



STORY

Paul the Prisoner - Acts 21:15 - 26:32

1/7/04

TEACHER PRAYER

O Lord, Your Almighty Word is very important. Its holy law shows us our many, many sins. Its glorious gospel shows us our dear Savior. Help me to proclaim the whole counsel of God in my classes, “rightly dividing the Word of Truth.” Enable my students to treasure Your Word and remain faithful to it all their days. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

VOCABULARY

mean - insignificant, small

thongs - a narrow strip of leather, used as a lace or strap

courtesy - politeness, graciousness

OUTER AIM

Paul suffered much for the sake of the gospel.

INNER AIM

The Lord used Paul to advance His Kingdom

BACKGROUND

 (*Rupprecht, Bible History References, Vol. 2, pp. 586-598*)

Shortly after his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul heard that he would suffer many things for the sake of the Gospel and Jesus, his Savior and Lord. In his epistle he describes them. (II Cor. 11:23-27) He often alluded to them in his writings. This story records a series of imprisonments beginning at Jerusalem and extending to Rome.

Acts 21:15-26 As Paul headed to Jerusalem, various disciples warned him not to go there. They spoke of great dangers awaiting him. They even pleaded with him not to go there. (cf. previous verses) Paul knew what lay ahead. He was determined to go and was ready to suffer, if the Lord so willed. Paul met with the apostles and leaders at Jerusalem. He told them of his journeys, and they rejoiced.

Acts 21:27-40 Only a few days later, Paul was arrested in Jerusalem. Jews from Asia Minor stirred up the crowd against Paul and accused him of many things. A tumult followed. Paul was rescued by the Romans. He requested to defend himself and to speak to the people. Permission was granted.

Acts 22:1-30

Paul explained at some length who he was, what he had done, and what he was now doing. He reviewed for them what his life had been before his conversion. He also conveyed to them what happened to him on the day of his conversion and what had been doing since that day. When they heard about the gentiles being a part of his ministry, the Jews could listen no longer. They would have killed him, but the Romans whisked him away. The Romans would have scourged and interrogated him; but when they learned that he had Roman citizenship, they were afraid. They couldn’t understand why the Jews hated him so. They hoped to find out.

Acts 23

Paul was placed on trial before the chief priests and the Jewish high council (the Sanhedrin). Paul explained to all present why he was on trial. Since some believed in the resurrection (Pharisees) and some did not (Sadducees), the Council was divided. A great dissension and tumult followed. The Roman commander again rescued Paul from his enemies. The Lord reassured Paul that He was with him and would help him. (v. 11) There was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill Paul. It was revealed to the Roman commander. Paul was kept safe until he could be escorted safely to Caesarea and the Roman governor.

Acts 24:1-27

vs. 1-9 Paul is charged by his accusers from Jerusalem.

Vs. 10-27 Paul is permitted to defend himself before the Roman governor concerning the charges levied against him. Felix was moved by Paul's testimony. (His wife was Jewish.) He postponed a decision concerning Paul until a more convenient time. (v. 25) He hoped to let Paul go free and was hoping for a bribe from Paul's friends. Paul remained a prisoner in Caesarea for two years.

Acts 25:1-12

Festus replaced Felix as governor of Judea. Again there was a plot against Paul at Jerusalem. Festus kept Paul safe in Caesarea. Paul's accusers again came to Caesarea. Many charges were levied against him, but none could be proven. Paul was permitted to defend himself. Festus encouraged Paul to go back to Jerusalem to be tried in the Jewish court. Paul appealed to Caesar to have his case heard.

Acts 25:13-27 Paul's Defense Before King Agrippa

Festus knew Paul had done nothing worthy of death. He told King Agrippa about the case. The king wanted to hear Paul for himself.

Acts 26 - King Agrippa permitted Paul to speak for himself in his own defense. Paul recounted his pre-conversion life and post-conversion life. He used the opportunity to proclaim Christ. Festus thought Paul was mad, out of his mind. King Agrippa was deeply moved and confessed that he was almost persuaded to become a Christian. All those present realized that Paul was innocent of all the charges levied against him and could have been released. Since he appealed to Caesar, he would be sent to Rome.

STUDENTS' PRAYER TLH #498: 1, 5

Rise, Thou Light of Gentile nations, Jesus, bright and Morning Star;
Let Thy Word, the gladsome tidings, Ring out loudly near and far,
Bringing freedom to the captives, Peace and comfort to the slave,
That the heathen, free from bondage, May proclaim Thy power to save.

May our zeal to help the heathen Be increased from day to day
As we plead in true compassion And for their conversion pray.
For the many faithful heralds, For the Gospel they proclaim,
Let us all be cheerful givers To the glory of Thy name. Amen.

PRESENTATION

There is more than one Bible story within this lesson. It covers both Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem and in Caesarea. A number of individuals appear in this lesson, people to whom Paul proclaimed Christ. A listing of these individuals and their titles, together with a map of the places mentioned, might be helpful.

APPLICATION

The Lord predicted concerning Paul: “He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” (Acts 9:15-16) In this lesson we have a graphic fulfillment. Paul appears before a Jewish king and queen, a Roman governor, actually two Roman governors. He appears before both Jews and Gentiles. “The Lord moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.” Had Paul not become a prisoner, some of these individuals would never have had such an opportunity to hear the Gospel. The Lord opens doors in very special ways today, also. He guides and leads us, as He did Paul.

The Lord was with Paul, blessing and keeping, protecting and defending him . . . so also He is with us.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

Psalm 50:15 - Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

Psalm 124:8 - Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

I Peter 5:7 - casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you,

Middle

Matt: 16:24 - If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Acts 14:22 - We must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God.

I Peter 1:5 - You are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Upper

Romans 8:28 - and we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Romans 10:17 - So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

II Tim. 4:18 - and the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me for His heavenly Kingdom: To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!

I Peter 5:6-7 - Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him for He cares for you.

HYMN CHOICES

Awake, Thou Spirit, Who Didst Fire” - TLH #494

There Still Is Room - TLH #509

Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun - TLH #511