



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1755 ~ Paul's Life Threatened.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Often in news reports we hear of Christian villages being attacked and people being killed while others escape as refugees to another place. Yet there was one time in history when all Christians living in Jerusalem escaped death.

The Lord Jesus warned in Matthew, Chapter 24, that times of trouble would come. He warned that when His followers saw the Roman army coming, they should flee from Jerusalem with all speed. Those in the Judean countryside were to flee to the mountains. They weren't to delay by gathering their possessions but to run for their lives. Some Christians when they heard this didn't wait for the Roman army to appear – they moved themselves across the Jordan River to a place called Pella. Other Christians had already moved to Antioch in Syria ahead of this warning.

When the Romans did come in 66 AD, the commanding officer directed his troops to surround Jerusalem and besiege it. Yet suddenly and without any known cause, the siege was lifted at a time when the city could easily have been taken. The troops withdrew and this gave any Christians still living in Jerusalem a chance to escape. A few months later, when the Roman general Titus came and started his siege on the city, there wasn't a single Christian left inside.

By the end of that siege just 3 years later, over a million Jews had been savagely slaughtered by the Romans. 100,000 more had been taken away as slaves and not a single Jew remained in the city either. Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. This was God's judgment on the unbelieving Jewish nation, which had rejected and put to death His own Son, Jesus Christ.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, Paul too had a narrow escape from being killed.

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We start following Paul's travels again in Acts, Chapter 20. The Lord Jesus had said that He had no place to lay His head down and this could easily be said about Paul too.

When Paul found Titus in Macedonia, Paul spent the next year travelling in that region before returning to Corinth in southern Greece. He remained there for 3 months while writing his New Testament letter to the Romans. Many of Paul's letters were actually written before the four Gospels were. The letter to the Romans was written about 56 AD and is the most complete statement of the Gospel of Christ in the New Testament.

The main theme of the letter to the Romans is that all people are sinners, but that through faith in Christ, each person can be made righteous in God's sight and receive salvation and eternal life. But instead of worshipping only God, all people turn away to worship idols or something created rather than the Creator Himself, and they call the Gospel of Christ foolishness. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. To receive this power we must believe in Christ, for this power for salvation is given to everyone who believes, either Jew or Greek and other nationalities."

Paul wasn't ashamed to preach the Gospel even though it was very difficult at the time to be a Christian. Christians were despised and persecuted and in the eyes of the world, it was a shameful thing. Are we ashamed of the Gospel of Christ at all and so hide our faith? Are we ever afraid of what people might do to us or say about us?

In Matthew, Chapter 10, the Lord Jesus taught that those who declare publicly that they belong to Him, He will do the same for them before His Father in heaven. But to those who reject Him publicly, He will also reject before His Father in heaven. God's holiness has been revealed in His Son Jesus and Jesus never sinned. He was in every way pure and righteous like His Heavenly Father.

We too can share in the uprightness of God through faith in Jesus' redemptive work done for us on the cross. We have no holiness of our own and if we don't obtain the righteousness of God before we die, then God cannot accept us into heaven with Him. When we believe that God considers us righteous through Jesus' gift of salvation, we are accepted as members of His eternal kingdom. Every day thereafter, by faith and in the power of God's indwelling Holy Spirit, we aim to live godly lives.

The Biblical pattern ties doctrine and duty together, for what we really believe is demonstrated in how we behave. The Spirit of God transforms our life by renewing our mind but we also need to willingly give Him our whole body. When you give yourself to God, and especially in spiritual worship, you become a living sacrifice to the glory of God. You are part of the body of Christ with a ministry or purpose to fulfil. Ask the Lord what this is and do your part lovingly and joyfully in the power and encouragement of the Holy Spirit.

If you're living a godly life, you're sure to have enemies at some point. But leave all judgment about your enemies to the Lord. If you let the Lord have His way, He'll use your enemies to build you and make you more like Christ. Even though evil is all around us, we can with God's help overcome any type of evil with good. Just as light always overcomes darkness, so good always overcomes evil. Paul's words "overcome evil with good," are a command; not a suggestion! Whenever God gives us a command to follow in His Scriptures, He always provides the means and strength needed to carry out that command. We should always remember that we're not saved by works or by faith plus works; instead, we are saved by a faith in Christ that works.

Paul had planned to make a 4th missionary journey to Rome and then from there, go on to Spain. But Paul never had an opportunity to carry out his plan as he was arrested when he reached Jerusalem. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote the letter to the Romans; not only for them, but for us in this generation too.

From Corinth, Paul then planned to travel back to Syria by ship and then on to Jerusalem by road. But just as he was about to get on the ship, Paul heard that the Jews were plotting to kill him while he was on board. He quickly changed plans and decided to go back by land through Macedonia. However, Paul's travelling friends took the ship and when they reached Troas they waited for Paul to arrive.

Just how deep was the Jews' hatred for Paul and his teaching about the Lord Jesus! Yet if they knew what their own Scriptures meant, they would have known that God had told Moses in Leviticus, Chapter 19, to teach the Jewish people: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart." Paul was a fellow Jew and a former Pharisee. In Amos, Chapter 5, the Lord says: "Hate evil, love good." And Paul repeated such words in Romans, Chapter 12, when he said: "Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good."

The act of murder itself as was planned by the Jews against Paul was certainly condemned, but so was hatred as a ‘heart’ sin. Any hateful thought or act represents an act of murder in God’s eyes for which justice will be demanded, possibly not in this life but at Judgment Day for any unbelievers whose sins will still be counted against them.

So ugly is the position of hate before God that the Bible says that a person who hates another is said to be walking in darkness, as opposed to the light. The worst situation is when a person continues professing religion but remains in hostility with his brother. The Scriptures declare that such a person is a liar. Although he may fool people, he cannot fool God. How many believers live for years pretending that all is well, putting on a front to all who know them, only to be found wanting because they have harboured hatred against a fellow believer?

Hatred is a poison that destroys a person from within; it produces bitterness that eats away at our hearts and our minds. This is why the Scriptures tell us not to let a “root of bitterness” spring up in our hearts. Hatred also destroys the personal witness of a Christian because it removes him from fellowship with the Lord and other believers. Let us be careful to always do as the Lord advised and keep short accounts with everyone about everything, no matter how small. The Lord’s forgiveness extends to such matters as well.

After the ship of Paul-hating Jews left Corinth, Paul went back by foot to Philippi, where he met up with Luke again. Together they took a boat to Troas after celebrating the Passover at Philippi. The travelling friends waiting for Paul and Luke at Troas represented various churches; they were on their way to Jerusalem to provide relief for poor Jewish Christians.

Paul and Luke stayed in Troas for a week. On their last day there, which was Sunday, all the believers came together to share the Lord’s Supper. This is the first mention in the New Testament of Christians holding a weekly service on a Sunday, rather than on a Saturday like the Jews did.

The meeting was held in a 3rd-story room with many lamps burning. Paul spoke until midnight. One of those present, a young man named Eutychus, was sitting near a window and grew sleepy as Paul spoke. As Paul continued his teaching, Eutychus sank into a deep sleep and he fell out of the window onto the ground below. Those first on the scene declared Eutychus dead. Luke, the author of the book of Acts, was a doctor himself and he could tell with certainty that the young man was dead. But Paul put his arms around the young man and his life returned. The believers were greatly comforted by this.

Is there a simple lesson here for all of us? When we don't get adequate sleep on a Saturday night, we may not be able to concentrate on the sermon during the Sunday morning service. We can rob ourselves of gaining more knowledge about the Bible when we are too tired to really concentrate on what the preacher is saying.

After the believers returned to the upstairs room, they celebrated the Lord's Supper and they ate a meal together. Paul then continued speaking until it was daylight. He and Luke then boarded a ship to travel only a short distance to a city named Assos, the most western point in present-day Turkey.

In the finishing passage of Chapter 16 of Romans, Paul proclaimed: "Let us give glory to God! He is able to make you stand firm in your faith, according to the Good News I preach about Jesus Christ."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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