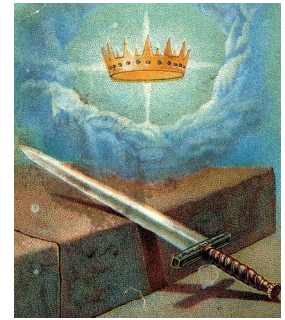




Church of God Sunday School

PAUL LOOKS FORWARD TO HIS REWARD

Acts 20:7-12; 25-26; 28:11-31



Paul was nearing the end of his life. It would not be long before he gained his eternal reward. Paul might have sensed this was coming, but God had some things for him to do first.

Paul, and those who had experienced shipwreck near Melita (*ME-luh-tuh*), stayed on the island for three months. Then they "departed in a ship of Alexandria." Paul was a prisoner, being taken to Caesar in Rome. When the ship landed at Puteoli (*poo-TEE-uh-lee*), in Italy, some Christians there asked Paul to stay with them for a week. Then Paul continued his journey to Rome.

When the Christians in Rome heard Paul was coming, some of them traveled to meet him. When Paul saw them, "he thanked God, and took courage." A few years before, Paul had written a letter to the Christians in Rome. In that letter, Paul had told of his desire to preach the Gospel to the people in Rome (Romans 1:10-12).

When Paul and the other prisoners reached Rome, "the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard." But Paul was not put in prison. He was allowed to live "by himself with a soldier that kept him." Paul rented a house, and a soldier was chained to Paul, so that he could not escape.

Paul lived in this house in Rome for two years. During this time many people came to see him, and he told them "those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ."

It might be that during this time Paul thought back over the many things that had happened during his life. Do you remember how Jesus visited Paul (then known as Saul) on the Damascus road? From that time on, God used Paul to preach the Gospel, to heal people, to teach the saints many wonderful truths of the Gospel, and even to witness before governors and kings.

One time Paul preached until midnight in the "upper chamber" of

a house. Many saints were listening to Paul, including a young man named Eutychus (*YOO-tuh-kuhs*), who was sitting in the window. Eutychus fell asleep, and then he fell out of the window to the ground, three stories below "and was taken up dead."

When "Paul went down" to where Eutychus was, he "fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him." Paul went back upstairs, and "talked a long while, even till break of day." After Paul departed, the young man was brought before the Christians so that everyone could see that he was alive!

Another time Paul was brought before the governor Festus. The Jews had brought "many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove." Festus had visitors—King Agrippa and his wife Bernice—who also heard Paul speak. Paul had a wonderful opportunity to give his testimony! Festus thought Paul was mad (crazy), but King Agrippa said to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Was "almost" close enough? Will "almost" get King Agrippa into Heaven?)

One day while Paul was a prisoner, he met a slave who had run away from his master. This slave's name was Onesimus (*oh-NES-uh-muhs*). Paul soon learned that the slave's master was a Christian (and also a friend of Paul's). His name was Philemon (*fi-LEE-muhn*).

Paul treated this slave kindly, and soon Onesimus became a Christian. He wanted to stay with Paul, but Onesimus knew that he had to go back to his master and make things right.

Paul wrote a letter to Philemon, asking him to treat Onesimus as a brother. Paul wrote that if Onesimus owed Philemon anything, Paul would pay it himself. This letter (or epistle) is in our Bible—The Epistle of Paul to Philemon. God was continuing to use Paul, even while he was a prisoner.



The Bible does not tell us how Paul died. History is not completely clear about this either. We do know that not long before he died, Paul wrote to Timothy, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). Paul had been faithful to all that God had asked him to do.

Paul then said, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness . . ." (2 Timothy 4:8). There was a reward awaiting Paul, just as there is a reward

waiting for every faithful child of God. Concerning this reward, Paul gave us some very good advice: "So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Corinthians 9:24b).

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."* —2 Timothy 4:7  
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**What did Paul say
about his life?**

"I have fought a good _____,

I have finished my _____,

I have kept the _____."