

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

BACK TO THE BOOK OF ACTS (BBA)

RLJ-1182

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PART 44: RECOVERING FROM A GREAT SIN

In the last part we learned that the apostle Paul broke away from the core doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah, who had become the last sacrificial lamb and slain once and for all to pay for the sins of mankind.

Paul caved in to political pressure from the Jerusalem church leaders and agreed to do some temple work, including sacrifices. **Acts 21:20-26**

Keep in mind the political landscape in Palestine at this time:

1. Judea, Samaria and Galilee were occupied by Rome and its soldiers had suppressed all Jewish opposition.
2. The Sadducees and the Pharisees were cooperating with the Roman occupation government to a degree.
3. The Zealots were still recruiting and training for a future overthrow of the Roman occupation government.
4. The only tangible piece of property that the Jews still had was the Temple and the ground around it.
5. Most of the Jews believed that Jesus was an imposter. When the real Messiah came, he would create a physical state of Israel and defeat the Romans and all other nations in the world.
6. Even the Christian Jews believed that the current Temple would be spared when Jesus returned in their lifetime to establish a Jewish earthly kingdom with Jerusalem as its capitol.

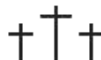
THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

When the apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the Galatians, he understood that a Christian can be forgiven for sin, but that the consequences might not always be lifted and there will be some bad reaping for a while. **Galatians 6:7-8**

He taught that if we don't faint during harsh times, there will come a time of reaping good things. **verses 9-10**

It was not God's will for Paul to be killed by the mob and set into motion His rescue plan; however, God would not immediately set Paul free because there were still lessons to be learned. **Acts 21:31-36**

Paul was always true to his calling and wanted to tell the crowd about Jesus as the Messiah. The strongest message a Christian has is his personal testimony, and Paul gave his testimony to the crowd under the protection of Roman soldiers. **Acts 21:37-40; 22:1-20**



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The Jews responded in fierce anger when Paul told them that God had commissioned him to go to the Gentiles. According to Jewish teaching, Gentiles were not human beings but beasts, and did Paul, a Jew himself dare to speak to the dogs about a Jewish Messiah? **verses 21-23**

The Roman officer in charge realized that Paul was antagonizing the Jews and wanted to know why this was happening. As a result, he ordered Paul to be interrogated under torture. **verse 24**

Paul used his Roman citizenship to protect himself. **verses 25-29**

PAUL FACED THE SAME COUNCIL THAT CONDEMNED JESUS

The Roman chief captain decided to have Paul confronted by the Jewish council. **verse 30**

The top leadership of the Jews at that time was forced to hear about Jesus as the Messiah one more time and rejected the truth once again. **Acts 23:1-5**

Paul was a cunning political speaker, when he realized that he was facing a group of Sadducees and Pharisees, he used their differences in doctrine to divide them so they began to attack one another. **verses 6-9**

Once again Paul had to be rescued by Roman soldiers. **verse 10**

A PROMISE FROM GOD

The apostle Peter had denied Jesus three times and Jesus sent word to Peter that He was risen and had forgiven Peter. **Mark 16:1-7**

Jesus did not send an angel to strengthen Paul but appeared Himself and confirmed to Paul that his calling still was valid. **Acts 23:11**

The same holds true for all born again believers in Christ; if we repent when we sin and turn from our wicked ways, God will forgive and restore us. **1 John 1:4-10**

A CONSPIRACY BY ZEALOTS

The hardcore Jewish Zealots determined that Paul was a great threat to their cause in liberating the land and drive out the Romans and decreed that Paul should be killed as soon as possible. **Acts 23:12-15**

God didn't use a supernatural means to save Paul from this new threat but used his nephew to hear the plot and report it. **verses 16-21**

PAUL IS SAVED FROM THE ZEALOTS

The Romans had through the time of their occupation of Jerusalem and Judea learned that the most feared fighters among the Jews were the Zealots, and that when they decided to do something, it was hard to stop them. Therefore, the chief captain decided that Paul should be moved out of Jerusalem with a large military guard. **verses 22-24**

A letter was written to Felix, the Roman Governor of the region and Paul was sent to the city of Caesarea, the Roman provincial capitol located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. **verses 25-33**

Felix ordered Paul held in prison while his accusers from Jerusalem were brought to Caesarea for a trial. Paul would end up sitting in prison for the next two years while awaiting trial. **verses 34-35**

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

1. God is a merciful and wants to forgive more than destroying a person.
Isaiah 55:6-13
2. We are to bless the Lord at all times regardless of the circumstances.
Psalms 103:1-12
3. Even if Paul had sinned greatly, when he repented and turned from his sins, there was forgiveness and restoration of his position as an apostle.
2 Timothy 4:6-8
4. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever and not a respecter of persons; what He will do for you, He will do for us all. **Hebrews 13:8; Acts 10:34**
5. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of God. **Hebrews 10:16-23**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?