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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:
A1769 ~ Paul in Malta.

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

After the passengers and crew from Paul's great shipwreck waded to shore, they discovered they were on the small island of Malta, south of Sicily and Italy. The local people there were friendly and they helped the survivors to get warm and dry. They lit fires and everyone scoured the area for wood to burn. Paul brought a bundle of sticks and he placed them on the fire too. But a poisonous snake caught in with the sticks reached out and it bit Paul on the hand.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound.](#)

When the people of the island saw Paul bitten, they concluded that Paul must be a murderer, because although he'd escaped from the sea, the gods had found another way to punish him. But when Paul didn't suffer any harm, they changed their minds and they decided that Paul must be a god instead!

Paul had seen people change their minds like this before, particularly in Lystra, where men one moment were worshiping him as if he was a god and the next, they were stoning him like he was a dog. God had been with Paul at sea, and now He was still with him on land. Because of Paul, everyone on the ship had survived. Now, because of Paul, everyone sick on Malta came to him and were healed. The islanders honoured the survivors and they gave them provisions on their departure three months later in another ship that had taken winter in Malta.

Julius the centurion in charge of the prisoners too pondered how Paul could survive the bite of a poisonous snake. We sometimes hear of a few churches these days where the church leaders have poisonous snakes in their worship services to show that they're immune to a snake's bite too. But why would anyone do such a thing like this? When Paul was bitten accidentally, God protected him from harm. Some people, however, want to show that they have God's Holy Spirit in them too, so that just like Paul when he was bitten, they too should have no bad effects. This is a totally misguided perception and some have died needlessly when they haven't recovered from such snake bites.

How does a person show that they have the Holy Spirit in their lives? The Bible says it's by producing the fruit of righteousness in our lives! We're not to put ourselves at risk of harm and presume that God will then protect us from the bad consequences of our own actions. Sometimes Christian people feel that there's nothing dramatic happening in their lives worth sharing for witness to God's glory. So they try to find some!

One of the well-known Christian writers and preachers of the 19th Century was R.A. Torrey. He lived an amazingly busy life and his energy came from pouring himself into the Scripture. Once an educated man approached him complaining that he could get nothing out of his Bible study. He said the Scripture seemed to be dry as dust. "Please tell me how to study it so that it will mean something to me."

"Read it," replied Dr. Torrey. "I do read it." "Read it some more." "How?"

"Take some book and read it 12 times a day for a month."

"What book could I read that many times a day, working as many hours as I do?"

"Try Second Peter," replied Torrey.

The man later said, "My wife and I read 'Second Peter' three or four times in the morning, two or three times at noon and two or three times at dinner. Soon I was talking 'Second Peter' to everyone I met."

We don't need some gimmick to draw people's attention to what we're doing for the Lord. We need to know His Word so well that we can use it in conversations to illustrate the points that we wish to make. The great hymn writer Frances Ridley Havergal knew the Scriptures so well that when engaged in a conversation with some young person she hadn't met before, she was able within minutes to bring the conversation around to the things of the Lord. Is it possible that we could do such a thing too? The Lord would give such a gift to any believer well taught in Scripture who asks Him and then goes out in faith to use it.

Paul's ship now on route to Rome stopped at places mentioned in Acts, Chapter 28. At a port close to present-day Naples, the soldiers and prisoners disembarked there to finish the rest of the journey on foot. Some Christians from Rome had walked 40 miles south to meet Paul and his companions. How glad Paul was to see them! For many years, Paul had wanted to visit the church in Rome. Three years earlier, he'd written to the Roman Christians saying he'd hoped to come to Rome soon and meet them. Now finally he had arrived, although not as a free man but as a prisoner.

However, even though a prisoner, Paul was allowed to live in his own rented house. He always had a soldier bound by a chain to him but while in this situation, he had time to write letters to the churches in Ephesus and Colossae.

The letter to the Ephesians was written probably around 60 or 61 AD. On his second missionary journey, Paul had visited Ephesus on the west coast of present-day Turkey and had left Aquila and Priscilla there. He returned there 2 years later where he ministered for 3 years, finally reaching the whole province of Asia with the Gospel. One major theme of Paul's letter to the Ephesians is that God is at work in this world, through His church, bringing things together. Paul explains God's work as a work of redemption, resurrection and reconciliation. Paul then states the responsibilities of believers in the light of God's great purpose for them.

Ephesus was an important city and boasted custodianship of the temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The city was devoted to idolatry, which explains why Paul had so much to say about defeating the Devil in our lives. This letter to the Ephesians shows balance in the Christian life between doctrine and duty, divine sovereignty and human responsibility. We don't obey God so that He will give us His grace; we obey Him in response to grace that we've already received.

What is grace? Grace is God's life-transforming gift of favour, power and spiritual enablement to those who don't deserve it. The gift of salvation and forgiveness of sins is available for all who through faith accept his grace revealed in Jesus Christ. And in a Christian's life, the gift of God's power, His strengthening and miraculous accomplishments are received as the Christian believes in Christ's work in their life. Many people have missed out on God's gift of grace because they rely on themselves and they try to earn grace by keeping the law, even after they've become Christians.

God's grace supplies us with everything we need for daily life and to that end, He invites us to come to him with our needs. To a generous extent, even the wicked receive blessings from God's grace. In Matthew, Chapter 5, the Lord Jesus said that our Father in heaven makes His sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil.

In Ephesians, Chapter 6, Paul spoke about spiritual warfare – the conflict between the forces of God and Satan as powers of light and darkness. Jesus battled the evil one and gained the ultimate victory by His death on the cross and then by His resurrection. No genuine Christian can avoid spiritual warfare, for Satan attacks all those who belong to God, accusing them and trying to bring doubt into their minds.

To help us in this struggle, God provides defensive armour for us to spiritually wear, as well as an offensive weapon, the Scriptures. We need to learn how to use these before we can be truly effective when going into spiritual battles. And added to these things, we need to be thankful and in prayer, asking for God's help in all things so we can stay alert and never give up.

While Paul was still awaiting trial in Rome, he heard that false doctrine was being introduced into the church at Colosse, an inland city in southern present-day Turkey. Paul had never visited this city. The church there had been started by one of Paul's converts and Paul wanted to warn the believers and establish them better in their faith.

False teachers were telling the Colossians a mixture of Jewish legalism and Greek philosophy based on human observation and ideas. These Gnostics said that matter, such as the human body, was evil; and that the immaterial things of mind and spirit were good. This led them either to abuse their bodies or to over-indulge them, because they thought it didn't really matter what they did.

The Gnostics' ideas meant that they denied Christ's uniqueness, saying that He was only one of many links between a good God and human beings. Paul wrote to the Colossians to show that Christ was the most important One to trust, who is supreme over all others. Paul affirms that in Jesus Christ, believers are complete and have the fullness of God available to them.

A major theme provided in the book of Hebrews explains the work of Jesus in context of the Old Testament system. Jesus was the fulfilment of the Old Testament's Jewish traditions and priestly roles and so therefore, He's greater than those ways. Jesus doesn't simply represent a new way of doing things. Rather, He is the greatest; He is God. Jesus is the ultimate in power, glory, authority and importance. Jesus' supremacy over all creation is developed Biblically primarily in the books of Hebrews and Colossians.

Jesus replaces the old way of doing things. For instance, we're told in Hebrews that "because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them."

Paul explains Jesus' role in creation in Colossians: "For by Him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him." This means that Jesus is not created but He is the world's Creator. He is God. He has authority over creation, over the Church, over death and everything. He only needs to speak, and things come into existence.

This doctrine is essential to our view of Christ and worship of Him. He's not simply a man greater than the rest but in fact, He is truly above all creation, as only God can be. Saying that Jesus is unsurpassed stops us from saying that Jesus is only one of many ways to God. He is more than just a good moral teacher whom we may choose to follow; rather, He is God and He is over all. Jesus' supremacy also makes it evident that we cannot atone for our own sins, as practiced in the Old Testament sacrificial system. As the righteous Lamb of God, Jesus both fulfilled and replaced that system by bringing God's kingdom to mankind. Salvation is not based on works. Christians are called to be like Jesus but this can only be achieved through the work of God's Holy Spirit.

Paul tells us that Jesus is even superior to the angels. This truth stops any interest towards angel worship. Jesus created the angels and is above them. Therefore, the Bible teaches we need only worship Jesus, God's beloved Son. In the same way, the fact that Jesus created the things of the earth means that creation is not worthy of our worship either. When we understand the greatness of Christ, we better understand the depth of His love for us and how much He sacrificed for us to become our Saviour. When we capture a vision of how great Jesus is as He is now sitting at the right hand of God, we are more able to receive and to respond to His love in everything that we do.

In Colossians, Chapter 3, Verse 17, it says: "Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks through him to God the Father."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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