



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

www.bibleradio.org.au

BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1948 ~ The Sanhedrin Questions John.

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

In the history of civilization, there are many examples of rulers, kings and governments who've actively worked against the good of their own people. Even King Solomon, reputed to be the wisest man who ever lived (apart from Jesus Christ), taxed his people very heavily to pay for his building program and extensive harem of women and children. In Romans, we're taught to obey the governing authority except when our leaders tell us not to worship and obey God.

God has, and continues today, to perform many miracles for those who help other people escape with their lives from acts of cruelty by their government. During war in particular, people often risk their own lives to save the life of someone else that they believe doesn't deserve to die. During the last Great War, one group of people targeted by the government to be wiped out were Jewish people. Those Jews who escaped were usually hidden by perfect strangers who lived by the principle of protecting the weak and the helpless.

One young woman travelled on trains with escaping Jews using false papers to get them unnoticed to their next safe house. One day, the woman was uneasy as she travelled with a 12-year-old boy. He didn't have any papers and she didn't know what she was going to do when an official came through the carriage, checking on the passengers.

The boy didn't look well and the lurching of the train didn't help him settle down. He was sick all over his own clothes and all over the young woman. The mess and smell were terrible. Just at that moment, the official arrived to check their papers. He was so put off by the mess and smell that he left the area, and they were saved from being caught. We usually look at sickness as a misfortune that we've caused to ourselves. But God has used sickness many times for His own purposes.

When Jesus was alive on earth, the Jewish people were ruled administratively by the Roman army and their system of governors. At this point in time, the Romans didn't interfere with the Jewish system of religious rule. The Jewish council of ruling priests and elders was called the Sanhedrin. It consisted of 71 members who had great authority and were led by the high priest. Men from two Jewish religious parties called Pharisees and Sadducees, had places on this council.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, John the Baptist was interviewed by a group of Sanhedrin representatives, and the officials made it quite clear that even out in the wilderness, they thought that they were in charge.

John knew the wisdom of giving soft but firm answers to this group (known as a delegation) from the Sanhedrin. When he spoke reasonably with them, the delegation members relaxed and made a more genuine effort to see things as they were. These men were trying to best place themselves for future glory when their expected Messiah would rule their country.

Some people hate confrontations and will go to extra lengths to avoid them. But no matter where we live and with whom we live, there will be times of conflict that we can't avoid. How should we cope with a situation when someone else is shouting angry words or being rude to us and others close by? For a Christian, the first step must be to pray silently asking God for help with the right words to say.

The second thing is to listen to what the other person's grievance is. Unless a person keeps a constantly angry disposition, there is often a perfectly valid reason why they feel upset. When someone's angry, their thoughts can become distorted and not everyone can express what they're really angry about. The surface argument may only be a front for a wounded pride or a deeper upset hidden beneath. So some well-worded questions may help angry people to sort out their thinking and become peaceful again.

Asking questions might help find common ground between people while someone is angry, and particularly start moving everyone toward a solution. But this isn't always the case. There are times when you must not ignore certain situations and must initiate conflict when speaking out for truth and justice. This is called healthy conflict even though at the time, it may seem very unpleasant. The Lord Jesus confronted the Pharisees not only for their pretence at honouring God, but also because of their destructive influence as teachers and leaders.

Solving conflict takes humility, persistence and a preference for peace over gaining personal victory. Yet if both sides in a conflict show unwillingness to compromise, the conflict can result in a broken friendship, divorce or even a war. The Lord Jesus brought a new perspective to conflict. While people want to love friends and hate enemies, Jesus said to reach out in love to your enemy. And by doing this, some enemies have become friends.

One of the biggest conflict zones for many young people is in the schoolyard. Should children give into a bully and let him or her have their own way all the time so as to keep the peace? Bullies usually have more physical strength than those around them. They can be very fearful, aggressive and always looking out for their own interests. It's almost the same question as: "Is might right?"

Civilization is built on the premise that we look after the weakest members of society. A famous anthropologist (that's someone who studies the human fossil bones) was once asked about any signs that she saw of society caring for its weakest. She said that when she found the first broken bone that had been knitted back together again, she was overjoyed. Someone else in that tribe had to hunt for that person's food and to help in other practical ways while the bone was mending.

Regarding the schoolyard bully, teachers should have the authority to teach all the children to have consideration for each other. They also need to step in and deal with bullying behaviour. Such a person could become better adjusted to his peer group and more interested in the needs and concerns of others.

But if the bully refuses to listen and secretly continues to hurt others, it's best to pray for this bully and ask for wisdom in what to say and do in each circumstance. Sometimes showing love through the giving of unexpected gifts or showing friendship can work wonders as well. God loves the bully's soul as much as He loves the victim's. As Christians, let us teach our children to hold fast to Jesus in such difficult times and to look to Him to know whether certain actions or words are helpful.

As with all conflicts, we can't be sure in advance how God will work things out. A Chinese sailor visited a hall in the east end of London in the early 20th Century. The hall had been decorated to look like all-things Chinese and yet a frail English lady gave English lessons there. The people called her 'The Little Teacher.' At that time, there was much racial intolerance against the Chinese. However, the Little Teacher arranged activities for those women, children, and sailors and other Chinese visitors who were willing to come.

Because the Little Teacher was a Christian, she shared the Gospel with those who attended the lessons and some gave their life to the Lord Jesus. One of the sailors did too. When it came time for him to sail back to his home country, the Little Teacher gave the sailor a small Salvation Army flag. The flag was a symbol of the Holy Trinity. The blue border represented the holiness of God the Father, the red background was the blood sacrificed by God the Son, and the yellow star in the middle was the fire of God the Holy Spirit.

When the sailor returned to his village, people laughed at his flag and his new-found faith. He tried to be patient with them as the Little Teacher had been patient with him. In time, he too gathered a few followers of the Lord Jesus.

Civil war then raged through the country and many Christians were tortured and killed. The rebel army moved from village to village, stealing and destroying. When the sailor's village was next to come under attack, the people challenged the sailor to put his new faith in Jesus to the test.

Deep down, the sailor had some doubts and many fears. Then he thought about the Little Teacher and he knew that she would spend time in prayer over such things. He saw her little flag hanging on the wall. He took it down and he prayed in desperation. Then, flag in hand, he went out to meet the raiding forces alone.

The sailor had no clear idea of what he thought he could achieve. But what happened next was something he could never have foreseen. The flag he carried was recognised by the leader of the rebel force. Incredibly, out of a population of hundreds of millions of Chinese, the leader of the rebels had also visited the Chinese hall in East London. He too, had known and respected the Little Teacher. The two men excitedly shared their experiences of England. Then the raiding party went on its way and the village was spared. By simply showing the flag, a possible disaster was turned aside. God's Name received praise for such a wonderful deliverance!

How should a young person choose a career or work plan for their life? The priests and lawyers in the Sanhedrin didn't have a lifestyle of devout, humble worship of God. Instead, they sought money, power and maybe fame in their own country. For a Christian, it can be a great mistake to study only for the best-paying jobs.

Lawyers, for example, in every nation are employed in high-paying jobs. But what does a lawyer do if he or she has to sell their own soul to get the money? Many defence cases require the lawyer to investigate the circumstances of the charges against their client. What should lawyers do if they become convinced that that person in court is guilty as charged? Do they drop the case? Yet often no, they don't. They pretend instead that their client is innocent and they try to confuse the court to get the charges dismissed. Sadly, on Judgment Day, many lawyers will be found guilty of perverting the course of justice.

For some jobs, there'll always be a conflict between what a Christian's conscience says they should be doing and what the boss requires to be done. It's never wise to go against what your conscience is saying in how to be faithful to the Lord.

A man working in a business was required to sign illegal documents. After a while, his arm became paralysed and he couldn't use it for anything. When his doctor finally found out that the man had been signing illegal documents with his now paralysed arm, he advised the man to leave that job. The man did so and soon his arm became useful again.

Any job that causes a double standard needs to be avoided. There's no such thing as a Christian thief or a Sunday-only Christian. We can't divide up our lives into different boxes so that when we're home, we'll be honest to God but when we're at work, using bad language similar to other nearby workers is OK. When a person gives their life to Jesus, He takes over every part, not just some. The song says: "Oh, be faithful all the way; it will be worth it all some day."

In times of conflict, remember Proverbs, Chapter 15, Verse 1: "A gentle answer quiets anger but a harsh one stirs it up."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

< END OF SCRIPT >
