

**S.S. LESSON**

December 13. Paul in Melita, and Rome, Acts 23:1-31. Golden Text—*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.—Romans 1:16.*

**SUBJECT.**  
**PAUL DELIVERS HIS TESTIMONY TO THE JEWS AT ROME.**

**INTRODUCTION.**—To see Rome, and to deliver his message there had been for years the dream, the crowning ambition of Paul's life. His faith that Jesus was the Universal Lord carried with it the hope that he might proclaim the gospel in the world's capital. As all roads led to Rome, he was confident that in spite of hindrances, God would open up the way and give him the great joy of being, though not the first, at least one of the first evangelists to visit the Eternal City. In Romans 1:8-15, written from Corinth during his Third Missionary Tour, Paul informs the Christians at Rome of the high hopes with which he looked forward to that visit. He had prayed unceasingly that the way might be opened up, and that he might be able to impart to them "some spiritual gift" that is, his contribution to their spiritual welfare.

Paul did not, however, then know that when he finally reached Rome, it would be as a prisoner, as "an ambassador in bonds." The fact that he does so adds pathos to the circumstances of his work in Rome. Nevertheless his spirit rises above his circumstances, and his contribution to Christianity at Rome was a notable one. In our lesson to-day, St. Luke refers to the opening episodes of that work. The rest we can only infer from sundry statements in the letters which Paul wrote from Rome, such as Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and certain passages in 2 Timothy.

**V. 16.** When Paul and his companions reached Rome, he was handed over to the authorities, but under privileged conditions. He was permitted to live by himself under the custody of a single officer. While this did not allow him to go abroad, it left him liberty to see his friends and others whom he was anxious to meet.

**Vs. 17-19.** Paul's first act is to invite the leaders of the Jewish community at Rome, to have a conference with him. The Jews at Rome were very numerous, the edict of Claudius, referred to in Acts 18:2, having remained a dead letter. Paul is anxious that these Jews should be under no false impressions as to the meaning of his arrest and delivery to the authorities at Rome. He is hopeful of finding them less prejudiced than his fellow-countrymen at Jerusalem. Accordingly, having got the leaders together, he calmly reviews the circumstances leading up to his arrest. He points out that he has never, in spite of rumors to the contrary, denied the special privileges of the Jewish people or the divine authority of the Law and the customs of the fathers. As a matter of fact the Jewish authorities themselves here Paul is referring to the attitude of Festus and Herod Agrippa (Acts 26:30-32)—intended to acquit him of any charge deserving death, and but for his own action in previously appealing to Caesar, he would now have been free from further trial or examination. Paul points out that the law has now to take its course, but that in appealing to the privy council at Rome he is not making any charges against the Jewish nation.

**V. 20.** He trusts for fair consideration at the hands of his fellow-countrymen at Rome. If they only knew it, it is for "the hope of Israel," that is, for the Messiah's sake, that he is wearing his chain.

**Vs. 21, 22.** The answer of the Jewish leaders is that they have heard no adverse reports of any kind concerning Paul. They wish to hear his own version of his history, though they frankly declare that the Christian "sect" to which Paul belongs has a good deal to answer for, if all the reports which have come in on every side are true.

**Vs. 23, 24.** The Jewish leaders agree to convene a general meeting of Jews to be held at Paul's lodging on a fixed day. This takes place in due course, and for a whole day Paul explains to the Roman Jews the gospel of the kingdom of God. The centre and heart of the argument is that Jesus of Nazareth is the divine Messiah promised in the Law of Moses and in the prophets. Some of the hearers are convinced; but the attitude of the majority brings home forcibly to Paul the hopelessness of trying to win the Jewish nation as a whole to Christ. Once more he sees that God intends their spiritual welfare.

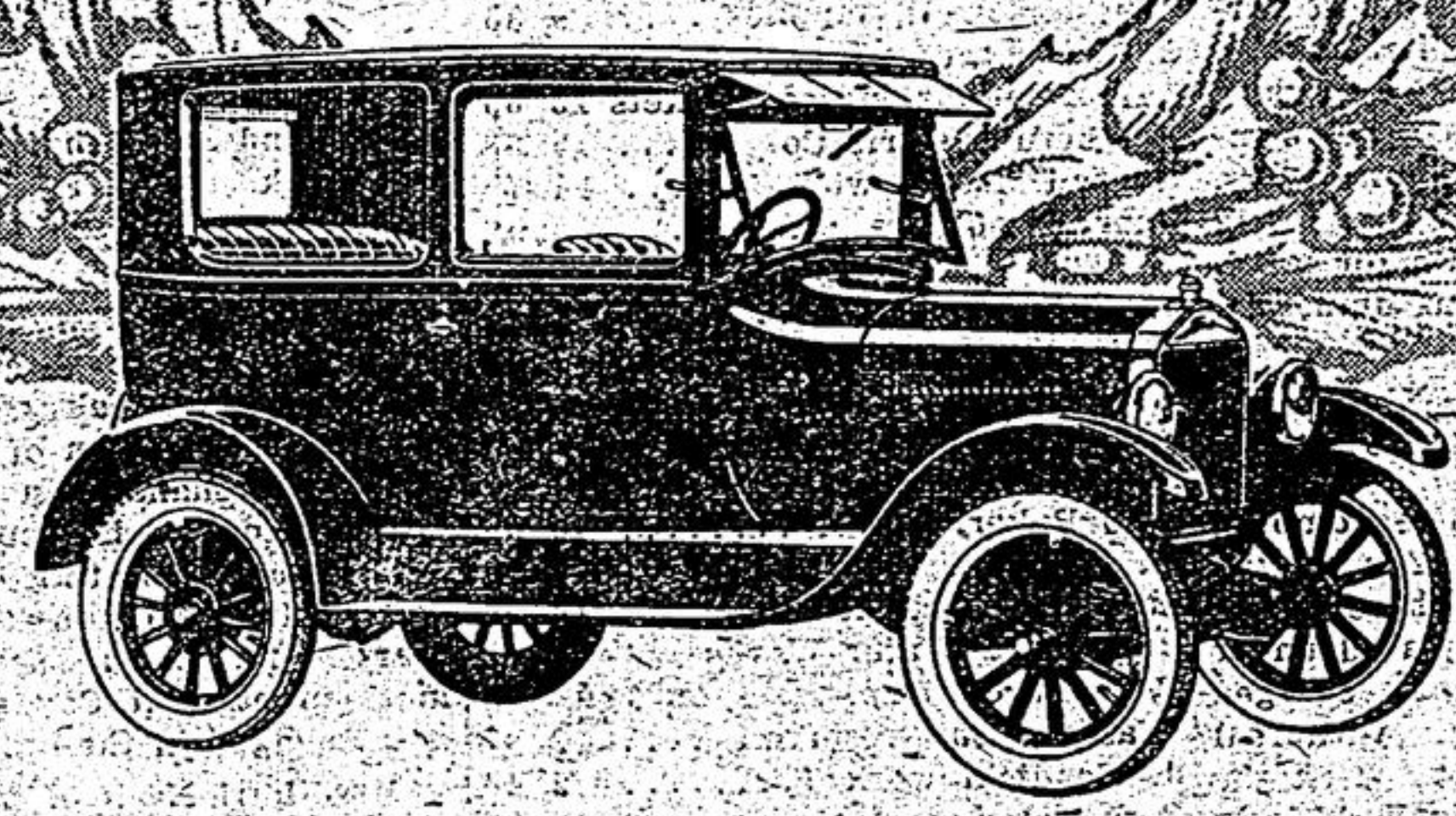
**Vs. 30, 31.** The closing verses of Acts refer briefly to a period of two years during which Paul carried on missionary work in Rome, and during which he kept open house for all who desired to see him. These visitors would mostly be Gentiles. Meantime, the authorities put no obstacle in the way of his freely declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the kingdom to all who come.

**Preventing Cock-Fights.**

The most effective way to handle a too high and mighty lord of the flock is to tie a string of buckskin between his legs just above the spurs. Make it loose enough to give freedom of movement, but short enough to make him take short steps. When an ugly rooster is treated this way, he soon learns that he can not fight. By the time he takes several tumbles, just when he is making a charge on some other male member of the flock, he is so chagrined that he limps off with as much dignity as he is able to command and gives up all further attempts. After which, he contents himself by giving forth a lusty, challenging crow, thus putting up a good bluff. He may remain the champion of the flock, but he will leave fighting strictly alone. —S.M.L.



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## HOW AND WHEN TO PRUNE FRUIT AND ORNAMENTAL TREES AND SHRUBS

While the pruning of any tree or shrub may be conducted at any season of the year, the dormant season, especially in the case of trees, is generally accepted as the most desirable time. At that season of the year one is better able to determine the shape of the tree and to space the branches properly.

**Object of Pruning.**—The operator should, before commencing to prune, have a clear conception in mind as to exactly what his objective is. If pruning a shade tree or an ornamental shrub, his sole aim is symmetry of form, and pruning then becomes largely a matter of taste and good judgment. If pruning a fruit tree, the object is mainly to encourage or promote fruit-bearing surface, and shape or form is secondary, except in a very young tree, when the object is largely to train it to a certain shape.

**Fruit Trees.**—It is sufficient to remember that heavy pruning or cutting back will delay the fruiting age of a young tree, but this practice may be necessary in an old tree to encourage the production of a large amount of new wood. A tree must produce a certain amount of new wood each season to replace some of the older

growth which is continually dying or going out of fruiting. In old trees, unless pruned frequently, the old wood going out may exceed the new coming in. This may be corrected by judicious pruning. The pruning in such a tree should take the form of cutting back not only the growth of the terminal or outside branches, but also of the laterals and smaller branches. This cutting back should not be heavy or excessive at any one time. A certain amount of thinning out may also be necessary. This is to allow light to get at the lower portion of the tree. Trees that are never thinned out frequently die at the bottom and get bushy or thick in the top. This cuts down bearing surface and may eventually lead to long barren branches with a little fruit at the top only.

**Trees in General.**—In the pruning of both shade and fruit trees there are a few principles that should be borne in mind. In making a cut do not leave a stub of the branch, but cut back to either a bud or to a lateral, making the cut on the slant so that it has an opportunity to heal over.

Try to avoid the formation of very sharp crotches or angles by removing them when possible and encouraging the development of branches which

**Join at right angles or nearly so.**

Always permit the main branch to retain the lead; sometimes a lateral will grow as rapidly as the leader and if permitted to keep up to it, will result in a very weakened crotch and branch. Suppress the lateral by keeping it cut back.

Large wounds (over an inch and a half in diameter) should be painted to prevent weathering. For this purpose a mixture of white lead and oil, without the addition of turpentine, is recommended.

**A Pretty Contest.**

Provide each guest with a large cork, tooth picks and a ball of yarn made up of short lengths and various colors tied together alternately. Give the guests instructions on making an umbrella to protect them from showers. Stick the tooth picks around the side of the cork to form the ribs and one into the bottom to make the handle. Cover the ribs by weaving the yarn over and under the tooth picks, starting close to the cork and working outward. Tie the ends firmly leaving about a half-inch of toothpick showing all around. The person finishing first or the one making the best umbrella should receive some simple prize. —D. W. B.

When you cut ham or bacon, run lard over the exposed surface to guard it from mold.

**Welding Broken Castings.**

The other day when I went to use a concrete mixer that had just been returned by a borrowing neighbor, I found that the machine would not run. Twelve cogs had been cracked off of one of the gear-wheels.

I could not wait until a new wheel could be had from the manufacturer, so I took the broken casting to an acetylene welder in our little town. In a very short time he had built up the twelve cogs to their normal height.

While waiting for the repair I looked about the shop. I found that this wizard in iron could restore to its original state any kind of a casting. There was a mower wheel that had a part of the rim and spokes broken out. Repaired and painted, it looked new. There was a mold-board broken into five pieces, broken plowshares, castings from manure-spreaders, and what not, all made stronger than they were before, at smaller cost than new parts. The time saved was a great item for all the owners. Many machines that have been thrown on the scrap heap could have been saved by this process of welding. —D. B.

There are 20,000 eggs in the flanks of a house fly; immediately they are hatched these 20,000 maggots set to work, so that Linnaeus says that three house flies would suffice to devour the body of a horse or a lion. —Fabre.

**Plan Space for Clean-Up Room.**

Many of the newer farm homes have a clean-up room opening off the kitchen or dining room, where the men may wash and get ready for the meal before coming into the main part of the house. Such a room usually opens onto the back porch, and has rows of hooks for hanging the coats and hats up. There is a lavatory or two, or a wash-bench, mirror and combs.

We have found that a second-hand kitchen cupboard—some of the tall sorts—is a great convenience in the clean-up room. It may be painted to match the woodwork. The shelves are removed, and hooks, screwed in all around the top on the inside. This provides a place to hang the kitchen aprons, sweaters, dust caps, etc. The large drawer at the bottom makes a good place for work gloves.

One of the most convenient things we ever had in a home was a wood box in the clean-up room, next to the wall, with a sloping door opening into it on the other side, opening from the kitchen. It was so placed that it was convenient to the kitchen stove, and could be filled from the clean-up room, thus doing away with the necessity of carrying the wood through the kitchen. It was a large box, holding enough wood to last three or four days, and there was a partition near one end, so as to leave a space for kindling wood. —N. P.