

The Sunday School Lesson

AMBASSADORS IN BONDS

(Lesson for June 17)

Acts 21:17 to 26:32
Golden Text—I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.—2 Tim. 1:2

THE LESSON AS A WHOLE

Approach to the Lesson

Our lesson deals with the Apostle Paul's contact with one of the Herods. This reminds us that several of this line of tetrarchs and kings came into direct contact with Christ and His church. None of them shows up well in his response. We think of Herod the Great, who had ruled in Judea at the time of our Saviour's birth. On hearing of Him who was born King of the Jews, his rage and jealousy knew no bounds, and he sought to destroy the infant King by the slaughter of all the children two years old and under in Bethlehem.

On the death of this Herod, his son Archelaus succeeded to the tetrarchy of Judea, and it was on this account that Joseph did not settle in Bethlehem on his return from Egypt, but took Mary and Jesus back to Nazareth in Galilee.

The next Herod with whom we have close contact is Antipas, the one who stole his brother Philip's wife and was reproved for his evil deed by John the Baptist. Pressed by his illegal wife, he imprisoned John and later, caught in the trap of a hasty oath given to his step-daughter, he had the forerunner beheaded. It was this same Herod to whom Jesus referred as "that fox" (or vixen), and in whose presence He refused to utter a word (Luke 23:9).

Turning to Acts, we meet Herod Agrippa I, who inaugurated a program of persecution against the church, not that he had any special hatred of the church, but for political reasons. He suddenly pounced on James, the brother of John, and put him to death, and then followed this up with the imprisonment of Peter. His purpose to bring Peter to trial, however, was frustrated on the apostle's deliverance at the hand of the angel. Agrippa went down to Caesarea, where he died of a foul disease inflicted on him as a judgment for his pride (Acts 12:1-25). It is the son of this Agrippa with whom we are confronted in today's lesson.

Agrippa II had the pride, the cruelty, and the immoral propensities of the rest of the Herods. Because of his youth he did not receive his father's throne but was given the small kingdom of Calchis, which was later exchanged for a larger domain. Bernice, who appears with him in our lesson, was his sister. She had been the wife of the King of Calchis, to whom the young Agrippa succeeded, and after her husband's death seems to have lived with her brother in an incestuous relationship. Later Titus, the conqueror of Jerusalem, fell in love with her and took her with him to Rome, where she lived with him as his wife without any formal marriage. Paul, then, was standing before two who sorely needed the message of the Gospel, but who were unprepared to receive it.

Verse by Verse
Acts 26:2—"I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer . . . before thee . . . whereof I am accused of the Jews." This was Herod Agrippa II, son of the Herod whose persecutions and death are recorded in chapter 12. For the accusations see 24:5, 6.

Verse 3—" . . . expert in all customs . . . among the Jews." Agrippa was theoretically a Jew and was keeper of the high priest's vestments for the Day of Atonement.

Verse 4—"My manner of life from my youth . . . at Jerusalem, know all the Jews." Paul is referring to the early years of his life in Jerusalem. He had, of course, come from Tarsus. As a pupil of Gamaliel he would be known by the Jewish leaders.

Verse 5—" . . . after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." The Pharisees were first organized to preserve purity of doctrine and practice. More and more they had become sticklers for the form, losing the spirit of their original purpose.

Verse 6—"And now I stand . . . for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers." Paul doubtless refers to the Messianic hope, which appears so much in the prophets.

Verse 7—"Unto which . . . our twelve tribes . . . hope to come." A hint of the fact that this was still a living hope among the Jews. Notice the reference to the twelve tribes. Paul apparently did not believe that ten of them were "lost."

Verse 8—"Why should it be thought . . . incredible . . . that God should raise the dead?" The resurrection of Christ is the keystone of the arch of Christian truth. As a Jew, Agrippa could scarcely deny to the God of Israel the power to raise the dead.

Verses 9-18 seem to go off on a tangent. Having planted the seed of the resurrection in Agrippa's mind, Paul now resumes the story of his own experience—his conversion and call.

Verse 19—"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." As a king, Agrippa could appreciate obedience. But this was the higher obedience rendered to the higher King.

Verse 20—"But shewed . . . at Jerusalem . . . to the Gentiles, that they should repent and do works meet for repentance." Obedience to the heavenly vision means witness, beginning where you are and proceeding as God directs. Paul began in Damascus, where he was converted, and carried the witness wherever the providence of God led him. Notice the ethical content of Paul's message. He was speaking to a man whose conduct called for repentance.

Verse 21—"For these causes the Jews . . . went about to kill me." Paul here implicitly denies the charges of the Jews, while explicitly stating the real cause of their assault upon him.

Verse 22—"I continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great . . . those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." The Romans were God's instruments in Paul's safekeeping, but all this was the ordering of God.

Verse 23—"That Christ should suffer . . . rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." Here is the gist of Paul's message, salvation (light) to Jew and Gentile through the crucified and risen Saviour. This, he affirmed, was incomplete accord with Moses and the prophets.

The Heart of the Lesson

We find Paul in today's lesson in a very different situation from that in which we have been accustomed to find him. In our previous lessons he has been going from city to city with all freedom, ministering the Word of life. He is now a prisoner. For the story of his arrest read chapter 21:27-40. Only quick action on the part of the Roman troops saved him from lynching. Rather than fall again into the hands of the Jews, Paul used his prerogative as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar. The Roman official Festus was, however, in a quandary. He was bound to grant Paul's request, but did not know what grounds to state in his report to Caesar for sending this prisoner to Rome. The visit of Agrippa, who was well versed in Jewish lore, was a happy occurrence for Festus. He felt he could secure help in making such a report. This meeting, then, could hardly be called a trial in an official sense. Nevertheless, it was a formal hearing.

The Apostle Paul seems to have been sincerely glad to be able to present his cause before one who could understand, so he spoke with all freedom.

His statement falls into three parts. First, he recalls his life as a Pharisee. Not only did this mean that he belonged to the strictest sect of the Jews, but it highlighted his insatiable opposition to the church and to the whole cause of Christ. From this he proceeds to the story of his conversion and commission. The story is told in such a way as to emphasize the supernatural elements, and to show that there was no room for unbelief in the face of such a definite revelation of the Lord Jesus. The commission was of course that ministry to the Gentiles which he had so faithfully carried on, but whose very mention had so angered the Jews.

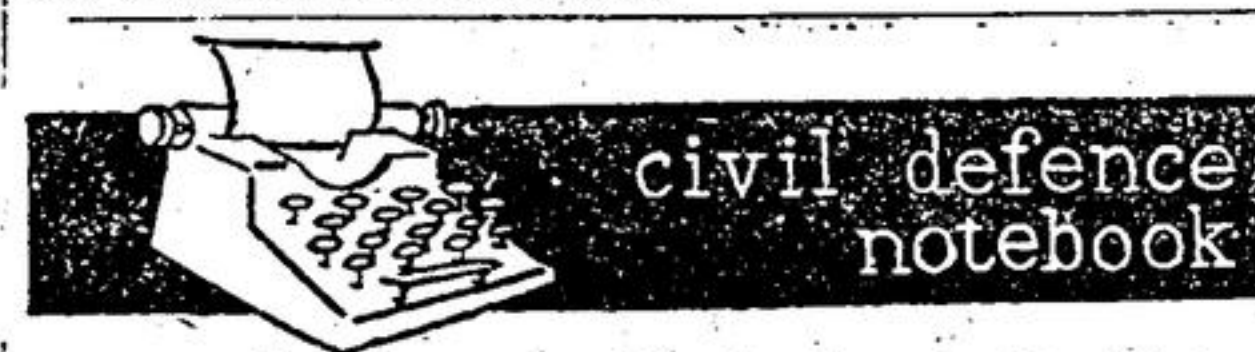
But the apostle would not close his statement without a

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Having just sold the major part of our theatre circuit to Odeon Theatres of Canada we are going out of the theatre business and offer our Uxbridge theatre for sale. Excellent opportunity to get in a cash business with no inventory problems. Minimum of \$15,000.00 Down Payment required to handle. Write to H. Fingold, 1295 Bayview Avenue, Toronto or telephone MA. 0711, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Mennonite Conference In Elmira Last Week

The Elmira Mennonite Church will be host to the annual conference of Ontario this week. Howard Bauman is pastor of the Elmira church. The 112 delegates will be from the congregations in Ontario and New York State. Bishop J. B. Martin, Waterloo, is moderator of the conference, and Rev. Rufus Jutz, Elmira, is the conference secretary. During the business sessions of the conference, plans will be discussed for the coming year's work in the field of education, missions, congregational expansion, and ministerial work. Reports will be received from the Rockway Mennonite School, Fairview Home for the Aged, Ontario Mennonite Bible School and Institute, Mennonite Hour radio broadcast, welfare board, publication board, council of general conference of the Mennonite Church. The Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities will hold their 15th annual convention in the Elmira Arena. The Ontario Mennonite Conference will be host to the convention. One hundred delegates will attend from the foreign mission fields, United States and Canada. The board has ninety missionaries stationed in foreign countries. Reports will be received from the four hospital administrators and 6 superintendents of homes for the aged and children's homes.

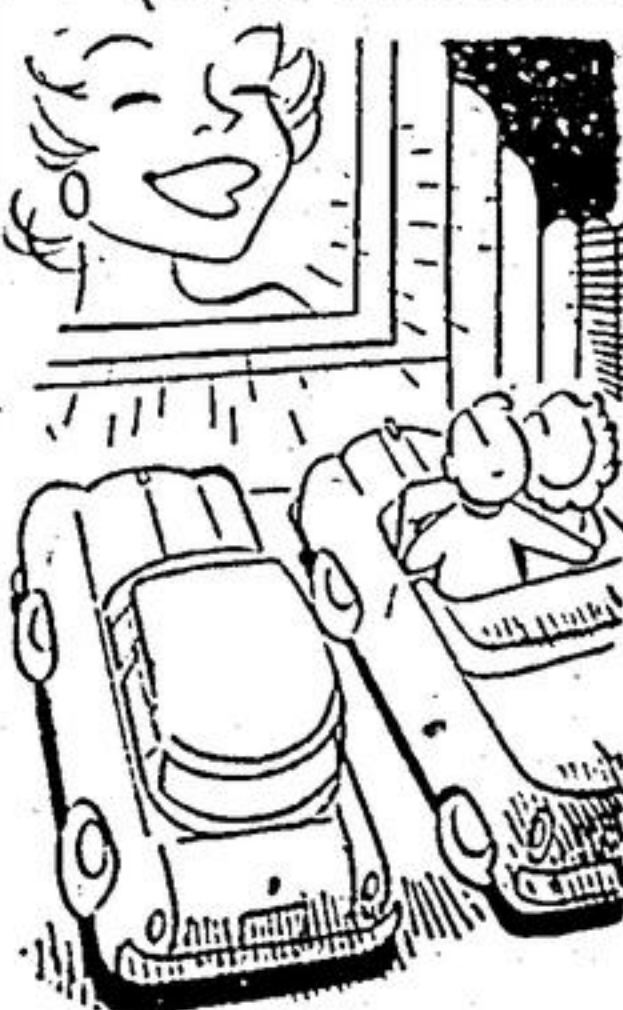


Natural Disaster Vital Rural Problem

(15th in a series of 24 articles)
As far as natural disaster is concerned, civil defence can possibly prove more important to the small town or rural area than to the city. Disaster can come in many forms. Possibly its most frequent and familiar form is fire. Fire can sweep a whole block, or two or three blocks, of a city without wiping it out. Disasters as such a blaze would be to any community, however

large, it would hardly put the whole city out of jobs if, for example, the flames destroyed a factory. There are hotels, YM-CA centres, Salvation Army shelters and dozens of other similar places in a city in which people driven by fire from their homes can take temporary shelter. But the small town can't always withstand such a blow. Its whole existence sometimes depends largely on one industry. Let disaster in the form of fire—or flood or tornado, for that matter—strike it and the town has suffered a serious if not fatal injury to its chief source of income. In combating such natural disasters, the city has other advantages over the rural area. There are usually many more firemen and more and better fire equipment to battle the flames. There are large numbers of police to call on for assistance in these and other emergencies if the need is great enough. And if more help is still required, the city can provide far more volunteers from its own population than the small town or the farming area. It is especially important, therefore, that the small community make the best of what it has. Even though spurred primarily by the threat of possible war, a civil defence organization can help a community to combat natural disaster. The federal civil defence organization has worked out plans flexible enough to fit the local needs of every section of the country. All they require is a willingness on the part of each community to put these plans into use. Through civil defence planning, the town with a two-man police force and a volunteer fire brigade can recruit and train other residents to help make the best of these facilities in whatever unexpected disaster comes. It is only by effective planning that the maximum use can be made of the lighter manpower available in the smaller areas. And, through civil defence coordination, several small communities can work out a system of mutual aid; that is, they can be prepared beforehand to help each other when the unexpected situation makes such co-operation urgent. The farmer has not been forgotten, either. In Canada's civil defence plans, the planners have worked out means of warning him, too, of approaching disaster and of bringing him aid when he needs it. The plans are there and in most communities a nucleus, at least, of the services to put them into action already exists. All that remains is for the residents of the community to ask for them and then learn how to apply them to the particular needs of their part of the country. Civil defence seeks only to help people help themselves.

Brighter Stars for Drive-in-Viewers



Your favorite movie star's smile beams three times as clear and bright from an aluminum screen recently developed for outdoor theatres. The new screen has won the praise of both audiences and owners. Little wonder the latter like it: one operator found his receipts increased by \$40,000 in two months after he replaced his conventional screen with the highly reflective, weather-proof aluminum job. And so it goes . . . Still another improved product, still another use for this versatile modern metal. The result: everybody gains by production from Canadian smelters that already account for a quarter of the world's primary aluminum. ALUMINUM COMPANY OF CANADA, LTD. (ALCAN)

Crop Improvement Growers To Inspect Seaway Project

The York County Soil & Crop Improvement Association has made arrangements this year to run their annual Bus Tour to Eastern Ontario to inspect the St. Lawrence Seaway and Hydro projects. This will be a conducted tour after which the group will go to Ottawa to visit the Experimental Farm, House of Commons and other places of interest. After an overnight visit to the Kemptonville Agricultural School, the route will be via No. 7 Highway to Peterboro.

Owing to the delay in seeding, the dates have been set back two weeks and according to the secretary, W. M. Cockburn, Agricultural Representative, Newmarket, they will leave Sunday afternoon, June 17th, at 2.30. Reservations must be a week in advance.

Emergency Crops
With the continued wet weather preventing seeding, the Department of Agriculture is receiving more requests for emergency crops to replace spring grain. Furthermore, late frost damage to clover and alfalfa will further curtail the growth of hay and pasture.

The Agricultural Representative, W. M. Cockburn, at Newmarket, and Ed. Pearson his assistant, are urging farmers to plant corn for silage and also husking corn for grain. They point out that an acre of grain corn will yield almost double an acre of oats in feed. However, in this area, an early maturing strain of hybrid corn seed should be used, particularly north of the ridge. If farmers are in doubt about maturity of varieties, they should contact local seed dealers or the Ag. Rep.

For hay or pasture, one of the best emergency crops is 2 bus. of oats and 20 lbs. of Sudan Grass, sown after the soil warms up or sweet clover might be substituted for the Sudan grass. If peas are available, a mixture of 2 to 2½ bus. of oats and ½ to 1 bus. of peas makes a very satisfactory hay. For straight summer pasture, Sudan grass alone, seeded at 30 lbs. per acre, grows well during the hot summer weather.

The largest aluminum structure is in the upper decks of the liner "United States." Weight of the aluminum alloys involved is 2,000 tons, producing a direct weight saving of 2,500 tons and a fuel saving estimated at 8 or 9 percent.

DECEMBER—The month you can't close the bus window which you couldn't open in August.

York Junior Farmer Results

Bruce King, Woodbridge, was announced as the winner of the Two Nations Tour at the annual York County Junior Farmers' livestock judging competition banquet on Saturday, May 26th. The award is made on the basis of outstanding work in all phases of Junior Farmer work as well as live stock judging competitions. Bruce is a past president of Vellore Junior Farmers and has been very active in the Woodbridge 4-H Calf Club and in addition was senior champion and winner of the George S. Henry Shield in the judging competition.

The winner of the Jr. championship and novice shield was Wm. Arkinstall, Newmarket, an active member of Sharon Junior Farmers and the York County 4-H Baby Beef Club.

The competitors were required to judge eight classes of live stock and to give reasons on their placings on each type of stock. Individual trophy winners were as follows: Beef—John Gardhouse Trophy—James Darlington, Maple; Dairy—Gordon Duncan Trophy—Garritt Herrema, King; Sheep—D. W. Bax-

Homemaking work was Hilda Andrews, Queensville. Following the banquet, an old-time dance was held in the Newmarket Town Hall. The competition was under the direction of W. M. Cockburn and E. K. Pearson, Dept. of Agriculture, while the banquet and dance were organized by the York County Jr. Farmers' Association under the direction of Miss Cora Brodie, Gormley, County President. Someone asks if it is correct to say that one "climbs down a tree". Of course not. One unclimbs a tree.

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— YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND AND TO PRAY —

- YOU: Car ads, car ads and more car ads.
- US: Yes . . . everybody's interested in cars.
- YOU: But the paper's full of 'em, pages and pages.
- US: Well . . . what's wrong with that?
- YOU: Most of 'em vague . . . not enough details.
- US: Doesn't apply to Pontiac.
- YOU: Where's the difference?
- US: Pontiac's specific . . . lots of information.
- YOU: That so?
- US: Sure. We give you all the facts.
- YOU: Like what?
- US: Go ahead . . . ask me anything you'd like to know.
- YOU: OK . . . how many Pontiac series and models?
- US: 6 series and 31 models . . . more than any other make of car.
- YOU: Mm-hmm . . . now what's the story on engines?
- US: 5—more and better than any other car.
- YOU: How about color and upholstery combinations?
- US: Literally hundreds . . . more attractive than any other car.

Plain talk from us to you

- YOU: So far so good . . . tell me about transmissions.
- US: 5 altogether . . . away ahead of competition.
- YOU: How do these things affect economy?
- US: Penny-pinchingest car you ever drove!
- YOU: Sounds like there's more of everything.
- US: Yes, sir . . . that's Pontiac all the way!
- YOU: No wonder you're so free with the details.
- US: Sure . . . Pontiac offers more. We're proud to talk about it.
- YOU: Anything more I should know?
- US: Nothing Pontiac can't prove—just drive one and see.
- YOU: Now?
- US: No time like the present.
- YOU: Where do I go?
- US: To any Authorized Pontiac Dealer . . . he'll treat you right!

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Announcement

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