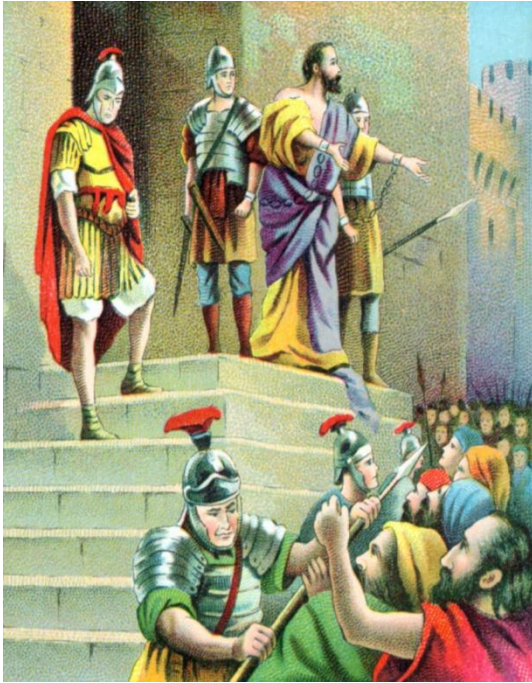


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 5



PAUL SPEAKS TO THE ANGRY CROWD

Scripture Text: Acts 22

Still in pain from the beating, just made prisoner, bound with two chains, guarded by soldiers is the way we left Paul in closing the last lesson. He stood on the castle stairs and spoke to the angry crowd below.

Paul gave a brief story of his early life and of his education. He told how zealous he had been toward God even unto persecuting Christians for their beliefs. He told of his conversion to Christ. He took them step-by-step from conviction to salvation. He told them how he had come to be different. Paul's testimony was the account of his transformation from a man like those he spoke to into the one he now was.

The important point in this lesson is that it was the power of conviction that struck Paul down on his journey. He was saved when he obeyed God's direction and went to a man of God for direction and instruction.

MEMORY VERSE: *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.*

—*Psalm 40:2*

DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**Isaiah 55** The great invitation to all.

Tue.—**1 John 5:6-12** Three bear witness and agree in one.

Wed.—**Joshua 24:16-27** It is our choice to serve God.

Thu.—**1 John 1** The test of righteousness.

Fri.—**Hebrews 10:1-18** Christ the once-for-all sacrifice.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 40 Delight in the will of the Lord.

Paul Tells of His Former Life

Acts 22:1-5 Paul quieted the crowd by speaking to them in their own language. **I am . . . a Jew**—the same as his accusers. **Born in Tarsus**—the chief city of Cilicia, famous for education and commerce. **Brought up in this city**—Jerusalem—**at the feet of Gamaliel**—a highly respected doctor of the Law, a Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin or council, the court of the Jews. Thus Paul had become a strict keeper of the Law and extremely zealous for it, even persecuting the saints **unto the death**.

Paul Tells of His Conviction

Acts 22:6-10 Paul had been as the crowd was now. He told them of the great change that had made the difference in his life. On the road to Damascus, Jesus had appeared to him. Here he realized for the first time that Jesus truly is the Son of God. **Who art thou, Lord?** Here he realized there was One Who had more power and authority than he had been given to bind and put to death. He also learned here that by persecuting the saints, he was actually persecuting Jesus. The voice said, **why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus . . . whom thou persecutest**. Paul said, **What shall I do, Lord?** The power of conviction was breaking down Paul's will,

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 5

and he was ready to do whatever Jesus told him. **Arise, and go into Damascus.** Christ could have saved Paul there, but He uses human instruments to lead souls to salvation. **There it shall be told thee** what I want you to do next.

Paul Tells of His Conversion

Acts 22:11-16 Paul told of being blind; he was **led by the hand . . . into Damascus.** Paul was led to the house of Ananias, **a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews . . . Brother Saul, receive thy sight . . . I looked up upon him.** Ananias told Paul what God had told him. **God . . . hath chosen thee . . . For thou shalt be his witness unto all men.** Here Paul was instructed in the requirement for his salvation. Would he pay the price and receive salvation, or would he fall back and be left out of God's Kingdom? **Now why tarriest thou?** All Heaven awaited his answer. The heart of Paul reached out to Jesus; he wanted Him at any price, his very soul cried out, yes Lord! **Be baptized,** thereby a testimony to all that your sins are washed away.

Ananias did not mean water could wash away sin. Only the blood of Christ can wash away sin (**1 John 1:7**). Christ made **one sacrifice for sins for ever (Hebrews 10:12)**. Water baptism is a symbol of the real washing. God commands that we be baptized to complete the experience—first, the real cleansing of the heart by Christ's blood, then the symbolic representation of it in water baptism.

Here Paul attempted to bridge the gap between the law-keeper and the Christian by explaining in detail the relationship between Ananias and himself. How could they deny it since Ananias was one of their own? Paul's speech was a testimony of his sin and God's forgiveness, of his salvation through Christ. It was the account of his transformation from a man like those he spoke to into the one he now was. In it was proof that Jesus is the Son of God. He stated that his life of evangelizing was not his plan but was directed by God. Paul loved to tell it.

The People Cry Against Paul

Acts 22:17-23 **And it came to pass . . .** Paul described an appearance of Jesus to him. Paul was praying in the temple at Jerusalem. Jesus warned him to leave Jerusalem. The people there would not accept his testimony of Jesus. Why? He had a painful memory of that day when he was a party to the death of Stephen. He reminded Jesus of this. Now he was on the other side. He was himself a Christian. To the Jews he was a turncoat—a traitor. Jesus said He would send him to the Gentiles. These facts were solid rock under him. They were assurance of the past and hope for the future. They were hope for everyone in the crowd. As Paul had been transformed, so could they be. That was Paul's burning desire. But they closed their minds to the Gospel. At this point in his story, the crowd broke into wild protest. They would hear no suggestion of Gentiles being admitted to God's favor equally with Jews. They called for Paul's death. **They cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air.** So blindly they lost their hope of eternal life. Unreasonable prejudice can shut out one from God's blessings.

Paul Taken Before the Council

Acts 22:24-30 Taken into the castle, Paul escaped scourging by pleading his Roman citizenship. The next day the council or Sanhedrin was called together and Paul was set before them.

God gave the Law as well as the Gospel. What had been right to observe did not suddenly become sin. The sin was to trust in the forms of the Law to save and to reject Christ Who alone can save. Paul, as did God, desired the Jews to pass freely from the Law to salvation. They were to turn their eyes from the Law to Christ. **By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified (Romans 3:20), but the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ (Galatians 3:24).** All of our faith must be fastened in Christ, not in works or forms. Christ must be held up as the only way of salvation (**Acts 4:12**).

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