

**KEY-VERSE**

PSA. 32:1

Psalm 32:1

**Blessed is he
whose transgression
is forgiven, whose
sin is covered.**

At this time in Paul's life, he needed and found the comfort of Psalm 32:1.

Paul's nephew
warns Paul of
plot against
his life.



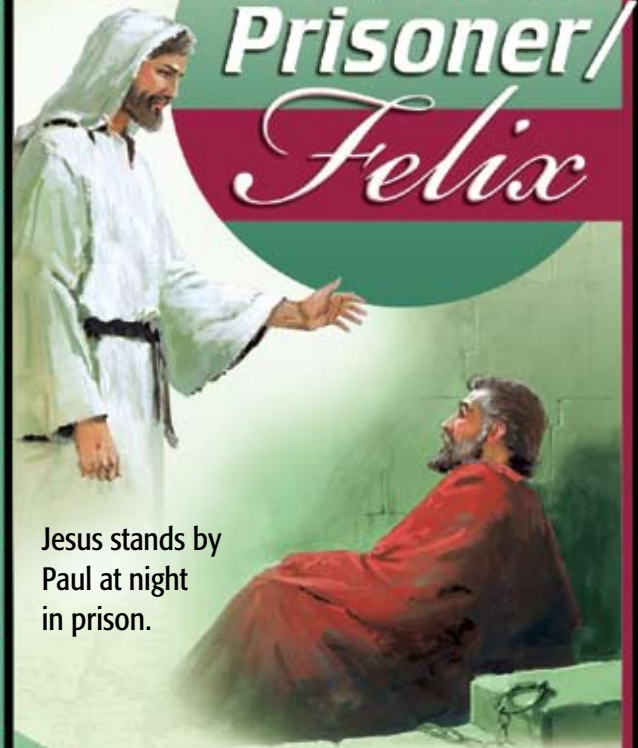
At night, almost
500 soldiers secure
Paul's safe arrival
in Caesarea.



Scripture to read before next Sunday

Acts 25 and 26

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Jesus stands by
Paul at night
in prison.

Later,
Paul testifies
before Felix and
Drusilla



WAS PAUL IN GOD'S WILL?

Paul's dedication to the Lord and his motives were excellent. He was willing to die for the Lord in Jerusalem. But God's best servants can disobey and move out of God's direct will into His permissive will, such as 1) **Abraham** going to Egypt, 2) **Moses** striking the rock instead of speaking to it, and 3) **David** with Bathsheba. Yet, God forgave them and continued using them, but their wrong actions had serious consequences.

RIGHT OR WRONG?

God put roadblocks in Paul's path to warn him **not to go** to Jerusalem. Good people differ regarding Paul's behavior. Some say Paul was in the will of God, and God was testing his dedication. Others say Paul did wrong in going against God's command.

It is obvious Paul did not obey the Holy Spirit's instruction. From that perspective, let's look at his response. Though his desire was commendable, his visit to Jerusalem only caused **trouble**, and he was **rejected**. The Lord knew they would not accept Paul's witness, and there was no need for him to go to Jerusalem.

God never changed His orders for Paul; his **ministry** was **not** to the Jerusalem Jews. God is to decide where we serve and where our testimony is most beneficial.

Through his **arrest**, Paul will eventually go to Rome, but God could have gotten him to **Rome** through obedience and not disobedience.

BEFORE COUNCIL

Before the religious Council, Paul abruptly began, not waiting to be questioned. He then dis-

played a self-righteous spirit and offended the high priest when he said, "*thou whited wall*", for which Paul apologized. His reactions were in the "flesh" and not in the Spirit.

PAUL JUDGES HIMSELF

In the castle alone, Paul had time to think. No doubt, he realized the mess he was in—was his own doing. What did Paul do? And what are we to do when that happens to us? We are to confess our mistake, our wrong action, and ask God to forgive us. And Paul must have done that.

Then God did what He always does. When we judge ourselves, He forgives us. Since Paul judged himself, God did not have to judge Paul; therefore, scripture remains silent about the matter.

NIGHT FOLLOWING

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 Acts 23:11. After Paul confessed his wrong, God said, "*Be of good cheer*", which indicates Paul had been **downcast** (depressed) in prison as he reviewed the events. God reassured him, not only with a sense of forgiveness, but the Lord's presence appeared to him. God took Paul's wrong and turned it around for good. And God can do that for us.

DIVINE PRINCIPLE

This incident demonstrates a divine principle: good motives are not a license to disobey what God's word says. Sometimes sincere servants of God believe if their motive is pure and good, they can violate God's word. No, God wants our motives and our actions to be in accord with His word.