**Truth Sowers Life Group**

September 15, 2013

**Who Was the Apostle Paul?**

**Paul in Captivity – Goes to Rome to Face Caesar**

Our key scripture for this study is:

**1 Thess 5:12, 13**

*12And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.*

**Acts 25, 26**

Paul had stood before two Roman Governors, Felix and Festus and a king, King Agrippa. All of them agreed that Paul had done nothing that would warrant bringing charges against him.

Another plot on Paul’s life was hatched. This was, at least, the third attempt on his life because of the gospel.

**Acts 27**

Paul, along with other prisoners, was finally put on a ship headed for Rome. A few days later he was transferred to an Egyptian ship. (27:6)

The sailors really struggled with this storm and it lasted at least two full weeks.

18The next day, as gale-force winds continued to batter the ship, the crew began throwing the cargo overboard. 19The following day they even took some of the ship’s gear and threw it overboard. 20The terrible storm raged for many days, blotting out the sun and the stars, until at last all hope was gone.

21No one had eaten for a long time. Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, “Men, you should have listened to me in the first place and not left Crete. You would have avoided all this damage and loss. 22But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down. 23For last night an **angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me,** 24and he said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What’s more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.’ 25So take courage! For I believe God. It will be just as he said. 26But we will be shipwrecked on an island.”

When the sailors thought they saw land, they raised their sails and dropped the rudders and headed right to the land to drive the boat ashore. They ended up hitting a shoal. The front of the boat was stuck and the waves kept battering the back of the ship and it was starting to break apart.

27About midnight on the fourteenth night of the storm, as we were being driven across the Sea of Adria,[[e](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2027&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-27845e" \o "See footnote e)] the sailors sensed land was near. 28They dropped a weighted line and found that the water was 120 feet deep. But a little later they measured again and found it was only 90 feet deep.[[f](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2027&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-27846f" \o "See footnote f)] 29At this rate they were afraid we would soon be driven against the rocks along the shore, so they threw out four anchors from the back of the ship and prayed for daylight.

30Then the sailors tried to abandon the ship; they lowered the lifeboat as though they were going to put out anchors from the front of the ship. 31But Paul said to the commanding officer and the soldiers, “You will all die unless the sailors stay aboard.” 32So the soldiers cut the ropes to the lifeboat and let it drift away.

33Just as day was dawning, Paul urged everyone to eat. “You have been so worried that you haven’t touched food for two weeks,” he said. 34“Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair of your heads will perish.” 35Then he took some bread, gave thanks to God before them all, and broke off a piece and ate it. 36Then everyone was encouraged and began to eat— 37all 276 of us who were on board. 38After eating, the crew lightened the ship further by throwing the cargo of wheat overboard.

The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners so they wouldn’t escape but the commanding officer liked Paul and stopped that. All who could swim were commanded to swim for shore and the rest hung on to boards or anything else they could find that floated. Just as Paul was told by the angel, everyone survived!

**Acts 28**

1Once we were safe on shore, we learned that we were on the island of Malta. 2The people of the island were very kind to us. It was cold and rainy, so they built a fire on the shore to welcome us.

3As Paul gathered an armful of sticks and was laying them on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand. 4The people of the island saw it hanging from his hand and said to each other, “A murderer, no doubt! Though he escaped the sea, justice will not permit him to live.” 5But Paul shook off the snake into the fire and was unharmed. 6The people waited for him to swell up or suddenly drop dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw that he wasn’t harmed, they changed their minds and decided he was a god.

Isn’t it funny how we tend to JUDGE people by looking at the consequences of their lives?

What was Paul’s reaction to the snake? What would your reaction be to the snake? Would you scream in shock and fear? Would you expect your hand to start swelling up?

Paul went on about his business like NOTHING had happened!

**2 Corinthians 5:7**

For we walk by FAITH, not by sight.

**Romans 4:17** says “God calls things that be not as though they are.”

Kenneth Hagin used to tell Ken Jr, “When are you going to start acting like the Bible is true?”

**Mark 16:1718**

17And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18 in their handsthey will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

There are certain groups of Christians who do these things. Obviously, you all know I believe in speaking in tongues and pray in tongues daily. I have seen demons cast out of people and I’ve seen those people come to know the Lord and to be filled and baptized with the Holy Spirit. I’ve laid hands on the sick and I’ve seen them recover.

There are groups of Christians who believe in picking up serpents and drinking poison as a sign to the unbeliever of God’s miracle working power. I’ve never done these things and we probably differ a little bit on how we believe on these things but I do have to admire their courage.

As a Christian, people will watch you. They may talk about you with other people and they may not agree with you but if you stick to your guns and live your beliefs, they will respect you. They will come to you in their darkest hour!!!

If those people of Malta needed prayer and they had seen Paul get bit by the poisonous snake and not even so much as swell up, who do you think they would go to for prayer?

Paul’s faith never wavered. He knew God had his back! He just threw the snake off into the fire and never worried. He just went about with business as usual!

7Near the shore where we landed was an estate belonging to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us and treated us kindly for three days. 8As it happened, Publius’s father was ill with fever and dysentery. Paul went in and prayed for him, and laying his hands on him, he healed him. 9Then **all the other sick people on the island came and were healed**. 10As a result we were showered with honors, and when the time came to sail, people supplied us with everything we would need for the trip.

They finally made it to Rome and Paul was given private lodging under house arrest (v.16).

Paul preached to the Jewish leaders at Rome three days later. Some believed what he said and some didn’t. He also would receive visitors while he was under house arrest and shared the gospel freely with all of them.

History tells us that during the reign of Nero, Paul was taken and beheaded.