the populace of the world. This is the urge that causes individuals to forsake all and go to herald the gospel to the heathen. It prompts folks to operate a business or hold a job or run a farm or perform any other task as unto the Lord with the motive of heart that a generous portion of the proceeds realized will be faithfully used for the furtherance of the gospel as He directs. This urge to contribute to the advancement of the gospel is a part of every genuine experience of salvation that is received by mankind. It is what we recognize as part of the bondage of love. Love must have an agent to flow from. It must also have an object to flow to. God's pure, holy, heavenly love flows out from His great heart of love to all of His trusting, believing children and to all the world beside. So then, not only are His saved ones objects of His great love; but the unsaved ones likewise are exposed to that divine blessing. It is not His will that any should perish. When an individual will humble his heart, acknowledge himself a sinner and cry out to God for mercy, God is faithful and just to forgive and to bestow upon that soul an exper-

ience of salvation. That experience is heavenly—that is, designed in heaven's likeness, therefore it will possess the characteristics of the heavenly. All heaven cries out to the sinner to come. God's Word invites all to repent. The Spirit convicts and urges the soul to yield. God's Son paid the price for salvation and made it available to all, and the church, the saved of earth, enter into this spirit of evangelizing and seize every opportunity to communicate to someone about our wonderful Saviour and His plan of redemption. The world, the fleshly mind, would look upon Paul's various legal hearings as a great trial and persecution, but to those who have known the Lord, this was only His way of exposing a few more souls to the mysteries of the gospel. It was not a trial but a golden opportunity to witness for the Lord. —C. W. Wilson

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What relation was King Agrippa, Bernice, Drusilla, and Herod? 2. Why did Paul say that King Agrippa was an "expert in all customs and questions" among the Jews? 3. Why would Paul affirm that Jesus was once dead and now alive? 4. Comment on the boldness of Paul as he preached before governors and kings about Jesus. 5. Answer the question by Paul in verse 8.

### **GEORGE FOX AND HIS FALSE ACCUSERS**

After being imprisoned for twenty weeks, the faithful servant of Christ, George Fox, was released in 1660. He thus speaks of his false accuser in his journal: "Thus I was set at liberty by the king's command, the Lord's power having wonderfully wrought for the clearing of my innocency, and Porter, who committed me, not daring to appear to make good the charge he had falsely suggested against me. Terror took hold of Justice Porter, for he was afraid I would take the advantage of the law against him for my wrong imprisonment, and thereby undo him, his wife and children. And, indeed, I was put on to make him and the rest examples; but I said I should leave them to the Lord: if the Lord did forgive them, I should not trouble myself with them."

"Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and He shall save thee." Prov. 22:22.

### **SATAN THREATENS OUR DIVINE LOVE**

Satan wants to place us in positions to try to cool our love. John Bunyan tells us of the threats Satan made to rob him of the warmth of love. "You the very hot, now," Satan said,

"but I will cool you; this frame shall not last always. Many have been as hot as you for a spirt (short time) but I have quenched their zeal."

"But I will watch," replied Bunyan, "and take care not to lose my love."

"Though you do," Satan answered, "It will be too hard for you: I will cool you insensibly, by degrees, by little and little. What care I though I be seven years in chilling your heart if I can but do it at last? A continual rocking of the cradle will lull the baby to sleep. I will ply it close. I will have my end accomplished. Though you be burning hot at present, I can pull you from this fire. I shall have you cold before it be long."

We notice in our study of Paul that the devil worked in every way to turn him away from God and cool his fervent love. For two years he was kept in bonds yet he did not feel God had forsaken him. How can we keep our trust and love for God aglow? "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 20, 21.

—M. Miles



October 25, 1970

## SINCERITY ACCORDING TO TRUTH

Acts 26:9-15; Acts 9:6a; Acts 26:16-18

Acts 26:9 I [Paul] verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue,

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

Acts 9:6a And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

Acts 26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.

18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

**Memory Verse:** Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. Ephesians 6:24.

**Central Thought:** God requires sincerity of each of us, but it must be sincerity according to truth and not sincerity in error.

**Word Definition:** Sincere—"In the Scripture sincere signifies pure or without mixture. 1 Pet. 2:1, 'Desire the sincere milk of the word;' that is, unmixed with errors, traditions, and heresies, free from deceptions." Cruden's Unabridged Concordance. Paul speaks of sincerity and truth in opposition to the leavened bread of impurity. 1 Cor. 5:8.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson is a continuance of the sermon that Paul is preaching to King Agrippa, the governor Festus, and others. He has spoken of his manner of life being known to the Jews and then affirmed he was being judged by them for believing in Jesus Christ who died and arose again as fulfilling the promise made to the twelve tribes of Israel by God.

Notice Paul uses the pronoun, "I." He tells of his belief and life before he was converted and then tells of his conversion and God's revealed purpose of sending him forth as a minister of the gospel.

**Lesson References:** Acts 9:1-23 (Paul's conversion); Phil. 1:16; Eph. 4:15.

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Before Paul was converted, he sincerely believed he should "do many things contrary to the name of Jesus." Today many people are sincerely holding to a false movement or a false cause. Some believe they are doing God's service, yet it is in direct opposition to God's purpose and His written Word. The conscience is not a safe guide unless it has been enlightened and educated by God's written Word, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Paul imagined, ignorantly of course, that in opposing, hindering, persecuting, and destroying Christians, he was actually doing God's service. In 1 Tim. 1:13, 14, he writes, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor; and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Notice that he did not affirm that he was free from guilt just because he sincerely fought against Christ as an imposter. He adds, "but I obtained mercy." Only through the mercy of God was he rescued from his downward road. His sincere belief was contrary to God's fulfilled promise of sending a Saviour. Remember there is a fundamental principle in morals and in God's purpose in our life. Every man, woman, boy and girl is held responsible to become enlightened. God has spoken and it is your responsibility to find out what He has spoken and obey it or you will be held accountable. Sincerity in a wrong cause will not be a good enough excuse when you stand before God. Jesus brings out this thought in Matt. 25:41-46. The question will be asked, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungred . . . and did not minister unto thee?" These people were sincere, but Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Then Jesus again said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And . . . I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:22, 23.

Dear ones, Paul met Jesus and his life was changed and his thoughts. His actions were just as sincere as before, but it was from a right source. He was willing to lay down his life for Jesus. God's Spirit moved upon him and he obeyed. His soul was awakened and when the light from heaven shone in, he saw his evil and wrong ways. "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me." (Psa. 139:1) Paul humbled himself and no longer sought to go his way, but was changed and desired to go God's way in sincerity according to truth. —M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The paramount and outstanding quality the Creator bestowed upon man that sets him apart and makes him peculiar to all the rest of creation is his intellect. His ability to think and reason, to consider a variety of factors and evaluate them all, give to each its proper weight of influence and then from the whole arrive at one conclusion, sets him apart from all the rest. To evaluate a proposition, the intellect must give consideration to ALL the material available to it that would concern or have bearing upon that proposition and determine HOW MUCH bearing each bit deserves, classify it all according to WHAT each deserves and then arrive at its conclusion regarding the entire matter. When all this has been done with complete honesty of heart so far as is known, then the decision arrived at will be accepted by that individual and upheld by him, for he is unable to perceive any way that it could be wrong. This is what we recognize as sincerity. Now we can see how sincerity, like the conscience, is irrevocably dependent upon the intellect. To knowingly ignore material that would have bearing upon a consideration would destroy sincerity because that information might alter the final decision. To knowingly attribute to some information more weight of influence than it rightfully deserved would again crucify sincerity for the improper evaluation might also affect the final decision. F. G. Smith wrote in his book, "The Evolution of Christianity," "Man cannot possibly believe a thing to be true and at the same time know it to be false." To attempt such a thing would automatically render honesty and sincerity useless and expose the soul to the condemnation of a wounded conscience. Individuals who indulge in such practice cannot and will never be able to maintain a satisfactory experience with the Lord for He will not countenance dishonesty in any form. Christ came and abundantly supplied us with material which, if we will give proper consideration and evaluation, will produce for us eternal life. To do otherwise can only terminate in disaster. For illustration, look up and read these texts: Ezek. 18:4, 20, 1 John 5:18, 1 John 8:5-10, Matt. 1:21, Rom. 6:1, 2, John 1:29, John 8:34-36, John 5:14, Romans 6:14-16. This is material supplied for the consideration of our intellect by the Word of God. How can any mortal possibly take this material, and the vast volume that could be added to it and by any stretch of the imagination conclude with any degree of honesty or sincerity that man cannot live free from sin? There is no way to get truth to a soul who will not be honest. You may uproot what he is holding to, whereupon he will either seize upon something else or he will gasp, "I am now confused," and still refuse the truth.

There are in the world yet today honest and sincere souls who have inadvertently misevaluated some truth somewhere or perhaps who have never perceived that there is more truth to know than what they now possess and consequently they proceed in error. These are the jewels that we seek to discover. When the glory of the full light of the gospel falls upon them they come "leaping, shouting home to Zion" with rejoicing in their hearts and shouts of praises upon their lips because of truth. Glory to God!

—C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. Can we have guilt before God if we follow an unenlightened conscience? 2. Tell of Paul's life before he was converted and his sincere thoughts and ideas. 3. What did a glance and a word from Jesus do to shatter the entire superstructure of Paul's past life? 4. Comment on the depths of Paul's sins and his forgiveness. 5. Does God ever send a messenger forth without giving him a message? What message was given to Paul?

### THE POWER OF A LIVING BIBLE

Nowhere is it more true than in the Christian life that actions speak louder than words. A young man had become an infidel, and would no longer read the printed Bible, but he could not help seeing the fruits of faith in the life of another.

In his father's house a young lady resided, who was a relative of the family. Her fretful temper made all around her uncomfortable. She went away to school and was absent for some time. While she was gone she became a true and earnest Christian. On her return she was so changed that all who knew her wondered and rejoiced. She was patient and cheerful, kind, unselfish, and charitable. Her lips that used to be always uttering cross and bitter words now spoke nothing but sweet, gentle, loving words. Her infidel cousin George was greatly surprised at this. He watched her closely for some time, till he was thoroughly satisfied that it was a real change that had taken place in her and not just a front. Then he asked her what had caused this great change. She told him it was the grace of God which had made her a Christian and had changed her heart.

He said to himself, "I don't believe that God has anything to do with it, though she thinks He had. But it is a wonderful change that has taken place in her, and I should like to be as good as she is. I will be so. Then he formed a set of good resolutions. He tried to control his tongue and his temper, and kept a strict watch over himself. He was all the time

doing and saying what he did not wish to do and say. And, as he failed time after time, he would turn and study his good cousin's example. He would read this living Bible, and her true godly sincerity that spoke out in strong words, something deeper than he had found in just making a set of severe rules for himself to live by. He truly was sincere in his desire to do and be like her and to live as she lived, but what was wrong? He said to himself, "How does it happen that she, who has not as much knowledge or as much strength of character as I have, can do what I can't do? She must have some help that I don't know of. It must be as she says, the help of God. I will seek that help." He went into his bedroom and prayed to that God whose very existence he had denied. He prayed earnestly and sincerely. God heard him, helped him, and he became a Christian. He was "born again" and from that day lived according to God's Word in all sincerity and truth. "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes." Ezek. 36:27

—Selected

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November 1, 1970

## ALMOST PERSUADED

### Acts 26:19-32

Acts 26:19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I [Paul] was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.



25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

**Memory Verse:** Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. Acts 26:28.

**Central Thought:** There is danger in one being satisfied with "almost" without becoming "altogether" a Christian.

**Word Definition:** Repent means "after . . . to understand, which signifies, that after hearing such preaching, the sinner is led to understand, that the way he has walked in was the way of misery, death, and hell. . . . To wage war with his own best interests in time and eternity, to provoke and insult the living God; and, by habitual sin, to prepare himself only for a state of misery, he shows evidences of insanity. . . . It was from this notion of the word that the Latin termed repentance . . . a growing wise again, or restoring the mind to itself. . . . His mind, purposes, opinions, and inclinations are changed and that, in consequence, there is a total change in his conduct. . . . In this state a man feels deep anguish of soul, because he has sinned against God, unfitted himself for heaven, and exposed his soul to hell. Hence, a true penitent has that sorrow whereby he forsakes sin, not only because it has been ruinous to his own soul, but because it has been offensive to God." Clarke Com. (comments on Matt. 3:2.)

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson takes place in the courtroom where Festus presides, so King Agrippa, his sister, Bernice, and others can hear the charges and also the defense made by Paul in his own case. Remember that King Agrippa and Bernice were well versed in the Jewish religion. Festus knew very little about it. No doubt the circumstances that surrounded the death of Agrippa's father, Herod, surely had a bearing upon him. (Read Acts 12th chapter.)

Lesson References: 1 Cor. 7:7; John 5:46; Isa. 53.

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The fervent appeal of Paul's message touched the hearts of the hearers. We have record of the reaction of two of them. It could be that Festus was touched and half believed what Paul had said and that brought forth his burst of denunciation. It might have been that he thought it incredible that anyone would risk his life to declare that someone had come here, lived, died, and rose again. We are sure that the Holy Spirit dealt with his soul. Now Agrippa was deeply touched. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." How many times there are those who sit under the sound of the gospel and feel the touch of the Lord upon their souls, but do not yield. Oh, if they only knew that this is a precious and mighty privilege for the God of all power, Creator of the universe and mankind, Saviour, Lord, and King to condescend to draw them to Himself! It is wonderful to know He loves and cares for us and does not want us to go to hell and eternal damnation. Surely every soul should value that touch and be willing to yield to God. Bro. Sam Barton longed for years for that touch so he could get saved. Fifteen years passed by and one night the Lord touched his heart and he yielded to God. He lived a godly life from that day and preached the gospel to many. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John 6:44) There is power in that drawing from God. Many have quit habits and some sins under the power of conviction. How sad when one rejects that drawing power of God. It means eternal life to them. To reject means eternal damnation.

No doubt Paul held up his chained arm and then declared that he wished that all that heard him was as he except for the bonds. Paul knew that he was clear before his God and that Jesus Christ truly had forgiven him of his sins and he was ready for heaven. Can you declare this as Paul did? As soon as the apostle's words died away, King Agrippa

arose as the hushed atmosphere was too much for him. Others followed him. They talked among themselves and would have freed Paul had he not appealed to Caesar. —M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A consideration of the theme of this lesson will again involve an inquiry into the human intellect. How does one go about to persuade someone in a matter? A pointing out of various advantages that would influence toward one decision and a presenting of disadvantages of the opposite direction, all in an attempt by one to alter a current decision of another. If new information is presented which has a bearing upon the matter in question, the intellect is obliged to give it consideration and make room for it in a decision, but all this may still not produce the desired result of the persuader. The fact that all necessary and pertinent information is present and clearly defined and properly evaluated and correctly decided upon does not at all insure that the desired result will be obtained. Every individual who possesses an intellect also possesses a will. All who have intelligence enough to think have the ability to act upon the result of their thinking and to do what they choose with their conclusion. That is one right that belongs to every man and him alone and even God Himself will not interfere with any man's will.

See what this does for persuasion. Folks may be just as convinced as the preacher is that they are sinners, lost and absolutely headed headlong for a devil's hell. They may be thoroughly convinced that there is salvation in Jesus; that His shed blood provides a fountain of cleansing which will absolutely and completely wash away their sins and cleanse them from all unrighteousness; they may acknowledge in Him the perfect sacrifice, acceptable before a holy God for the sins of the whole world, their own included, and in spite of all this still refuse to be saved. There is no lack of truth here to hinder a decision; no misconstruction of information to alter a correct answer, the material is complete and the answer correct. There is simply a lack of willingness. Persuasion would urge one to act wisely on the information he has at hand, possibly recount some of the factors involved such as the glory and beauty of heaven and the awfulness of eternal hell, etc., but in the final analysis there is no influence able to override an individual's will. Fellow Christian, do all you can to persuade and encourage all you can to turn to Christ and be saved, but know this, that no one will ever be saved against his own will. The Word did not say whosoever can be tricked in may come, or influenced in or forced in or whatever; it simply said

whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely. Sinner friend, without the consent of your own free will, you will never meet your heavenly Father in peace.

—C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. How will a touch and a heavenly vision of heaven and hell, from God, affect a person if he accepts it or rejects it?
2. What does it mean to "do works meet for repentance"?
3. According to our lesson who foretold thousands of years before it happened of Christ's coming, death, burial, and resurrection?
4. How did Paul answer the severe accusations of Festus?
5. Discuss the effects of the gospel upon souls and their responsibility when they hear it.

### STAND WHERE FIRE HAS BEEN

A small party of pioneers were making their way across one of the central states to a distant place that had been opened up for homesteading. They traveled in covered wagons drawn by oxen and progress was necessarily slow. One day they were horrified when they saw a long line of smoke in the west stretching for miles across the prairie, and soon it was evident that the dried grass was burning fiercely and coming toward them rapidly. They had crossed a river the day before, but it would be impossible to go back to that before the flames were upon them. It seemed as if they were hopelessly doomed until one man in the party who had an understanding of the situation commanded them to set fire to the grass behind them. As the wind drove the fire eastward across the grass behind them, the whole company moved back upon the space that was burned over. As the fire advanced from the west, a little girl cried out in terror, "Are you sure we will not all be burned up?" The leader replied, "My child, the flames cannot reach us here for we are standing where the fire has already been."

—Selected

The parties in the above story would have been victims engulfed in the flames, but they had prepared for the time when they would have to face the fire. Dear ones, there is coming a day when the fire of God's wrath will be poured out upon man because of sin. We can prepare for that time. Our works can be already tried by fire. The Bible says, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." 1 Tim. 5:24. We can send our sins on beforehand and open them up to God through confessing them and with godly sorrow seeking forgiveness. The

precious blood of Jesus will cover them and when the last day comes we will be saved from the eternal fire. Just as sure as people die, just that sure will they meet God in the day of Judgment. Are you preparing for that day? Are you taking the way of escape God has prepared for you? Jesus suffered and died on the cross and bore the punishment for our sins. "For He [God] hath made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him [Christ]." 2 Cor. 5:21. Won't you accept today God's way of escape from the judgment fires that are surely coming?  
—M. Miles

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November 8, 1970

### RESULTS OF REJECTED COUNSEL

Acts 27:1, 2, 7b-11; Rom. 2:7, 8, 9a; Acts 27:12-17

Acts 27:1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, [Ad-ramit-i-um) we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, [Ar-is-tar-kus] a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

7b We sailed under Crete, over against Salmone;

8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,

10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

Rom. 2:7 To them [who obey God's counsel] who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:



Paul's Voyage To Rome

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

9a Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil,

Acts 27:12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is a haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.

14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat;

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

**Memory Verse:** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. Psalm 1:1a.

**Central Thought:** It is better to learn from the experiences of others and listen to advice than to learn by personal experience. The price is too high.

**Word Definition:** Euroclydon is a strong north east wind.  
**Undergirding:** "A stout cable is slipped under the vessel at the prow, which they can conduct to any part of the ship's keel and then fasten the two ends on the deck to keep the planks from starting; as many rounds as they please may be thus taken about the vessel." Clarke's Com.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

It is evident that Luke, who wrote the book of Acts, was with Paul and thus able to give these details of the voyage to Rome, undertaken because Paul had appealed to the Roman government for trial. This was in late autumn in A. D. 60. He and some other prisoners were given into the charge of Julius, a centurion. Paul was given privileges the other prisoners did not have, but probably was chained to a soldier. At

Sidon, Julius gave Paul permission to visit friends. At Myra a change in vessels was made, and from there the voyage continued to Fair Havens. The voyage from Myra (130 miles) to Fair Havens was slow and difficult as it was near the stormy season. (Check map.)

After rejecting Paul's advice, the centurion took the advice of the master of the ship and embarked with him. Almost immediately a violent storm arose. It was but 35 miles to the harbor of Phoenix but the ship was driven before the stormy gale.

"The fast signified the Great Day of Atonement which the Jews celebrated about the beginning of October." (Lev. 16:29.)

Aristarchus (Ar-is-tar-kus) went along with Paul evidently as a prisoner. He is mentioned in Acts 19:29 as one of Paul's companions in trouble. Then again he is mentioned in Col. 4:10 as being "my fellow prisoner."

A score is 20. There were 276 people on ship.

Lesson Reference: 2 Chron. 10:1-19. (Here the king refused the advice of older men and took the advice of younger men. He lost ten tribes in his kingdom.)

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our lesson points out the results of rejected advice from Paul, a minister of God who, after fasting and prayer, knew it was not best to leave that port at that time. Let us apply this to our lives, which is a voyage from time to eternity. God, our Creator, has not left us alone to fight the storms of life, but has given us a map and chart to go by. That chart is the Bible. He goes farther than that and gives us ministers, gospel workers, and those who are filled with the Spirit of God to help us know God's will. In olden Bible times, God spoke through the prophets to the people and then at times He spoke directly, but other times He gave them angel visitations. Today in the Holy Spirit dispensation God will speak through His Spirit to us or through His ministers. It is important that we take heed to advice given to us if it comes from a reliable source. Even if it should come from the most unlearned saint, we should consider it and pray about it. Never reject it without due consideration.

Marriage is something that should be considered seriously, whether by a young person or an adult. Consider any advice given along that line. Don't ever feel you can marry a person and then change that one. Resist any undue urgency to marry. Wait upon the Lord or the results might be worse than the storm we read about in our lesson.



One young person said that he liked to talk to older people as he learned so many things. That young person was a level-headed, deep-thinking person who valued experiences of the older ones who have fought many of the battles of life. It is a wonderful thing to learn a lesson through observation, or by knowing the experiences of others, and better than passing through painful experiences oneself. There is a reaping to each sad experience in life in the future. God helps those who are saved to reap, but yet, there is a regret that lingers and effects that might never be erased.

Notice the Scriptures in our lesson that give the results of well doing. It brings glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life. But those who are contentious and do not obey the truth will reap indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish. We know that the Bible says, "There is no respect of persons with God." (Rom. 2:11) —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The acceptability of any counsel will ultimately come to depend upon the quality of the counsel itself and the source from which it comes. If the crew of the ship upon which Paul was riding had been made up of folks who had been converted under his preaching and who had seen the hand of the Lord upon him, they would have immediately given heed to his warning and acted accordingly. The same counsel given to the group it was, and under the circumstances it was, had little or no effect upon them because they did not believe much in God, therefore they would not place much confidence in this Paul as being God's man. If he be God's man and living an upright life, why was he in bonds, under arrest, and on his way to Rome to stand trial? Prisoners are not usually prisoners because they are innocent. And besides all this, what could this fellow possibly know about the ways of the sea and how to handle a ship? Anyone would know that people who had experience in such things would be more trustworthy to follow than a stranger. As it turned out, Paul's perception was correct, his counsel was sound and his advice worthy of acceptance, but because of its source, it was refused.

A great many things can mar the acceptability of good counsel. One might give the best counsel to someone else, but when put in identical circumstances fail to follow that same counsel. When such has happened, there is not much use for that one to offer the same good counsel to another who needs it for he will immediately consider the source and discredit the counsel. The counsel was still good and worthy

to be followed, but the source had spoiled it. It is pretty hard to build again things once destroyed and remain innocent.

Some counsel given is of such poor quality within itself that it is not worthy of acceptance. One hireling minister said, "I tell my people the Lord is not much interested in the little details of our lives such as neckties, dress length, taking medicine, but in the overall condition of the heart." This in the face of Scripture which says the little foxes spoil the vine! This very consideration of counsel accentuates the qualifications given for God's gifted workers. People sound in doctrine, solid in the faith, upright in heart and life who can be esteemed highly in love for their work's sake will likely be able to give counsel that is of the highest quality and worthy to be accepted for they practice it themselves. —C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. Is there danger in always trusting experts or always following the majority? 2. Who was right in the case presented in our lesson? 3. What happens to those who patiently continue to do right? 4. What is the end of those who are contentious and do not obey the truth? 5. Should a person learn from experience or take the advice of others who took a wrong route and learned by severe experience that it did not pay? 6. Paul was a landsman and the shipowner a seaman. Should all advice be considered and prayed about and compared by God's Word?

### HIGH PRICED WORLDLINESS

(Girls, listen to advice.)

Miss Wilson hesitated before closing the Girls' Meeting. As she waited, a visitor arose. "May I speak?" she asked modestly.

"Surely," permitted Miss Wilson, wondering.

"I was expecting your leader to mention modesty in dress as an outward evidence of the inner purity that she stressed in her evening lesson," Miss Browne began. "Well, maybe this point is more real to me than to most girls, because I learned it in the expensive school of experience. You girls here this evening need not learn it that way if you'll take it from me. Pardon my frank, blunt expression, but I am more interested in saving girls than in making flowery speeches. Here is my life story:

"When I was a small girl my father died. Mother struggled to keep her family of four girls together, but it was a losing fight. One by one we children were parceled out to neighbors

and relatives. Some were good homes and some were not. The influence soon began to tell on us, and I for one responded to the full. By the time I reached my middle teens, I was—well—low. You've heard the expression, 'wine and women,' in accounting for the downfall of many men. Well, in my case it was 'wine and men,' and far too much of both. Then strange to say, I became aware of my miserable condition. But I didn't know what to do about it. I didn't know God, and none of my friends did. I went to drinking harder than ever and grew more miserable. Then one day I was picked up out of the gutter and nursed back to consciousness by a kind Christian woman who also led me to God. How I love that saint!

"When I got converted inside I did outside, too. My past life of sin—and I'm not commending it when I say this—did one thing for me that innocent girls like you usually don't like to believe. It convinced me of the danger of looking like the world while trying to live for Christ."

"I knew you would resent this, but I know it from experience. You don't—yet. And may God spare you the awful—" She swallowed, and wiped her eyes.

"You'll want an illustration to prove the danger I just spoke about," she said, regaining her composure. "And again I'll give it from my own life. As I said, I was converted inside and out, and in a few days I made a raid on my wardrobe. Dancing gowns, sleeveless dresses, cosmetics, and similar things had to go, and as fast as I could I replenished with clothes that suggested only the inner adornment, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.

"Well, this worked fine, and I was happy for months. Then one evening, by invitation, I visited one of my old friends on the other side of the city. She had not known of my conversion.

" 'Why Edith,' she exclaimed, looking me over critically, 'how—how—antiquated you look! Has Paris gone back to Noah's ark for ideas?' she giggled, patting my long sleeves. 'And don't you trip over the length of the skirt? Edith, Edith!' She shook her head, backed up, and took in the full effect once more.

"She kept this up all evening, and by the time I started for home she had persuaded me to slip into one of her modern outfits and to arrange my hair in the billowy, fluffy coiffure that I had used before my conversion. The effect in the mirror both pleased and frightened me.

" 'There, now!' she flattered. 'That takes ten years away from you.'

" 'And also my peace,' I thought, afraid to tell her, coward that I was. I soon left for home. It was a lonely three-block

walk to the street car and my thoughts troubled me. I found I couldn't pray. I felt helpless as a lost child. As I hurried across the first intersection a perfect stranger stepped up to me and said, 'Hello.' Without even answering him I went on, faster and faster. I was afraid and prayed for God to help me.

"I'm sure God heard that prayer. I don't know why He should have, after my evening of folly, but I know He did; otherwise I couldn't be here to tell you so. For as I stood on the corner looking through the magazine assortment of the corner drug store I suddenly felt a hand on my shoulder.

" 'Fast traveler, aren't you?' asked the same voice I had just run away from. 'But I caught up.'

"My heart began to pound again. I looked in the window to see if there was anyone to help near. What could I do? 'God,' I begged again, 'You must help me!' But why should He help me? How could I expect Him to? It was cheap of me even to ask Him, I thought. I wanted to run inside, but my trolley was due any second. If I missed it I'd have to wait another.

"I tried to conceal my fright by ignoring him and leafing faster through a magazine.

" 'Do you like that one? I'll buy it for you,' was his next attempt.

" 'No, thanks,' I refused.

" 'You're waiting for the next Lake Court car, I presume?'

" 'Yes,' I said, hoping to dismiss him. Poor me! I was only giving him information.

" 'Well, why wait?' he suggested. 'My car's just around the corner. Let's go.'

" 'Say!' I suddenly turned on him, my fear gone. 'You think I'm a greenhorn, and good bait for you, don't you? Listen! I know your tactics. I've been a victim to such as you too often, sometimes because I wanted to be and sometimes because I had to be. Tonight, thank God, it shall be neither. My life isn't a prey to your kind since—' I looked myself over, and knew I had no visible proof for what I was saying, but I finished it anyway. 'Since I became a Christian.'

" 'A what? A Christian? Are you a Christian?' And he looked me over from head to foot. 'Well, who'd have guessed it from your looks?'

" 'What do you know about Christians?' I asked, hurt by his rebuke.

" 'Not much. Mother was one. I just know that she didn't believe in looking like—like—worldly women.'

"I wanted to say, 'Neither do I,' but I knew it would do no good.

" 'Well,' he said, backing off a step of two—he had been familiarly close—my hat's off to you, anyway. Sorry to have

troubled you. And now may I give you a bit of advice? Men like me find the kind of women we're after at just such places as this at such an hour as this, and in such attire as yours. You are one of the few in whom my judgment has been misplaced. Is the mistake mine or yours?"

" 'I've learned my lesson,' I admitted to him. 'You had a right to judge me as you did. In the future I shall try harder to show what kind of woman I am.'

" 'Better had,' he agreed seriously, 'if you want the respect of us men.' He started to go. 'And whatever you do, hold fast to your religion. It's the real stuff—the only stuff that can keep a person on the right track. I had it once—a short time—and lost it, so I know what I'm talking about. And you are on the losing side, too, unless you quit—'

" 'I know what you're thinking, and I'm quitting it this very night. If you ever meet me again I'll look—well, different from this.'

" 'I hope so. We'd be better men if all women felt that way. Here's your trolley. Safe trip home. Good night.'

" 'Good night, and thanks for the advice,' I called. 'And thank You, God,' I panted from the seat I settled into, 'for the advice You've given me through this experience tonight. I promise to profit by it.'

"And, girls, I have kept my promise, much to my safety and spiritual growth. I pass on this experience to you to help you live more wisely than I did. Take it from one who knows, and save yourselves many of the regrets that will always be mine."

After dismissal Miss Wilson hurried to Miss Browne and clasped her hand. "Thank you, Miss Browne. You got across to my girls just what I had the burden to say. Again, I thank you."

"I need no thanks. I'm just glad if I've helped, Miss Wilson. If I can spare one of these dear girls the misery I've gone through I'll be happy. Some believe in letting girls learn by experience, but I can say from experience that the price is too high."

—Ida Bontrager

**November 15, 1970**

**LISTEN FOR GOD'S VOICE IN THE STORM**

**Acts 27:18, 19-26; Psalm 107:23a, 26-30**

Acts 27:18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;

19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

Psa. 107:23a They that go down to the sea in ships,

26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.

27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

28 Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

30 Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

**Memory Verse:** In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began: Titus 1:2.

**Central Thought:** If man will listen, God will speak to him when he comes to his wit's end.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson is a continuation of the voyage by Paul with other prisoners to Rome. Paul had advised them not to go at that time but they disregarded his counsel. They found themselves in a severe storm in the Mediterranean Sea. Check your map for location.

They threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. We notice that in that storm some of God's children were suffering, but they heard God's voice. On the voyage of life we might be in the storm of affliction, mental tribulation, distresses of various kinds such as material losses, loss of loved ones, etc., but be of good cheer and listen to God's voice.

"Let troubles rise and terrors frown,  
Through Him all dangers we'll defy,  
And days of darkness fall;  
And more than conquer all." —Sel.

I have heard that in a storm some waves will be 112 feet high.

The last part of our lesson is in Psalms describing a storm.

**Lesson References:** Rom. 4:20, 21; Heb. 6:17, 18; John 16:44.

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Storm-tossed soul out on the sea of life—there is a voice speaking to you! The God who cannot lie is calling above the rage and fury of the billows. Did you not know there is hope when you come to the place when you feel that all hope is gone? True hope is not in what is around you, but it is in the mighty power of God, and brought to us by obedience to His Word. You did not mean to get into the storm. You thought you were doing the right. You, in your worldly wisdom, thought that you should go to the next port where it would be more pleasant and you would have greater ease to the flesh, but now you are drifting and storm-tossed. It is so easy to drift. Thousands today are drifting. Drifting into wrong associations, drifting into habits, drifting into a course of conduct, drifting into personal habits which make a bad life. Really habits are tricks on a large scale. Almost everyone knows how easy they are to fall into, and how difficult to get rid of. There are habits of speech, of thoughts, temper, debt, profanity, dope, strong drink, tobacco, immorality and

at first not much thought is given to the trend but soon one is caught in the whirl and a vision of deliverance is lost unless one listens to the call of God. There are habits of thoughts such as a habit of being critical, foolish, unforgiving, vulgar, etc. You will be awakened to the fact that you have a battle on your hands and only through God can you straighten out your way of thinking. Maybe one who is saved will drift and pass one morning of prayer and find it easy to skip two mornings, etc. I beg you to listen to God. He is speaking to you from His Word, His ministers, His saints, and through the gospel by the printed page. Turn to Him and have faith.

Our lesson speaks of man coming to his wit's end. Then he cries unto the Lord. God delivers him out of all his troubles and brings him to the desired haven. God spoke to Paul in the storm and he believed God. What a calmness came to his soul! Though the storm still raged, yet he knew God had spoken and all would be well. Dear one, if you are storm-tossed today, listen to God's voice. You can have a life with an aim, a purpose and a destiny. Jesus will be your pilot and He has power to bring you safely to the haven of rest. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Life is a moving sort of thing that finds no place to remain stationary. The circumstances and conditions that surround us today will never be exactly like that again. It is upon the basis of the situations of life as we see them now that we make our decisions and order our conduct. If we knew now what we will know tomorrow, many times the decision we make today would be different, but we have no way of knowing, so we do the best we know to do with what we have immediately available to us now. Sometimes, as in the case of Paul's experience in the lesson, time proves that apparently a wrong decision was made which produces undesirable results later on. Many times along life's journey the Lord would graciously and wondrously warn us of impending danger or lead us away from a heartache or grief, etc., but the veil of the flesh is so predominant upon us until we are not always able to discern the admonition, and so we blunder on and consequently must reap the reward. At times like these the enemy loves to rush in and begin his doleful work of accusing. The decision has been made and life moved on away from the point of decision; no way to recover that and the result obviously something less than what we desired or expected. Had we been following the Holy Ghost we would not have been caught in this condition, the devil reminds us and torments us as long as we are willing to listen. However, there is a solu-



tion to the problem. Dwelling on the past will never provide an answer for now or the future. Some have gone for years dwelling on something that happened in the past, spending all their time mulling it over and over and fail to do anything with the present or the future. If you made an error in judgment or conduct or failed the Lord somehow or other, acknowledge it clearly and openly. If someone else was injured, repair the injury so far as is possible, then bring your case to God and seek His pardon and plead His mercy until you are conscious of His pardoning grace upon your soul. Then forgive yourself and continue on for God. —C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. Name some of the circumstances that people get into where they are powerless to help themselves. 2. What will men do, in a worldly sense, to save their lives? 3. Where will man find true holy courage in the storms of life? 4. Is God merciful to unthankful people because of the prayers of His children? (Consider Abraham's pleadings for Lot in Sodom.) 5. How can a person drift into habits? 6. Can a soul sink so deep in sin that God cannot save him?

### "I BELIEVE GOD"

"Will I be able to keep my appointment?" Bro. George Mueller asked the captain of the ship on which he was sailing. The answer was negative because of the dense fog that surrounded them, making their progress slow. Bro. Mueller suggested that they pray. The captain said he didn't believe God would hear and answer them. When they prayed, Bro. George Mueller told the captain he did not need to pray as God had heard. God did hear and lifted the fog and Bro. Mueller was on time for his appointment. He believed God, just as Paul believed God in our lesson. For nearly seventy years G. Mueller housed thousands of orphans, never asking for one dime, but trusting in prayer to move God to supply their needs.

In this day when the teaching is broadly spread that there is no God, we need to fortify ourselves with firm convictions and cling to them. Some scientists today try to tell us that all things evolved, including ourselves, but in trying to explain the beginning they use the words "probably this happened," or suggest this clue and say, "we guess" so and so. One science book says "our galaxy probably existed a million million years." Then they say that "some progress has been made in attempting to explain" how and when the sun and its nine planets came into being. So you see, they still don't know. They

have to admit there was a sun and it had a law of gravitation but where did the sun and the law of gravitation come from? Who started them? It was God who placed the sun in the sky, just as we read in the Bible in the first chapter of Genesis. He made their laws.

It is said that the embryos of fish and humans look very much alike. That is true we are told by those who study those things, but that fish embryo turns out to be a fish just like the fish that laid the egg. The embryo of the human turns out to be human. This is really a proof that there is a God who has laws governing the reproduction of all animal, plant, and human life. One scientist writes, "While we are able to breed and cultivate new varieties within a great kind, they are still of the same kind and not a new species of life! . . . In attempting to array the skeletons of an orangutan, chimpanzee, ape, gorilla, and a man, evolutionists assure us there is a definite pattern showing all have come from one common ancestor! This is an absolute fallacy! And again, this merely serves to show another clear proof of God! It does not prove an evolutionary process, but it does prove, rather, if men were willing to look at the facts, similarity of design! It shows that the same 'Architect' had the same general plan and design in mind! It shows functional similarity, not the evolution of one to another." Which evolved first, we ask the scientist, the corn, or the bee which pollinates it, the egg or the chicken? They do not answer this question. We know, for the Bible tells us, and I believe God. We read, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so." Gen. 1:11. God created every living thing. "And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for man: and it was so." Gen. 1:30. I believe God, don't you? "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." Gen. 1:27, 28. "I believe God" that He created the heavens and the earth, the sun, the nine planets, the stars, and this great universe, and all that is in it. But most of all I believe God to be real because He is real in my soul. When a person will believe the Bible and obey it, it will bring a satisfying portion to the soul that nothing else can give in this world. —M. Miles

## **"YOUR GOD MUST BE REAL"**

A missionary in India reports the following testimony given by a farmer of Taroda during a church gathering in February, 1958: "I thank the Lord, for He really answers prayer. Some time ago I had to go to Wun, and knew I could not get back that night. I had a field of peanuts and I was afraid the wild pigs would come and destroy them. Then I thought God can watch my field for me tonight, so I prayed and was not afraid.

"The next day when I came home, I met a neighbor and he said, 'Lucas, your God must be real. Last night about twenty wild pigs came into our field, and we drove them over toward your field. We thought, now Lucas' peanuts will be ruined. So in the morning we went to see. But do you know? Those pigs went straight through your field but did not stop.'

"Sure enough, I went to see and there were their tracks right through my peanut field, but they had not destroyed one. Oh, I know our God is a living God!

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## **NOTICE**

Have you ordered your Bible Lessons for the next quarter, which begins January 1, 1971? We would appreciate your order now so we will know how many to print.

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**November 22, 1970**

## **DELIVERANCE FOLLOWS THANKSGIVING**

**Acts 27:27, 29, 30a-37, 39, 41-44**

Acts 27:27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;

29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

30a And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea,

31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.

37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred three-score and sixteen souls.

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea and get to land:

44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

**Memory Verse:** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb. 11:1.

**Central Thought:** Praising God in the storms of life shows faith and trust.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Check your map to see the position of the ship which was wrecked near the island called Melita or off the shores of Sicily.

Paul was a prisoner on the ship which was bound for Rome, Italy, so he could appear before Caesar, the Roman Emperor

of the then known world. Luke, the writer of the book of Acts also was with him. Those two and Aristarchus probably were the only three Christians on the ship.

Our lesson starts with the 14th day of the storm that struck them soon after they left the port of Fair Havens.

**Lesson References:** James 1:1, 2; 1 Pet. 1:6, 7; Psa. 16:11.

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

God spoke to Paul, and he believed him. He not only believed, but he also acted like it. When the 14th day was coming on, he encouraged all to take meat as they would need it. He again assured them that they would all be spared and not a hair of their heads would be lost. Such firm faith and trust is not very often exhibited. But that is the faith that God is calling for. Our memory verse says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Paul had not seen the shore nor had he seen their deliverance, but by faith he saw it come to pass. He broke bread and gave thanks and ate. He had been fasting, but now it was time to quit fasting. It was time to believe and act like he knew God had heard and was taking care of the situation.

In 2 Chron. 20:17-25 we read about the great army that came against Judah, but when he consulted the Lord about the battle the Lord said, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Now the king believed God and told the people, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established." So the king set singers to go out before the army and say, "Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth forever." And the Bible says, "When they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against" their enemies. Notice God worked when they began to praise and sing. Oh, dear ones, we need to learn this lesson! God gave them the victory over their enemies. This is a type of our battles in the spiritual life. The enemy of our soul will come but when we begin to sing and praise the Lord we are showing faith and confidence in His power to help us.

God did hear Paul's cries and saw his faith. God delivered every one that was on the boat. Not a soul was lost. —M. Miles

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Paul said in one place that he had learned in whatever state he was in, therewith to be content. Surrounding conditions need not have any noticeable effect upon an experience of salvation. We are not saved by our environment, but by

faith in the shed blood of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. Such realization makes us conscious of Him and His presence regardless of where we are or what conditions prevail. If the way becomes rough and stormy, the immediate danger causes us to flee to the safety of His protecting bosom. If all becomes calm and peaceful about us, our hearts go out in grateful praise and adoration to the Lover of our soul. There is a contentment, a fulfillment, an inner satisfaction of the soul that the Christian enjoys from the Lord which no other source can supply. The Scripture says, And ye are complete in Him. Without that intimate personal relationship with the Divine, man is not complete. Unsaved folks, many times, do not recognize what is lacking, but rejoice greatly when they find it. Demonstrating such an experience with the Lord before others is one very effective means of awakening them to their own need of a personal contact with the Saviour.

Regardless of the circumstances current about him, Paul went right ahead with his devotion and dedication to the Lord as usual. He acknowledged the Lord's guiding hand over them all and in the presence of all he offered the sincere gratitude of his heart for the temporal blessing they enjoyed. The Divine influence was so real and radiant about him and provided such confidence and assurance until the entire group realized its merit and were "all of good cheer." Hearts were touched by the power of the gospel radiating from a man's life.

—C. W. Wilson

## QUESTIONS:

1. How does our lesson teach us the helplessness of man without God? 2. How do we see the baseness of man's heart demonstrated even in the presence of godly men? 3. How was it a value to the rest to have a godly man among them? 4. How did Paul manifest his faith before deliverance? 5. Tell how all escaped, just as God had told Paul they would.

## EVERY HAIR NUMBERED

Do you have any idea how many hairs are on your head? Experts tell us that the number varies from 120,000 to about 180,000. The average person has around 140,000 hairs on his head.

None of us knows exactly how many hairs he has, but God knows. He knows when we lose just one hair! Jesus tells us: "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered." (Luke 12:7.) This shows how much our heavenly Father cares about us. We should never doubt His care and love.

Once when Paul was being taken to Rome by ship, a furious storm arose. The ship was in danger of sinking. When the tempest continued for many days, the sailors became discouraged and stopped eating. Then God sent an angel to assure Paul that God was with him and that He would protect all on board the ship. Paul comforted the others by telling them: "There shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you." And God kept His word by saving the entire crew.

God is more concerned about each of us than we realize. Because we trust Him and believe in His promises, we don't have to be afraid. Jesus has won forgiveness for all our sins. He put us at peace with God, after we confessed our sins with godly sorrow. So we can trust God even when dangers come.

When Jesus spoke the words, "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered," He quickly added: "Fear not therefore!" So ask God to take away all your fears. —Selected

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November 29, 1970

## **GOD REWARDS KINDNESS**

### **Acts 28:1-12**

Acts 28:1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.

**Memory Verse:** As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10.

**Central Thought:** "If we serve the Lord He will serve us."

**Word Definition:** "Barbarous people were not savages, but natives who spoke neither the Greek nor the Roman tongue, but most likely the Punis—i.e., Phoenician as used by the Carthaginians." Homil. Com. "Bloody flux would be fever with dysentery."

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Malta in the Mediterranean is about 50 miles south of Sicily. This is the island the 276 shipwrecked people swam to. They had been on their way to Rome, Italy, taking Paul and others as prisoners. It was about the end of October.

"Both these, the inflammation of the body and the falling down dead suddenly, are recorded as results of the bite of the African serpents." (Alford)

"The term chief used here by Luke (who wrote the book of Acts) was the ancient title of the governor of this island, as is evident from an inscription found in Malta. This title is another proof of the accuracy of Luke, who uses the very epithet by which the Roman governor of that island was distinguished." —Clarke Com.

**Lesson References:** Col. 3:12; Heb. 13:1, 2; 1 Tim. 5:9, 10; Luke 1:19 (tread on serpents), 2 Cor. 11:23-28.



## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I have often heard my father pray to the Lord to help him to be thoughtful to do good. How often after the situation has passed one thinks of something that could have been said or done to encourage someone else. I am sure that there are gifts that God gives to different ones. It seems that some seem to know just how to help others and when. This is a wonderful gift and we thank God for those we see working in that place for God. We can't each have all the gifts. We each one have our place, but dear ones, there is a virtue of kindness that God gives to all. It should be in our minds, hearts, and thoughts. Seek God to fill your heart with compassion for all souls regardless of race, color, creed, or station in life. The one who has much of this world's goods needs kindness. Their riches don't make them happy. The one who is in poverty needs kindness. That one who is held by the chain of habits needs kindness and the love of God shown to him. Kindness will be rewarded by God. If the reward does not come in this life it will come when we go to meet our God and live in that place where our treasures are. Jesus has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matt. 25:40. Our memory verse tells us to do good to all, but especially to the saints of God. We each have some responsibilities to discharge before God and others. —M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In exchange for the blessings of divine power which God wrought among the heathen came many tokens of appreciation. They were offered lodging, courtesy, honors, such things as were necessary for comfort, etc. These are spontaneous results which automatically follow when folks have come in contact with God. People who have been blessed love to be a blessing and so they willingly and freely give of such means as they possess in an effort to demonstrate their appreciation. That the manifestation would be directed toward the vessel the Lord had used would also be automatic, but herein lies the test of the vessel. To begin to take glory to one's self, making it appear as though it were something wonderful the vessel itself had done and begin to gather homage and praise to the vessel would most certainly have betrayed the Lord and sooner or later have proved a disappointment to the people. Human endeavor cannot produce divine results and to leave that impression or allude to that conclusion would be dishonest and deceitful before the Lord.

There is no wrong in receiving the expression of gratitude being expressed by one who has been blessed. God designed and ordained that we manifest our love toward Him by bestowing it upon our fellowman. But the true man of God will leave no doubt in anyone's mind as to where the power came from that blessed the people whether it be in healing, in instruction or whatever and he will also make sure that the credit goes to the proper place. The man who looks to the accomplishment of his works for his blessing will miss the greatest blessing of all. Jesus told the seventy to rejoice not because the devils were subject unto them but to rejoice rather because their names were written in heaven. This rejoicing is supreme above all the rest and when found and entered into makes the other look small in comparison. If I pray for someone and in answer the request is granted, he rejoices because his desire is fulfilled and my heart pours out in gratitude and praise and honor and adoration to my wonderful God and Saviour because He acknowledged me as His trusting believing child and granted my petition. The temporal transaction takes on a secondary importance when compared to the fullness of that kind of joy in the soul. This is the real reward. —C. W. Wilson

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it important that you have God in your life when you mingle around a fire with the ungodly? 2. What influence does the company you keep have on your life? 3. Tell of the change of mind the people had concerning Paul. 4. Whom are we to please, God or people? What is the result of trying to please people? 5. Tell of the healing of the people and Publius. 6. How did God reward the people for their kindness?

#### KINDNESS

God will bless those who show kindness. My father, Bro. Fred Pruitt, told about how he was blessed when he showed kindness to a little girl when he was a young man traveling over the country. He had not been taught about God and salvation, but was a worldly man. He said they stopped at a railroad station one time and a number of children were selling baskets of peaches to the passengers. He said one little girl was being pushed back by others. He felt sorry for her and even though her peaches didn't look as nice as others, he bought them. He said it seemed he felt so good way down in his heart for doing that. At that time he didn't understand why, but after he was saved he knew it was God who had blessed him for showing kindness. —M. Miles

## FOR MEDITATION

It is important to be careful as to what kind of company you keep. Let me call your attention to three fires that were built for people to warm by. At the one mentioned in our lesson there were only three godly men there with the others. These men were strong for God and God blessed them. Don't be surprised if your life causes people to change their minds about you as they did Paul. They thought he was a murderer and then a god. Continue to live to please God.

Peter was warming by a fire built in the court yard of the palace, at the trial of Jesus. (Mark 14:54, 66-72.) He was mingling with those who hated Jesus and he gave down under their sneers and denied Jesus.

There is another beach fire that was built by Jesus. (See John 21:9-15) The group around this fire loved Jesus and partook of His compassion and kindness. Jesus probed into their innermost desires and brought out some decisions that helped them in days to come. He gave them a vision of work to do. For further meditation think about the people who are warming themselves by false fires, built by false prophets who are leading people into deception. "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." 1 Cor. 5:9-11. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." John 17:15. —M. Miles

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December 6, 1970

### PAUL'S BONDS FOR CHRIST

Acts 28:16, 17, 23, 24, 30, 31

Phil. 1:12-14; 4:11-13, 17, 18, 22

Acts 28:16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren,

(49)

though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging: to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Phil. 1:12 But I would that ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me.

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.

**Memory Verse:** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Phil. 2:13.

**Central Thought:** Those who glow for God do not themselves recognize the fact nor talk about it.

**Word Definition:** Abound means "to overflow; to be plentiful; to be full." Abase means "to lower; humble; to humiliate" to make one feel unimportant.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

The unprinted portion in Acts 28:12 to 17 is about the journey from the island of Melita to Rome. After leaving Syracuse, the capital of Sicily, they came to Puteoli. There, quite unexpectedly, he met a small group of Christians. Julius, Paul's guard, permitted him to stay with them seven days. Then at Appii Forum a group of Christians came from Rome to meet him. This cheered him when he saw them. "He thanked God, and took courage." He was inspired by their love for him. He probably arrived in Rome about 61 A. D. in March.

Paul was allowed to live in a rented house though bound by a chain and constantly guarded by a Roman soldier. (Paul calls the Jewish leaders in Rome together to talk to them. They had not heard about him, but they had heard of the Christian "sect" (verse 22) which was "everywhere spoken against." Paul said that "because . . . for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." (ver. 20) Paul had many friends and for two years he taught many about the Saviour, Jesus Christ. This closes our study in the book of Acts.

The church at Philippi sent an offering for Paul's temporal needs at Rome, which was brought by Epaphroditus (E-paf-ro-di-tus). In acknowledgement of their kindness, Paul wrote the Epistle to the Philippians in 62 A. D. His love for them glows in this letter in the New Testament, and his instructions are helpful to us today.

"The soldiers who guarded Paul for three hours at a shift could not help hearing the apostle's message, and by this means the gospel was spread through the praetorian guard and even into the household of Caesar; for, naturally, the servants would hear the story from those who alternately guarded Nero's family."

**Lesson References:** Phil. 3:8. Read the book of Philippians, written from Rome by Paul while in prison to the Philippian church that Paul established. Acts 16:12-40; Acts 20:6 (his second visit). For home study, read unprinted portion of lesson in Acts 28:25-29. Notice comments in "Theme For This Quarter." Paul clearly states that the Jews had closed their hearts against the gospel and that the Gentiles would open their heart.

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

How different this world would be if everyone who was convinced that Jesus was truly the Saviour of the world and that there is a heaven for those to go to who are truly "born again" and made a "new creature in Christ Jesus" would live according to God's Word. Many will tell you they believe this but they do not live up to their convictions. Many will agree with you that there is a hell prepared for "the devil and his angels" and for those who reject Jesus as their Saviour but they do not live as if they wanted to miss that place. They believe the lies of the devil who tells them they have plenty of time to get ready. Or, in plain truth, they lack the courage to be different from the majority of people or those they mingle with or face in this life. Oh, for more of the God-given courage Paul had! Paul was persuaded and thoroughly convinced that Jesus truly was the Saviour and Deliverer from sin for all who would come to Him. He loved Jesus for forgiving Him of his sins and giving him that "peace that passeth understanding" deep down in his very soul and being, and he wanted others to love Jesus, too. He wasn't satisfied to enjoy being saved alone. He wept and longed for his people and the Gentiles to be saved. Again and again he risked his life that they might believe on Jesus. This gave him great courage. In our lesson we find that he gladly suffered that others might know about Jesus. He called being in prison with a chain to hold him and a guard to guard him as "bonds for Christ." Through those bonds, many were blessed. The brethren were given more confidence in God and "waxing . . . more bold to speak the word without fear." Paul said, "I am set for the defense of the gospel." He said, "I am not ashamed but with all boldness . . . Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." (Phil. 1:17-23) Paul was sold out to God, dead to the desires of the flesh and all that the world had to offer. God stood by him. Even those in the king's household were saved. Many believed because of his God-given courage that came from a full surrender to God.

—M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A considerable amount of Paul's time was spent under some type of physical restriction. Stocks, chains, prisons, house arrests, etc., but these all fade into insignificance when we consider the real bondage he was under. Physical oppressions can be and are imposed upon one by outside forces and do not need nor require any strength of character or moral scruples.

Many a mortal has spent a large segment of his life under restrictions of some kind, but it did not make him any more holy. Wicked men who commit great crimes against society, when apprehended are required by society to pay for the crime committed, but society is not able to change the condition of the heart of the offender. He was wicked before the crime and he will still be wicked after he has paid the penalty unless he finds and accepts the Saviour. This is what separates the Christian and makes him stand apart from others who offend. They offend because of carnal lustful influences, but the Christian offends the same society because he loves them and seeks to get them to change their sinful ways. Carnal influence is a tyrant that drives men to do things they did not really want nor intend to do, but love works strictly on a voluntary basis. Jesus said if ye love me ye will keep my commandments. Paul endured the hardships of the flesh, not because he was forced to or could not help himself, but because he loved the Lord with all his heart and wanted others to know of the Lord, too. His persecution would have ceased if he had laid down Christ and quit preaching His doctrine. But souls would have perished as a consequence and Paul's love for them could not tolerate that when all it required for them to hear and be saved was for him to endure a little physical restriction. There is no bondage that equals the bondage of love. —C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. Into what two groups does the preaching of the gospel and its power divide or separate people? 2. To some of the Jews, Paul's bonds meant disgrace, but to others and to Paul himself, what did it mean? 3. What caused Paul to want to see the Jewish leaders in Rome? Had they not caused him great trouble in other cities? 4. What did Epaphroditus bring from the Philippian church that Paul had established? What did Paul tell them? 5. How much did the gospel affect Caesar?

### THE MARTYRS OF THE EARLY MORNING CHURCH

The nature of the conflicts endured by the martyrs in the persecution.

Then, indeed, vast numbers of the prelates of the church endured with a noble resolution the most appalling trials, and exhibited instances of illustrious conflicts for the faith. Vast numbers, however, of others, broken and relaxed in spirit, by timidity before the contest, voluntarily yielded at the first onset. But of the rest, each encountered various kinds of torments. Here was one that was scourged with rods, there

another tormented with the rack and excruciating scrapings, in which some at the time endured the most terrible death; others again passed through other torments in the struggle. Here one, whilst some forced him to the impure and detestable sacrifices, was again dismissed, as if he had sacrificed, although this was not the case. There another, though he had not in the least approached the altar, not even touched the unholy thing, yet when others said that he had sacrificed, went away, bearing the calumny in silence. Here one, again taken up when half dead, was thrown out as if he were already dead; there another, again lying upon the ground was dragged a long distance by the feet, and numbered among those that had sacrificed. One, however, would cry out, and with a loud voice declare his abhorrence of the sacrifice. Another exclaimed that he was a Christian, furnishing, by confession, an illustrious example of this salutary name. Another asserted that he neither had sacrificed nor intended to sacrifice; but these were forced to silence by numerous bands of soldiers, prepared for this purpose, by whom they were struck on the face and cheeks, and violently driven away. Thus the enemies of religion, upon the whole, deemed it a great matter even to appear to have gained some advantage. But these things did not avail them much against the saints, to give an exact account of whom no description could suffice. —Eccl. History.

We thank God for those who suffered to preserve this glorious gospel for us and are our examples of courage. They are at rest with Jesus today.

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December 13, 1970

## **GARMENTS OF THE RENEWED SOUL**

**Colossians 3:1, 5-13; Philemon 9-11, 16**

Col. 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.



8 But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Philemon 9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?

**Memory Verse:** And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Col. 3:14.

**Central Thought:** There is a definite change in one's life when he has been made a "new creature in Christ Jesus."

**Word Definition:** Mortify means to destroy its strength. Inordinate means unnatural. Concupiscence means strong and vehement desire of any kind. Blasphemy means injurious speaking.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

As we study our lesson, let us remember the Apostle Paul wrote these letters while in Rome as a prisoner. He was visited by Epaphras (Ep-a-fras) in Rome. (Col. 1:7, 8, 9) He was the minister of the Colossian church. No doubt, Paul was the one who helped establish the church there as it is about 100

miles from Ephesus and he worked in and around there for three years. (Acts 19:10) Even though Paul was far from them he still loved them and carried a burden and concern for their spiritual welfare.

The letter to the Colossians was taken to them by Tychicus. (Col. 4:7) It seems that a number of young men visited Paul. No doubt they were attracted to him by the manly soul within him, in which they found sympathy with their aspirations and inspirations for the most noble work which is a work for God. In reading about him we find that Timothy, Luke, Mark, Aristarchus, Tychicus and Epaphras and many more came to be refreshed from the ardent love that Paul had for Jesus and the furtherance of God's kingdom in the world. Paul also sent them forth again to work for God with renewed courage.

The letters to Colossians and to Philemon were written in A. D. 62. Philemon lived in Colosse and his slave, Onesimus (O-nēs-i-mus) had fled to Rome after defrauding his master. After he found Paul he was converted and Paul persuaded him to return to Philemon. He took this letter from Paul, asking him to give him brotherly treatment and to forgive him for any errors. Paul asked Philemon to charge to his own account any debt owed by Onesimus. Onesimus was putting off his old life and putting on the new by retracing his steps.

**Lesson References: Romans 5:1-12; Eph. 4:24.**

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The climax of our lesson is the tenth verse. Man must come back to that Eden state from which he fell. We must be "risen with Christ," who is our life if we are dead to the world and our life hid with Christ in God. The same power that brought Jesus out of the grave can resurrect our souls out of a dead state in sin. Then we can put on the new garments of righteousness through the power of God.

We are justified by faith in Christ. We are to put off the deeds mentioned in our lesson and ask forgiveness with godly sorrow, accepting the precious blood of Jesus as a propitiation for our sins. (1 John 2:1, 2) The "old man" is the root or the cause of the sins. That is the sin principle or the inherited sin that "passed upon all men" from the fall of Adam. (Rom. 5:12) This sin principle is cleansed or purged out by the Holy Ghost. Sanctify means to cleanse and Paul tells us that we are "sanctified by the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 15:16) Peter spoke of the work wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost as "purifying their hearts by faith." (Acts 15:9) Through the fall of Adam and Eve man lost the image of God in which they were

created, but through Christ's atonement we are justified by His blood and sanctified by His blood (Heb. 10:10; 13:12). We can't ask forgiveness for the sin principle, but it is cleansed as we come to God after our volitional sins or sinful deeds have been forgiven. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Ephesians 4:24. —M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We are all individuals—separate, distinct, and independent one of another, and yet we are amazed when we realize how the gospel disregards these bounds and puts us all together in one category! "For ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" "except ye repent ye shall ALL likewise perish;" "ALL we like sheep have gone astray," "there is none that doeth good, no not one." According to these texts mankind as a whole was surely in need of help of some kind. Here is the remarkable part, for when salvation came it came on an individual basis! Just a little consideration will tell us why, for every man has an intellect of his own and a will of his own and the ability to choose for himself, and of course salvation would have to be presented to every individual separately for him to dispose of as he sees fit for himself.

But notice this now. Just as soon as a man decides for Christ and yields himself to the influences of Christianity, the individual barriers begin to tumble down again and we find ourselves again being classified along with a whole—"there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision . . . but Christ is all, and in all." No political separation, no race separation, no religious separation, no prison-bar separation—for all are broken down when each individual falls down in humility and finds mercy for his soul in the salvation of Christ. To attempt to bring any of the old barriers over will only cause the individual to fail to enter in himself. All this must be left behind in order to enter in to Christ. All who enter in must have put on Christ and will manifest the qualities and characteristics of Christ for these are the garments He is clothed with. If all the old is left behind and the new put on, he will have nothing else to display but the righteousness of God through Christ. When some of these other qualities begin to show up it is not an indication that the church is no longer pure, nor that Christ has lost His power; it simply means that someone has not fully laid aside all and completely put on Christ. Those who have completely put on Christ will not be crossing up with each other, for all will blend together smoothly and evenly to make up one whole. Jesus found a man at the very last who

had not on a wedding garment and he was cast into outer darkness, because he did not fit with the whole. How sad!

—C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. Where was Paul when he wrote the letter to the Colossians? 2. Name some of the things that people commit that brings the "wrath of God" upon them. 3. What does it mean to put off the old man with his deeds? 4. Name some of the virtues we are to put on. 5. Tell something about the letter written by Paul to Philemon about Onesimus.

### "THE SINNER'S PRAYER

Upon the day of Pentecost, when Peter was preaching to those wicked men who crucified the Son of God, and told them of their sins and of the way of deliverance, they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." There was mercy for everyone of them, notwithstanding their former wickedness.

While traveling with a minister in the South, a few years ago, we came to a place in Mississippi where a series of meetings were being held. This was considered a very wicked community. We earnestly prayed for the salvation of souls, and conviction rested upon the people. It seemed that the more the power of God was manifested in conviction, the more the enemy of souls tried to work in opposition to it. One night, just as services were about to begin, someone informed the congregation of the condition of affairs, asking the brethren to pray for protection and deliverance from the power of the enemy. We had a glorious meeting. The next day we learned that a number of those wicked young men, after spending some time in drinking liquor had started for the place of meeting, and when within a few rods of the place, came to a small creek or stream, which was frozen over, it being midwinter. The ice was smooth and slick. They tried for a long time to cross, but could not do so, as on account of their intoxicated condition, they would fall on the ice. At times they would almost reach the other side, but seemingly could not quite make it, so finally abandoned their purpose of breaking up the meeting.

The next night the house was crowded, and the members of the mob were present. The Spirit of the Lord accompanied the preaching of the Word and great conviction rested upon the people. When opportunity was given for those who de-

sired to seek the Lord to come forward, more than thirty persons speedily made their way to the front and began calling mightily upon the Lord. Soon the leader of the mob was there upon his knees, pleading for mercy, and one after another of his companions followed his example. After a short time, the leader rose, weeping, and confessed publicly concerning his sins and their former intentions of breaking up the meeting, also, stating that he realized it to be the power of God which kept them from crossing the creek the night before. He cried out, "I am the worst man in the whole country," then fell upon his knees, calling earnestly upon God for mercy. In a few minutes he arose, praising God for deliverance and was happy in the Saviour's love. He then besought his companions to seek peace to their souls. Nearly two years later, this man was taken sick and died, and his father informed me that he passed away rejoicing in the Lord.

There is hope for anyone who will seek the Lord while He may be found. —E. E. Byrum (The Secret of Prayer)

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December 20, 1970

### WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

Eph. 6:10-20; Titus 1:5; 3:12

Eph. 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: [prisoner in Rome] that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

(Paul wrote a letter to Titus after being tried and released from prison in Rome.)

Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee [Paul left Titus] in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

3:12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

**Memory Verse:** Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 2 Tim. 2:3.

**Central Thought:** Carnal weapons and spiritual weapons are never used together. Only those with the spiritual armour on will be able to stand against the enemy.

**Word Definition:** Wiles means sly tricks or deceit. Loins means hips and lower abdomen. Principalities means "the territory ruled by a prince." Satan is the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Eph. 2:2; 1 John 4:3-5.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon were written near the close of Paul's imprisonment in Rome in A. D. 63. When Paul sent Onesimus back he sent Tychicus along, also. Tychicus takes the letter to the Ephesians, parts of which are in our lesson today. (Col. 4:7-9)

The account of Paul's life in Rome by Luke in the book of Acts does not tell us about his trial there before Nero. Fortunately the three letters written after the close of Acts reveals some interesting facts. In them we find that he must have been released from imprisonment as he wrote to Philemon that he expected to visit him. (Phil. 22) Also in 1 Tim. 3:14 he wrote that he was expecting to return to Ephesus before

long where he had left Timothy when he went on into Macedonia. This is a different situation from that recorded in Acts, so it seems definite that Paul did this after being released from prison in Rome. Also in Titus 1:5 we read that Paul had been on the Island of Crete and had done pioneer missionary work. That was his reason for the instructions given to Titus, recorded in our lesson, which was written after his release from the Roman prison. Only once before had he been there, and then as a prisoner on his way to Rome. So we conclude that Nero in Rome found no fault in him and released him. Note in our printed portion in Titus, which Paul wrote after his release, he asked Titus to come to Nicopolis, Macedonia, but to wait until Artemas or Tychicus should arrive so the work would not be without a pastor. (Fourth century historian, Eusebius, relates Paul was released from prison.)

The First Epistle of Clement, not a part of our Bible, but written nevertheless toward the close of the first century, indicates that before his death Paul had preached "as far as the confines of the West." This would have been after his release from prison. No doubt his plan to preach the gospel in Spain was fulfilled. (Rom. 15:18.)

—M. Miles

**Lesson References:** Rom. 13:12; John 12:31; 1 John 5:4; Hebrews 4:12.

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

This Christian armour is not made with iron nor by man. It is an armour that is stronger than iron and made by Someone who is more powerful than man. This is a spiritual armour. The Apostle Paul explains this armour more fully in 2 Cor. 10:2-5: "I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." We do not fight, nor war as others in this world. When we have on the whole armour of the Lord we can face the enemy of our soul and the problems of life with confidence, knowing our Lord, who gave us the armour, knew exactly what we needed for every battle. We notice in the above Scripture that when we have on this armour we can "through God" pull "down strong holds; casting down imaginations." The devil tries to build some strong holds which means "a secure refuge" in our minds. We need to use this armour on these strong holds, such as doubts, fears, wrong attitudes,

doing something in one's own strength, and many more things of such nature. He will even tell you lies about your brother and then keep trying to make you believe them. If you are not careful you will be considering it and he will have begun to build up a place in your mind that will act to destroy your fellowship or bring a wedge between you and him. In this case, get the "sword of the Spirit," which is the Word of God, and use it on those strongholds. Cut out wrong thoughts; cut deep until every trace of it is gone. Use the "shield of faith," which is stronger than iron, to stand between your mind and heart and every evil work of Satan. Walk with confidence, having your feet shod with peace and your heart and life covered through the blood of Jesus with righteousness from God. Pray always and be careful to watch your heart, thoughts, and actions, that they all are according to God's Word. After you have done all, then just stand. "Stand still" and see the salvation or deliverance from the Lord for you. Be faithful soldiers for God.

In verse 12 we read about the different orders of evil spirits who are employed by the devil to prevent the spreading of the gospel. It seems very plain today that we are fighting with the Christian armour "against spiritual wickedness in high places." That is sectism which claims to be of God, but does not obey His commands. Rulers in darkness are those in political authority and our rulers. Most of them are against godliness.

—M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God's kingdom is a kingdom of love and joy and peace and good will and righteousness forever. It seeks to distribute itself throughout the whole world and advances a standing invitation that whosoever will may come and take of its waters of life freely. It appeals to every soul and speaks to every heart in an effort to persuade folks to turn from their evil and do right. Its converts with a heart full of heavenly love seek to influence others to yield to its wooing and find peace with God, and the angels yearn for every soul to come and be saved. The Holy Spirit gently pleads with every heart to turn to God and find rest.

On the other hand is the kingdom of darkness ruled by the arch fiend of the pits of hell and aided and abetted by the mighty host of imp and devil spirits that he uses to trap and ensnare souls to keep them away from God. This working force has no principal nor moral scruple of any kind. It will take every advantage all the time. It knows no mercy. It has no compassion. Its motives are only corrupt and foul. Its rewards are,



misery and death. It threatens, abuses, crushes down, and oppresses. It takes folks captive and enslaves them under bondage to awful destructive habits and entanglements of all kinds that break God's laws and leave their souls condemned before a just God.

Now, how could the forces and influences of either side be used to promote the interest of the other? Could pure love ever bind a soul under the bondage of a cigarette habit? Or would righteousness ever cause a man to curse and swear and take God's name in vain? On the other hand, would it ever be possible to accuse and abuse and crush a man down until he would turn to God to be saved? Is it possible to deceive and trap and snare men's souls into the Kingdom of God? No, these are all so completely contrary until they become ridiculous. Romans 8:7, 8, says, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Thank God for that heavenly host who have been washed in the fountain of His blood, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, having been born again of spiritual birth, and who go forth wielding the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of Truth, breaking down the strongholds of the enemy by revealing his lies and uncovering his deceit and breaking the chains that bind and setting the captives free by the power of the gospel.

—C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. Since our enemy, Satan, is a spirit and is stronger than mankind, what kind of an armour would we have to use to fight against him? 2. Through what agencies here in this world does the devil fight the Christian? 3. Name the different parts of the Christian armour and how they are obtained. 4. From the "Lesson Background" what do we learn about Paul from historians and parts of some of the letters he wrote about being released from prison in Rome? 5. Relate what Paul wrote to Titus after his release from prison.

## **PREPARATIONS MADE FOR A CROWN**

**December 27, 1970**

**Hebrews 2:9; 16-18; 2 Tim. 1:8, 12, 13; 4:6-8, 22**

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

17 Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that he [Jesus] himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

[Paul's last words while in his second imprisonment in Rome, just before he was beheaded.]

2 Tim. 1:8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

**Memory Verse:** I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 2 Tim. 4:7.

**Central Thought:** The gospel makes the noblest heroes.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

It has not been definitely proved, but most believed that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews as its style and the burden of the writer reflect Paul's calling. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A. D., therefore it was written before that time. Our reason for taking a few verses from Hebrews is to bring our minds to the birth and purpose of Jesus, the Son of God, in coming to this world.

The book of II Timothy is decidedly the writings of Paul and is his last letter. It is very personal in nature and in it we find that Paul had been arrested again and was a prisoner in Rome after having been released the first time. We read in the fourth chapter, verses 16, 17 where he had only the Lord to stand with him while going through the preliminary examination of his trial. Though he was, for a time "delivered out of the mouth of the lion" he knew that it would not be for long as Nero, the wicked Roman ruler, was enraged against the Christians, whom he accused of setting Rome on fire, but some are convinced he had it done himself to use as a weapon against the Christians.

"Paul was in his second imprisonment at Rome, and but a short time before his martyrdom. And as the Christian Church has generally agreed that this apostle's martyrdom took place on the 29th of June, 66 A. D. . . . It is supposed that Paul went from Crete to Rome, about the end of the year 65, on hearing of the persecution which Nero was then carrying on against the Christians, on pretense that they had set Rome on fire." —Clarke's Com.

"All tradition places the martyrdom of Paul before the death of Nero. At some time, we know not just when or where, Paul's head was laid on the block. There was a stroke of the executioner's axe, and all was over. But nay, in a truer sense, this was only the beginning—the commencement of an eternity to be spent in the presence of Christ. . . . The date of our epistle would be 67 or 68 A. D. toward the end of Nero's reign." —Homiletic Com. So we find the date of Paul's death uncertain.

Lesson References: Gal. 4:4; Col. 1:16, 17; 1 Tim. 1:15; 2 Tim. 4:15-18.

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Oh, what a different world this would be if everyone who thought about giving gifts at this time of the year would think about the greatest Gift that was ever given. But sad to say, many just use this time as a time of committing greater sins

by rejecting Christ and leaving Him out of all their plans. Business men use this time as a time to commercialize upon the name of Christ. It is a time when money is being wasted and a time of much drinking and revelry which is called celebrating the birth of a Saviour. But, thank God for those who truly love that "unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15), Jesus Christ, which the Apostle Paul refers to. They worship him at this time of the year in an acceptable manner. They give gifts to those near them in memory of Jesus Christ, and as the wise men gave gifts to Jesus Christ, and as God gave us "his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life," because of His great love for the world.

Jesus Christ, the gift of God to us, took on flesh and blood and not the nature of angels. Paul explicitly teaches Christ's pre-existence with God and the human element in his person. He was born of woman, but God was His Father. He came into the world without the sin principle within him as he was born of the Holy Ghost, yet was in the flesh. He felt pain as His flesh was as our flesh. He felt sadness, grief, and wept and longed for love. Yet he knew what joys meant. He blessed those who recognized Him to be the Son of God. He was tempted in all points as we are and knows how to help us today. That little "bundle from heaven" that the angels sang about and the shepherds left their sheep to go and see and the wise men traveled from afar to worship had everything in it that mankind needs today. Only those who humble themselves before Him can receive that need. God did all He could to prepare the way for us to have a crown.

Our lesson in Timothy includes some of the last words of Paul. He is pointing us to Jesus, of whom he was not ashamed. He knew his death was very near and he looked back over his life. He found that Jesus truly had been a "merciful and faithful Helper to him. Through Christ's power he had "fought a good fight," and "kept the faith." Not only did he look forward to the crown of life for himself, but for "all those that love his appearing." I am glad you and I can be in that number if we will prepare to live with Jesus in eternity. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The provision for our crown has been a long time in preparing. It was in the mind of God from the time He began the creation. When God made man as he did with intelligence and volition and then exposed him to opposing power, of course He knew there was a possibility man would fall. Along with that realization came a solution for the problem in the event it should be needed, and so He speaks of the Saviour as a

"Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." That was before man fell, so God must have had it in idea form only, to be used only in the event that man did fall. Sure enough, man fell and lost his lofty and holy estate before God and so God had to set about to initiate His plan of salvation. When the time was right, He sent Christ into the world, suffered Him to bleed and die and then He resurrected Him again to life the third day, and he is alive forever more. Then He invited all mankind to come and take of the water of life freely. Christ had opened the way and told us how to be saved—by following in His footsteps—and so the plan of salvation was effected. God's part was completed at Pentecost, and so whatever else is lacking must be supplied by each one of us individually.

All who will humble their hearts and seek His pardoning grace are making preparations for a crown. All who remain faithful to God and press against the opposing power of the enemy are making preparation for a crown. All who endure hardness as good soldiers of the cross and become not weary in well doing are preparing to reap a crown. Be not weary, fellow Christian, but take courage and labor on in full assurance of faith, knowing there is a crown in store for each faithful one at the end of the way. Read Song No. 37 in "Evening Light Songs."

—C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. Did Paul write a life of Christ? Why not? 2. Show how Paul teaches the pre-existence of Christ. 3. Discuss why the celebrations of Christmas by the world are not in conformity with the spirit of Christ, our Saviour. 4. Tell about Nero, Paul's second imprisonment and supposed date of his being beheaded. 5. Relate Paul's last words and how they touch us today in our purposes and our end.

### END OF NERO'S REIGN

Josephus writes that the Jews were scourged with rods, and nailed upon the cross at Jerusalem by Florus who was the procurator of Judea at the commencement of the war, in the twelfth year of Nero's reign. "Then," says he, "throughout all Syria a tremendous commotion seized upon the inhabitants, in consequence of the revolt of the Jews. Everywhere did the inhabitants of the cities destroy the Jews without mercy. So that you could see the cities filled with unburied corpses, and the dead bodies of the aged mingled with those of children, and women not even having the necessary covering of their bodies. The whole province, indeed, was filled with indescrib-

able distresses. But greater still than the crimes already endured, was the anticipation of those that threatened."

—Josephus Historian during life of Christ and Apostles

### VAIN CUSTOM

"Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you . . . Learn not the way of the heathen. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not." Jer. 10:1-3.

We gladly accept the prophecy of the cars that is given in Nahum which reads, "The chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings." Nahum 2:3, 4. But what about accepting the above prophecy of the Christmas trees as they are called that people cut down and put up in their homes and deck them. Some might say, "Why, that is just a tree. We don't worship it." Well, if you give it a close examination you might feel differently when you think of those who never think of Christ who came as a lowly babe in the manger as the greatest Gift from God to man. Something has taken the place of Christ in the home. The children don't see anything about the tree that makes them think of Christ as their Saviour. It has come between God and mankind in the world today. Christ is left out. Would not the prophets be given a prophecy of the Christmas tree as well as cars? I am sure there are enough trees decorated for it to be considered by God as well as the cars. God is concerned about all things in our lives. "The customs of the people are vain." —M. Miles

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