

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

## PAUL'S EARLY LIFE

International Sunday School Lesson For October 6

Golden Text: "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth."—Ecclesiastes 12:1.

Lesson Text: Acts 21:39; 22:3-27; 28; 26:4-5; Phillippians 3:5-6.

With this lesson, we begin a new course of study of the lessons of Paul upon the background of the story of his life and work. In the primary and junior lessons, wide use is made of the narrative portions. In the intermediate, senior, young people and adult lessons materials from the epistles are given greater emphasis. Guidance for personal living, help in meeting church problems, understanding of Christian doctrines, and inspiration to high Christian devotion should be practical outcomes of this particular series of studies.

Were we to desire to go to the birthplace of Paul, second only to Jesus as the greatest person in the Bible, we would take ship at an Atlantic port, cross the Atlantic, pass through the Straits of Gibraltar, cross the Mediterranean Sea to some port on its eastern shore, most probably Beirut. There we would change to a smaller ship bound for Mersin, on the southern shore of Asia Minor, where we would embark to take a slow-moving train to Tarsus.

The Tarsus we would see today is far different from the Tarsus of Paul's time. Then it was a city of marble temples, colonades, baths and public squares. It was a university city where thousands of young men gathered and were taught an appreciation of Greek culture. Today Tarsus is only a shabby little town where rows of wooden shacks face each other across roadways of hard mud, but in the humble little workshops, located on side streets, one can see men spin thread from goats' hair and weave it into coarse cloth—tent cloth—just as the weavers did in Paul's boyhood. This was the trade that Paul had learned that supported him late in Thessalonica, Corinth and Ephesus.

Paul was born in a Jewish family and was reared in the strictest Jewish faith. D. A. Hayes in "Paul and His Epistles" declares: "Since Jesus was a Jew, and the Christian faith was born among the Jews and was propagated wholly from them in the beginning, it was essential that the most successful missionary in the early church should be a Jew. His race affinities enabled Paul to begin his ministry in each city in the synagogue, in an established meeting place, with a congregation ready assembled and accustomed to religious discussion. He preached by preference to the Jews, and turned to the Gentiles only when the Jews had refused to heed his message. All the first Christian missionaries were Jews, and Paul never would have been able to maintain himself among them as their equal and to establish himself at last as their superior if he himself had not been a Jew."

"He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and there were several reasons why that would mean much to a Jew. Benjamin was the son of the favored wife, and Benjamin alone among the patriarchs had been born in the Chosen Land. The first king of Israel had been taken from the tribe of Benjamin, and the apostle had been named after him. His parents had called him Saul; and Paul was proud of that fact, and he never forgot that he was the namesake of a king. The Saul of Old Testament history towered head and shoulders above his fellows, and had been a right royal soul. This second Saul was to tower above his fellows in intellectual and spiritual accomplishments, and he would be a king among the New Testament leaders of the world reformation.

"Paul was a Pharisee. He belonged to that sect among the Hebrews which was notorious for its scrupulous observance of all the religious ritual, for its patriotism and its zeal, for its piety and devotion. The Pharisees were all zealots, but among them Paul became conspicuous for his zeal. He came to be the chosen instrument of the Sanhedrin to persecute and to annihilate the Christian Church."

The City of Tarsus was in the

province of Cilicia, which was a Roman province on the Mediterranean coast of the peninsula which we call Asia Minor. Tarsus was its capital and, from coins of Tarsus we learn that it was considered the metropolis of the East. Paul's father, being a Jew, was not, of course, entitled to Roman citizenship, but it is thought he may have been granted citizenship because of some special service and Paul inherited his rights. In New Testament times those who held the honor of Roman citizenship formed the aristocracy of each city, as it was not until 212 A. D. that all the inhabitants of the Roman Empire were given the citizenship. Paul's Roman citizenship stood him in good stead on his various journeys. It was recognized by the Politarches at Philippi, the governor of Achaia at Corinth, the Asiarches at Ephesus, the governor Felis and Festus in Judea, and the centurion Julius on the Alexandrian ship bound for Rome.

From this, we can see the hand of God selecting, training and guiding one whose ministry has had the greatest influence on the world of any man save Jesus himself.

## Wildlife Group To Seek Change In Law

A spokesman for the North Carolina Wildlife Federation has taken cognizance of rumors being circulated to the effect that the 1945 amendments to the state game and fish laws "contain all the desirable features of the Wildlife Federation's bill for the 1947 General Assembly."

Thomas J. White, of Kinston, chairman of the Federation's Legislative Committee, commented that "if these rumors reflect the conception of their authors as to what is necessary to give the hunters and fishermen of North Carolina adequate game and fish management and some value for the several hundred thousand dollars exacted from them annually in hunting and fishing license fees, it is little wonder that thousands of thoughtful sportsmen are realizing the necessity or the legislation sponsored by and proposed by the North Carolina Wildlife Federation."

White further stated that under the Wildlife Federation bill which will be introduced at the next session of the General Assembly a nine-man commission representing nine geographic districts of the state would be appointed by the Governor. This commission, he explained, would be composed of men "interested in and having knowledge of game and fish management and problems incident thereto."

The terms of the nine appointees, White added, would be so arranged that less than a majority of the commission could be appointed during the term of any one administration. This would make possible the continuation of a game and fish program longer than four years at a time. Furthermore, White added, this would guard the game and fish population from the ravages of politics and insure the continuation of a game program long enough for it to bear fruit.

White expressed the opinion that the study made over the state in the past two years by hunters and fishermen and knowledge thus acquired will enable sportsmen and wildlife lovers to recognize the circulated rumors as an effort to dissipate their efforts. Such rumors as these, White added,

will only spur hunters and fishermen to work harder for passage of legislation which will put game and fish management on a sound basis in this state.

"The people of North Carolina want to see the state's wildlife resources managed and conserved for the benefit of all who would enjoy them," White affirmed. "The hunters and fishermen are not the sole sponsors of the proposed legislation; thousands of friends of the Wildlife Federation are working with its members to see that money collected from hunting and fishing license fees can and will be used in a constructive, far-reaching way so as to assure boys and girls of North Carolina an opportunity to enjoy hunting and fishing in the years to come."

## Use Of Electricity Calls For Caution

Safety precautions are as timely for the man waiting to get electricity as for the man whose farm is already equipped.

Care and caution never go out of date, says D. S. Weaver, head of the Agricultural Engineering Department at State College and it is particularly important that the farmers waiting to receive service under the expanded programs announced by the power companies and the REA cooperatives recognize this fact.

Of first importance, he says, is keeping away from high voltage wires. Climbing a highline pole is dangerous business, as is moving buildings or equipment under a highline. A lineman should be consulted before any of this moving is done.

A second safety precaution is having the wiring system on the farm and home inspected and approved after its installation. The same is true for additions made to the electric equipment after it is once installed. Weaver also emphasizes the im-

portance of keeping electrical equipment in good repair, which means keeping it clean and free from excess grease, dust and moisture. Fires and short circuits are often caused from careless neglect.

In completing the list of safety precautions, he points out that it pays to be careful in using electric equipment around water. Wet hands and feet make it easy for electricity to pass through the body and into the ground. For this reason, it is not safe to touch an electric switch or appliance while in the bathtub. Where the floor or ground is wet, over-shoes or rubbers should be worn to insulate the body from the ground to protect a person from shock.

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