

# Paul the Prisoner

Acts 21:15 - 26:32

Many people are persecuted for what they believe. Christians were persecuted to the point that they were thrown in jail and even killed.

Paul used to be someone who persecuted Christians, but God called him to preach to the Gentiles.

Now we read of him being taken to prison where he must defend himself against the Jews.



## 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.

## The Story - Acts 21-26 (paraphrased)

When Paul had come to Jerusalem, the brethren gladly received him. On the following day, Paul went to James. He told them all about the work God had given him to do with the Gentiles and how the Word of God was spread to them. When they heard it, they glorified the Lord.

Paul went to the temple to bring an offering, but some of the Jews stirred up the crowd, dragged him out of the temple and tried to kill him. The commander of the army stopped the beating and took Paul away in chains amid the shouting of the crowd.

Paul asked the commander if he could

speak to the crowd; and when he said, "Yes," Paul told the people about his former life of persecuting the Christians and also his conversion on the way to Damascus where Jesus Christ appeared to him and asked why he was persecuting Him. He told them about his work of spreading the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Jews did not want to hear this about the Gentiles and became furious. The guards led him away and were going to beat him to find out why the crowd hated him. Paul stopped them by saying he was a Roman citizen.

The next day Paul was brought before



the chief priests, Sadducees and Pharisees. They could not agree if Paul was speaking the truth and argued among themselves. Paul was taken away to protect him from these angry men. The following night he was told by the Lord, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

The Jews hated Paul and his message so much that they formed a conspiracy and made an oath together. They would not eat until they had killed Paul. Forty of the Jews were planning an ambush for the next day, but Paul's nephew heard about the plot and told Paul who told one of the centurions.

Paul was escorted to Caesarea early in the morning to Felix, the Roman governor, with 370 soldiers for protection. The Jewish high priest and elders came and gave testimony against Paul telling lies about him and how he caused problems in the temple and broke Jewish laws.

Paul defended himself before Felix saying he was innocent of the charges brought against him, and the charges could not be proven true. He also talked about the Word of God.

When Felix heard these things, having heard about Christianity, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "I will make a decision on your case." So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him. Paul was kept here for two years. Felix often brought Paul to him to hear about faith in Christ. He also hoped Paul would give him money to be released.

After two years, Festus succeeded Felix as governor. The high priest and chief men from Jerusalem now pleaded with Festus to hand Paul over to them so they could kill him. But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor,

asked Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?"

So Paul said, "I was born a Roman citizen in Tarsus and therefore appeal to Caesar."

After some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews are asking for a judgment against him."

Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself."

"Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him."

So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in.

Festus said, "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me that he was not fit to live any longer. But I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death."

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself."

So Paul answered for himself and told of his life and his conversion to faith in Jesus Christ. He told of his ministry to the Gentiles teaching repentance and forgiveness of sins through Jesus.

Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

But Paul said, "I am not mad, but speak the words of truth. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become believers in Christ."

When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and

Bernice and those who sat with them. They talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains."

Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

After this Paul was taken to Rome.

## Outer Aim - Paul suffered much for the sake of the Gospel.

**What the Story Tells Us** - Fill in the blanks and then find those words in the WORD SEARCH. The words may be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and even backwards.

- \_\_\_\_\_ was spared being imprisoned and beaten because he was a \_\_\_\_\_ citizen.
- Paul was converted on his way to \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ appeared to Paul in the sky and asked him why he was \_\_\_\_\_ Him.
- Paul was told to preach to the \_\_\_\_\_ the Word of God.
- Some Jews formed a \_\_\_\_\_ to kill Paul.
- Paul was originally from \_\_\_\_\_.
- Paul was sent to the governor \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Paul was placed before the next governor, \_\_\_\_\_, when he was granted his appeal to \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ heard Paul's preaching and said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a \_\_\_\_\_."

PAUL	CAESAREA	CONSPIRACY	TARSUS	ROMAN
FELIX	CHRISTIAN	JESUS CHRIST	CAESAR	GENTILES
FESTUS	PERSECUTION	KING AGRIPPA	DAMASCUS	

R E P C O N S P I R A C Y P G E Y  
 F P E W O D Y S R M C F G L E A U  
 G A R B S U C S A M A D T O H J J  
 Y U S F D G J A H P E X C K T E K  
 N L E E R S G F P G S Z G A N S I  
 J N C L G D M I F M A J H Y A U L  
 R H U I T R R J T A R S U S I S O  
 O J T X H G S D J H E H Y O T C S  
 M U I G A O P I Y T A G D W S H J  
 A I O G E N T I L E S H S Y I R K  
 N O N G Y T F E S T U S S Y R I I  
 S I G H G H E J H S D F J D H S U  
 K S F B M K S G R A S E A C C T T

**What God's Word Tells Us** - Look up Romans 8:28, Romans 10:17, and 1 Peter 5:6-7. Fill in the blanks then discuss the meaning of these passages.

- ◆ Romans 8:28 - And we know that \_\_\_\_\_ work \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ to those who \_\_\_\_\_, to those who are the \_\_\_\_\_ according to His \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ Romans 10:17 - So then \_\_\_\_\_ come by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ 1 Peter 5:6-7 - Therefore \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves under the \_\_\_\_\_ hand of \_\_\_\_\_. that He may \_\_\_\_\_ you in due \_\_\_\_\_, casting \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ upon Him, for He \_\_\_\_\_ for you.

**Inner Aim** - The Lord used Paul to advance His Kingdom

## Your Turn

Paul was persecuted by being thrown in jail and beaten. We are blessed by being in a country that does not persecute Christians in that way. In what ways can Christians still be persecuted today? Have you ever been persecuted? Tell about your experiences.

## Passages

Matthew 16:24 - Then Jesus said to His disciples, "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."

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

## Hymn - TLH #511 v. 1, 2, 4, 6

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run,  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Blessings abound where'er He reigns;  
The pris'ner leaps, unloosed his chains,  
The weary find eternal rest,  
And all the sons of want are blest.

For Him shall endless prayer be made,  
And endless praises crown His head;  
His name, like sweet perfume, shall rise  
With ev'ry morning sacrifice.

Let every creature rise and bring  
Peculiar honors to our King;  
Angels descend with songs again,  
And earth repeat the loud Amen.

## Prayer

You are the Rock of my salvation; You are the strength of my life.  
You are my Hope and my Inspiration, Lord unto You will I cry.  
I believe in You, believe in You, for Your faithful love to me.  
You have been my Help in time of need; Lord unto You I cleave. Amen.