

## PAUL SUFFERS FOR CHRIST

Acts 21:30-40; 22:1-30; 23:1-35.

### LESSON 136 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9).

#### BIBLE TEXTS

##### Acts 21:30-40;

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

##### Acts 22:1-30;

1 ¶ Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

3 ¶ I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring

them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 ¶ And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

### **Acts 23:1-35.**

1 ¶ And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

6 ¶ But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

12 ¶ And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me?

20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves

with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

22 So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

23 And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

24 And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner: 26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting.

27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

33 Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

## **Returning to Jerusalem**

Since his first visit to Jerusalem, Paul, the preacher, had travelled from place to place, telling the Story of Jesus. We find him, in this lesson, going once more to Jerusalem. Paul had been warned by friends along the way that he would have much trouble there, but he still wanted to go. He did not fear what wicked men might do to him, for he knew Jesus was in his heart. Paul had been mean to the Christians before he was saved, but now he loved everyone. He looked forward to worshiping with those who loved Jesus in Jerusalem.

When Paul reached Jerusalem these friends told him that there were people there who did not like him — they did not like what he preached because they did not love Jesus, and did not want to think that Jesus was alive as Paul said He was. They did not like to have Paul tell the Gentiles, or heathen, that they could be saved, too.

## **Paul Is Beaten**

One day some of these people who were Paul's enemies saw him in the Temple. They grabbed him and shouted that Paul was preaching against them, and that he was not fit to be in the Temple. People all over Jerusalem were excited and came running. They pulled Paul out of the Temple and began to beat him. The chief captain and soldiers came to see what was causing all the excitement. The captain, seeing that the people were angry with Paul, thought he was a bad man, and had the soldiers bind him with two chains. Then the captain asked why they were angry with Paul. There was so much noise and shouting that the captain could not tell what the people meant. He told the soldiers to take Paul into the castle, and as they were walking up the steps Paul asked the captain if he might say something to the people.

## **Paul's Defence**

Can we not see Paul as he stands on the stairs with the soldiers, turning around to the noisy crowd of people and raising his hand to let them know he wanted to speak to them. They began to quiet down so they could hear what Paul was going to say. When they were all still — maybe it was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop — Paul started to speak to them.

He told them all about himself, so they would know he loved them and would not do them any harm. He told them he lived as they did until he saw Jesus that day on the road to Damascus. A bright heavenly light had flooded the earth around him, and Jesus had talked to him. After Paul saw Jesus and heard Him speak, he knew Jesus was alive and that He was the Son of the living God. Paul loved Him and told others about Jesus wherever he could.

The angry people still wanted to destroy Paul, but the soldiers took Paul into the castle and would not let the people hurt him. During the night Jesus came to Paul and told him not to feel bad. "Be of good cheer, Paul," Jesus said. It is so sweet to think that no matter what happens to us, Jesus is always very near!

Shall we imagine we see a young man standing outside the castle as small groups of men are here and there talking? It is Paul's nephew. Suddenly he lifts his head — he hesitates a moment — then he walks up the steps into the castle. Perhaps he has overheard some of the men say they are not going to eat nor drink until they have killed Paul. He tells his uncle, Paul, what he has heard, and Paul sends him to the captain. The captain, wanting to save Paul, tells the soldiers to take Paul to another town so the people in Jerusalem cannot hurt him. That night while perhaps most of the city is very quiet, there is the stamping of horses' feet, the hushed voices of men, and the dull sound of spears on the pavement. Two hundred soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 men with spears, go out through the city gate toward Caesarea, taking Paul with them. God has again spared Paul's life so that he may tell others in many lands about Jesus.

## **Preaching and Suffering**

Paul had preached for a long time. He always told the people that Jesus died on the cross that they might be saved, and that He arose from the grave the third day and is now in Heaven getting mansions ready for everyone who will love Him and do what He tells them to do. But always there were people who were mean to Paul because they did not want to be good and love Jesus, and did not want Paul to preach about Him. Once Paul told of being beaten eight different times; once he was stoned; three times he was shipwrecked. He spent a day and a night in the waters of the sea; he was put in jail; he faced dangers of robbers, and other dangers in the city and in the wilderness. Once when the people waited at the city gates day and night to catch Paul, Paul's friends helped him to escape at night by letting him down over the wall of the city in a large basket. At times he was weary; he suffered pain; he was sometimes hungry, thirsty, and cold (II Corinthians 11:23-27). Paul was glad to suffer for Jesus because He had died for Paul.

Perhaps not one of us has suffered even one of the things that Paul suffered for Jesus. Do we love Jesus as much as Paul loved Him? When we try to work for Jesus we may find that things are not always easy. We may invite a friend to Sunday School. Perhaps she will make an excuse like, "My mother will not get me ready in time to go." Or she may say, "I would rather play on Sunday." But if you let her know that it is more important to listen to God's Word than anything else, perhaps she will come with you. Let us pray that God will make us earnest and faithful in our work for Jesus, as Paul was.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. Why did some people dislike Paul? Acts 22:19; 23:6.
2. What happened to Paul when he was in Jerusalem at this time? Acts 21:30, 31.
3. How did Paul know Jesus was alive? Acts 22:8.
4. Who stood by Paul and told him to be of good cheer? Acts 23:11.
5. Who told Paul that some men were not going to eat nor drink until they had destroyed him? Acts 23:16.

## LESSON RESOURCES

### TOPIC

# PAUL SUFFERS FOR CHRIST

Lesson 136

Acts 21:30-40; 22:1-30; 23:1-35

MUSIC

# I Am A Volunteer

WATCH & PRAY 21



s. l. s.  $\widehat{m:-m}$ . s. l. s.  $\widehat{f:-f}$ . s. l. s. t: l: s: f:  $\widehat{l:-s}$ .

s. l. s.  $\widehat{m:-m}$ . s. l. s.  $\widehat{f:-f}$ . s. l. s. t: l: f: r:  $\widehat{d:-d}$ .

s. l. s. m: m: m. s. l. s. f: f: f. s. l. s. t: l: s: f: l:- s.

s. l. s. m: m: m. s. l. s. f: f: f. s. l. le. t: l: f: r:  $\widehat{d:-d}$ .

## SONG

# I Am A Volunteer

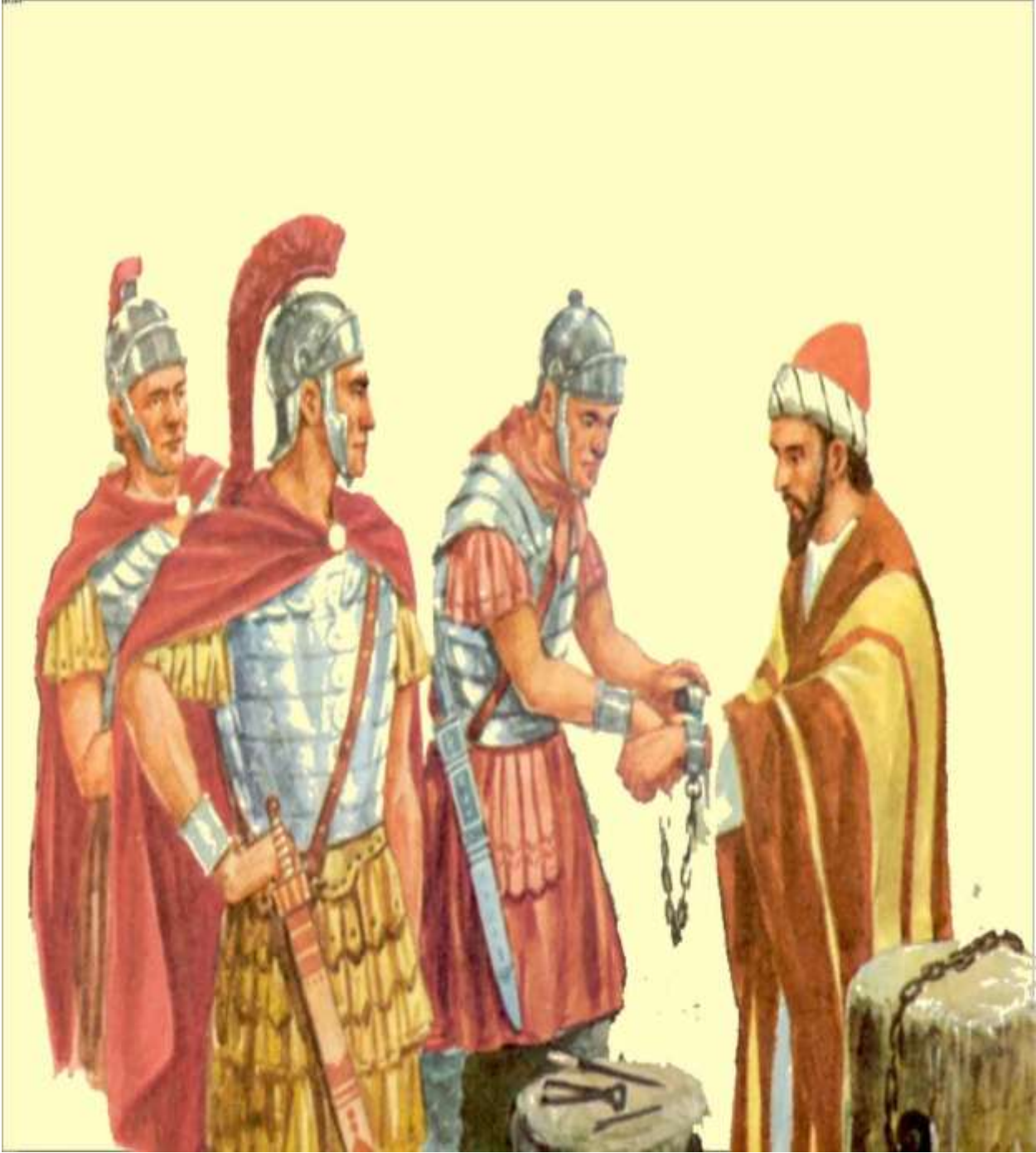
I want to live, I want to live,  
I want to live my life for Jesus  
I want to live so He would have me be  
His child forever more.

### *Chorus:*

I am a volunteer, I am a volunteer  
I am a volunteer for Jesus  
I want to work for Him, I want to glean for Him,  
I want to meet Him when He comes.



**PICTURE 1**



**PICTURE 2**

