**The Solution to Persecution**

(Acts 21:31-40)

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

 One day a landlord called one of his tenants to say, “Your heating bill is *through the roof.*

It’s *way* too high, and I’m coming over to discuss a solution. His tenant replied, “Sure! Come on over. My door is always open.”

 Well, speaking of solutions, here in our text the Apostle Paul is experiencing some *persecution.* And we want to carefully consider his *solution* to persecution, because he is our pattern in all things, and the kind of *violent* persecution he was experiencing here may eventually come our way as well. If that should happen, we want to be sure to respond to it as Paul did, so let’s give God’s Word our best attention in this passage. The story begins in Acts 21:31, where we read,

 **“And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.”**

In our last study, we saw that the men who were trying to kill Paul were *unsaved Jewish men.* One of them had accused Paul of polluting their temple by bringing a Gentile into it, and he got the rest of them so whipped up they were in *a murderous rage.* But as they were about to kill Paul, the chief captain of the Roman band in charge of keeping the peace in Jerusalem got word that all Jerusalem was in an uproar, and he sprang into action. Speaking of him, verse 32 says,

 **“Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul” (Acts 21:32).**

Now we’re not told how *many* soldiers and centurions the chief captain sent to quell this uprising, but we just read in verse 31 that he was the captain of a Roman “band,” and history says that a Roman band consisted of *600 men.* And there’s a good chance the chief captain sent most—if not *all—*of them to quiet this riot, because the word *centurion* there is plural. A centurion was a commander of *100* men, as in how a century is made up of 100 years. So “centurions” *plural* means the chief captain deployed *hundreds* of hardened Roman soldiers to address the tumult.

 And since we just read in verse 31 that they were going about to *kill* Paul, when verse 32 says they “left off beating of Paul,” that tells us *how* they planned to kill him. They planned *to beat him to death* without the benefit of a fair trial. And that was most assuredly *illegal* under Roman law, so they knocked it off when they saw the Roman soldiers.

 Now you’d think that once the soldiers arrived on the scene that they would *rescue* Paul, and I guess you could say they did. Verse 33 says,

 **“Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done” (Acts 21:33).**

Now usually when the cops arrive on the scene of a man being beaten, they arrest the men doing the beating, the guys with the bruised knuckles, not the man looking beaten and bloodied. But instead, these soldiers arrested the *victim* of the crime instead of the perpetrators. So why would they take *Paul* into custody?

 I believe it was because the Jews, for all their faults, were a pretty law-abiding people, at least in comparison with *other* nations Rome conquered. And that’s because that’s what their Bible *told them* to be. Even when they were living under the regime of a nation that had conquered them, God told them to *pray* for that nation, and not rebel against it (Jer.29:7). And that’s how great men of God behaved, as we see when

 **“The...princes sought to find occasion against Daniel *concerning the kingdom;* but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, *neither was there any...fault found in him”* (Daniel 6:3,4).**

 Daniel’s enemies tried to find something that they could charge him with “concerning the kingdom.” That is, they tried to find some *law* he’d broken to get him in Dutch with the king. And they couldn’t find *a single charge* that would stick. Remember The Teflon Don, the mafia kingpin that they couldn’t bring down because no matter what they charged him with, none of the charges would stick? Well, Daniel was the Teflon Prophet. He didn’t break a single law of the kingdom in which he lived, even though it was the kingdom of Babylon that had conquered his own kingdom of Israel.

 And the Jews in Paul’s day followed Daniel’s example. They too were law-abiding citizens for the most part. So the chief captain figured that if men who were known to be law-abiding citizens were beating a man, that the man they were beating probably *wasn’t* a law-abiding citizen. He was some kind of trouble-maker instead. In other words, he gave the Jews the benefit of the doubt because they had *earned* the benefit of the doubt.

 Now is there anything you can learn from that? If you have a reputation for keeping your nose clean and obeying the law, the cops are just naturally going to assume the best of you when trouble breaks out. I’ve watched enough cop shows on TV to know that policemen sometimes tell their superior officers, “This man has no priors,” implying that he’s probably innocent because he had no prior arrests.

 Now the law doesn’t *always* assume the best of you, of course. But I can tell you this: If you have a history of being a *troublemaker* instead, who do you think the law is going to suspect of wrong-doing, you or some guy with no priors? It just stands to reason.

 But now, when verse 33 says that Paul was bound with two chains *by the Roman chief captain,* that is *not* what the prophet Agabus *predicted* would happen just one chapter ago in Acts 21:10,11, where we read that,

 **“...a certain prophet, named Agabus...took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall *the Jews at Jerusalem* bind the man that owneth this girdle, *and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles”***

A prophet of God said that *the Jews* would bind Paul, and turn him over to the Roman Gentiles. But that’s not what happened. The Jews tried to *kill* Paul, and the Romans *saved* him, and then *the Romans* bound him. So was God’s prophet wrong? Was the Holy Ghost wrong? You know better than that! But then, how do we explain this discrepancy?

 Well, you’ll notice that Agabus used Paul’s “girdle” to bind him, and a girdle is the Bible word for a man’s *belt.* And when it says he used Paul’s *“own”* girdle to bind him, that was symbolic of how *it was Paul’s own fault* he was being bound. Remember, in verse 26 he tried to offer an animal sacrifice that he knew God wouldn’t approve of, and God providentially allowed a riotto break out among the Jews to stop him.

And that’s how the Jews were behind the binding of Paul. It was Paul’s *love* for the Jews that bound him.If that seems like a stretch to you, I’m open to any and all other suggestions as to how to reconcile Agabus’ prophecy with what actually happened, and how it was fulfilled. But that’s what makes the most sense to me.

 Now if you’re wondering why the chief captain bound Paul with two chains, we see the reason by comparing what happened to Peter in Acts 12:1-6:

 **“...Herod...*killed James*...and because he saw it pleased the Jews, *he proceeded further to take Peter also*...the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, *bound with two chains...”* (Acts 12:1-3,6).**

So if Peter was bound with two chains because he was bound between two soldiers, that’s probably why Paul was too.

 And the indication is that Herod was going to *kill* Peter, just as he’d killed James. And Peter knew that, but he was *sleeping like a baby.* That’s because he knew that being willing to die for the Lord is what Jews had to do to be saved under the kingdom program, as the Lord made clear in Matthew 16:24,25:

 **“Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up *his* cross, and follow Me. *For* whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.”**

The Lord gave up *His* life on a cross, and He told the Jews to whom He ministered (Mt.15:24) that they had to be willing to take up *their* crosses, and give up *their* lives for Him, the way He gave up Hislife for them. They had to be identified with Him *in His death,* if they wanted to be identified with Him *in His life,* His resurrectionlife.

 And we see that identification with Christ pictured here with Peter. Did you know that the only other time the Bible talks about two chains is when it talks about Israel’s high priest, who was a type of Israel’s *ultimate* high priest. Look what God told Moses in Exodus 28:1-30:

 **“...****make holy garments for Aaron...to consecrate him, *that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office.* And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate...and a robe...*and two chains of pure gold...*upon the breastplate...And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel *in* *the breastplate of judgment* upon his heart*...and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually”***

Israel’s high priest wore *two chains* to hold his breastplate over his heart, and his breastplate bore the names of the 12 tribes of Israel so that he could identify with them, and bear *their* judgment on *his* heart. And that’s what Israel’s *ultimate* high priest did, the Lord Jesus Christ. He bore the judgment of the Jews on His heart when He died for them.

 In the dispensation of grace, we are identified with the Lord in His death by grace through faith when we believe the gospel (Romans 6:1-5). But in the Lord’s day, Jews had to identify themselves with the Lord like He identified with them, by giving *their* lives for *Him,* just like He gave *His* life *for them,* if they wanted to be saved. And we see Peter symbolically preparing to do that by preparing to die between two unsaved soldiers, the way the Lord died between to unsaved thieves.

 The Book of Acts is a book of symbols, symbols of what God was *doing* during the time period depicted in Acts. And we see this when Peter was bound with two chains and ready to die for the Lord.

 But what’s all this have to do with *Paul’s* two chains? Well, interestingly enough, the high priest wore something *else,* something I didn’t mention when I quoted that passage in Exodus 28. God *also* told Moses,

 **“...make holy garments for Aaron...that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office...a breastplate...and a robe...*and a girdle...”* (Exodus 28:2-4).**

 Well, isn’t *that* interesting? Agabus bound himself with a *girdle,* and said that Paul would be bound like that.

 So what’s being symbolized here with Paul? To answer, look what Paul said about the Jews in Romans 9:3:

 **“I could wish that myself were *accursed from Christ* for my brethren, *my kinsmen according to the flesh.”***

 Paul wasn’t just willing to die *physically* to save *himself,* as the Jews had to do to be saved. He was willing to die *spiritually* so *the Jews* could be saved! He identified himself with the Lord’s death *to save the Jews,* not to save himself. The Lord died physically *and* spiritually to save the Jews, and Paul was prepared to die for them physically here in Acts 21, and he confessed he was willing to die for them *spiritually* in Romans 9:3.

 Now eventually, Paul ends up being what he calls himself in Ephesians 3:1,

**“...the prisoner of Jesus Christ *for you Gentiles...”***

But what we are reading about here in this passage is the *segue* to that, the segue that took place during the transition period in Acts. That is, Paul was *chained* because his love for Jews made him offer that sacrifice to get Jews to listen to him about Christ, but he was later *imprisoned* so *Gentiles* could hear about Christ. And we see that segue symbolized here, and leter in the Book of Acts.

 But now that Paul’s bound with two chains, verse 33 says the chief captain asked who Paul was, and what he’d done. But before Paul could answer, the unruly mob of unsaved Jews answered *for* him in verse 34, where it says of the crowd,

 **“And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle” (Acts 21:34).**

Now if you want a good example of what religious fervor and misguided zeal can do to men, *there it is!* I mean, think it through. They were fixin’ to *murder* a man for religious reasons, *but they weren’t sure what those reasons were!* One said one thing, one said another, and not even a savvy chief captain in the army of Rome could figure out what they were charging him with. If you were going to kill someone, wouldn’t you be pretty sure of the reason why you wanted the man dead? But religion can blind men in ways that defy the imagination.

 Here I believe the suspicions of the chief captain begin to turn, and he starts thinking that Paul may be innocent. I’ve watched enough cop shows on television to know that whenever witnesses give conflicting testimony against a man, the police smell a rat, and suspect something’s up, and know that something’s not right.

 But if that’s so, why did the chief captain keep Paul under arrest and bring him into the castle? Well, have you ever heard the phrase “protective custody”? On those same TV cop shows, I often saw the police make arrests of that nature, and here the chief captain took Paul into the castle to protect him from the mob until he could have a fair trial.

 History says that castle was built by Herod the Great, the Roman emperor who tried to kill the Lord when He was a baby by murdering all the baby boys born in Bethlehem. Herod named it “The *Antonio* Castle” after his friend Marc *Antony,* who was a relative of Julius Caesar. Some say that it was from the steps of that castle that Pilate heard the Lord’s case when the Jews had falsely accused *Him* the way they were falsely accusing Paul here.

 I suspect this castle was built on the highest point in Jerusalem, because in verse 32 it says that the Roman soldiers “ran *down* unto them.” Jerusalem was the city on a hill the Lord talked about in Matthew 5:14. At 2,400 feet, it was a half mile high, higher than any hill anywhere to be found for 100 miles in any direction. So for the soldiers to run *down* to Jerusalem *from* the castle, it had to be *above* the city on a rise or small hill of its own. That means it didn’t matter where a disturbance broke out, the captain could look out and locate it, and it was a downhill run for his soldiers to get to it. The Romans knew how and where to build a fortress!

 But don’t think that the murderous mob gave up on trying to get their hands on Paul, for it says in verse 35,

 **“And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people” (Acts 21:35).**

Now that means they carried Paul into the castle in such a way that the violence of the people couldn’t get at him. And that *could* mean they put him on the shoulders of two men, the way the 1985 Chicago Bears carried Coach Mike Ditka off the field after the greatest Super Bowl victory in history.

 But that would have made him an upright target for people to throw rocks at, now that their white-hot anger had been reignited by the thought that Paul was going to escape their grasp. That is, they’d stopped beating Paul when they saw the soldiers, but they just couldn’t bear the thought of him escaping the death penalty they sought to inflict on him. So the way I picture what was happening to Paul here is one of two ways.

 First, have you ever seen a funeral where the pallbearers carry the coffin on their shoulders instead of waist-high, the way caskets are usually carried? I know Marines do that, and I understand that this is the norm in some cultures abroad as well. That could be what it means here, that the soldiers carried Paul laying flat on their shoulders.

 But carrying Paul shoulder-high might not get him out of reach of the murderous mob. So I think what they did was something like what today they call *crowd-surfing.* The crowd at rock concerts is sometimes so dense that the singer can fall into the crowd on the top of their up-stretched hands, and literally go surfing across the crowd as they pass him along like the wave of a surf carries a man along. If that’s what the soldiers did, *that* would keep Paul out of the reach of the mob, and not make him an upright target. Once they reached the stairs, the height of the steps would keep him out of reach, and they could flank Paul to protect him from anything thrown at him.

 Well, the mob may not have been able to lay their *hands* on Paul, but they were still able to lay their *words* on him, and they weren’t shy about doing it, as we see in verse 36:

 **“For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him” (Acts 21:36).**

Now if those words sound familiar, it’s because that’s what some unsaved Jews said to Pontius Pilate in Luke 23:18:

 **“And they cried out all at once, saying, *Away with this man,* and release unto us Barabbas.”**

 And don’t forget, the Lord had been falsely accused of some things there, just as Paul has been here. And the Lord was suffering *for Jews like Barabbas,* just as Paul was suffering for the Jews here *in chains.* But as the transition period of the Book of Acts continued to unfold, Paul eventually began suffering for *us* in *prison.* He told the Colossians,

 **“I Paul...now rejoice in my sufferings for you, *and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ* in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church” (Colossians 1:23,24).**

Paul said he was suffering *prison* for us members of the Body of Christ, just as he suffered for the Jews in chains before that segue took place.

 But don’t get confused when he calls his sufferings “that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.” He’s not talking about the afflictions Christ suffered *to pay for our sins.* Christ didn’t leave any of *those* sufferings behind. That is, He didn’t suffer for our sins, and then ask us to suffer for them too, by giving things up for Lent, and all the other ways people try to suffer for their sins to *pay* for their sins. No, Paul’s talking about suffering the *rejection* that people would still be giving the Lord if He were here. He wasn’t, *but Paul was.*

 For some reason, that always makes me think of what Richard Nixon said after he lost the presidential election in 1960. He told the press, “Now you won’t have Nixon to kick around any more, because this is my last press conference.” At least it was his last one until he ran again in 1968 and won.

 But after the Lord ascended into heaven, the world didn’t have *Him* to kick around any more—but they had *Paul!* And he says he not only didn’t *mind* it, he *rejoiced* in it. He rejoiced in his sufferings for us.

 You say, “But that’s suffering *for the Lord,* in His place. Paul says he was suffering *for the church which is His Body.”* Well, think it through. If you’re in the Lord’s Body, then any suffering Paul did for the Lord, he did it for you as well.

 But if Paul wasn’t suffering for our sins, how *was* he suffering for us? He explains it in IICorinthians 1:5,6, where he wrote,

 **“...as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, *so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.* And whether we be afflicted, *it is for your consolation...*which is effectual *in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer*: or whether we be comforted, *it is for your consolation...”***

Paul is saying that he was willing to suffer afflictions and be consoled by Christ *so he could teach us* how to find *our* consolation in Christ when *we’re* afflicted. Remember, he’s our pattern in all things. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior, our Redeemer, but Paul is our pattern.

 But he said that his sufferings for us only become “effectual” if we suffer as he suffered and let the Lord console us as he consoled him. That is, his pattern only becomes effectual when we *follow* his pattern. The only way Paul’s pattern can have any effect in our lives is if we follow it and learn to be as consoled by Christ in our afflictions as he was. When Christians are afflicted, they generally beseech God to have the affliction *removed.* But in the dispensation of grace, God says His grace is sufficient for us (IICor.12:7-9), and He supplies grace for us to “escape” afflictions by *bearing* them (ICor.10:13).

 Here it helps to remember that it’s our suffering for the Lord that God plans to *reward* at the Judgment Seat of Christ, as Paul says when he wrote,

 **“...*I suffer trouble,* as an evil doer, even unto bonds...I endure all things *for the elect's sakes,* that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *with eternal glory*....For...if we suffer, *we shall also reign with Him...”* (II Timothy 2:9-12).**

Paul says that he suffered for the sake of *the elect—*people who were already saved—so they could obtain salvation *from a loss of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ,* and share in Christ’s “eternal glory” as we join Him in reigning over the angels (ICor.6:3). He suffered for their sakes as a pattern for them in suffering.

 Well, now comes the solution to persecution I promised you, in verse 37, where we read:

 **“And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?” (Acts 21:37).**

Paul answered persecution by speaking *graciously* to the chief captain who was persecuting him *by clapping him in irons.* And he’s about to speak just as graciously to the murderous mob that prompted his arrest. God’s solution to persecution is *grace!* It’s the same solution He has for everything.

 And gracious is what you should be if you should get arrested because of some trumped-up charges like Paul was here. Paul could have looked at those soldiers as the bad guys. After all, he hadn’t done anything illegal, so he’d been wrongfully arrested. But he knew that the solution to persecution is *grace,* even when you’re in the right.He could have started *screaming* at the chief captain and accusing him of false arrest. Instead, he didn’t dare even *speak* to the chief captain without asking *permission* to speak to him.

 And because he spoke graciously to the chief captain, the chief captain answered by speaking to him just as graciously. What a concept!

 Grace doesn’t always work, of course. It’s not always answered with grace in others. But it is the only thing that has any hope of working. Screaming at your antagonist never works!

 As we read on, we find out why he was surprised that Paul spoke Greek as we read on in our text, where he asked the apostle:

 **“Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?” (Acts 21:38).**

The chief captain thought Paul was an uneducated lowlife rebel who probably spoke Egyptian, not Greek.

 Now here we have to ask: why would he think *that?* Well, history says that that event took place a scant 3 years earlier, and there probably hadn’t been an uproar in Jerusalem like it *since* it happened. So the chief captain thought Paul must be the same perp.

 *Plus,* the chief captain would have known that Jews didn’t *like* Egyptians, going all the way back to when they were *slaves* to the Egyptians *for 400 years.* So if some Jews were trying to kill a man, the chief captain figured the man was probably that Egyptian.

 But because Paul has been gracious, he received permission to speak to the captain, and he said to him in verse 39:

 **“But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people” (Acts 21:39).**

Now the reason Paul mentions Tarsus is probably because there was a college university in Tarsus, and that would explain to the chief captain how Paul knew how to speak Greek. It told him that he was an educated man, and not a cutthroat who led murderers around in the wilderness.

 That’s also why he described Tarsus as “no mean city.” The word “mean” in that context means the opposite of *noble,* as we see when Solomon wrote,

 **“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before *kings;* he shall *not* stand before *mean men”* (Proverbs 22:29).**

Do you see how the word “mean” there is the opposite of nobility? So Paul is saying that Tarsus was no mean city, it was a *noble* city. History says the schools of higher education in Tarsus rivaled the schools found in Athens and Alexandria, and her library contained 200,000 volumes. As a learned man, Paul had probably read many of them. And Romans like the chief captain here were impressed with things like that, as people are today.

 So now Paul has the captain’s attention, and he was willing to let the apostle speak to the Jews as he requested, as we see in verse 40 where it says:

 **“And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue...” (Acts 21:40).**

Now as you may remember, this is the very reason Paul *came* to Jerusalem in the first place! He wanted to get the chance to preach to all the unsaved Jews that he knew would be there for Pentecost, as we saw in the last chapter, where it says that

 **“Paul...determined to sail by Ephesus, *because...he hasted,* if it were possible...*to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost”* (Acts 20:16).**

 Unsaved Jews from all over the world came to Jerusalem for Pentecost, and Paul planned to take full advantage of that to preach Christ to that vast assembled multitude.

 Of course, he thought that when his chance came that they’d be listening carefully because of the relief money he’d collected from the Gentile churches to give to the Jewish kingdom church in Jerusalem. Instead, they were *not* inclined to listen to him carefully because they thought he’d brought a Gentile into their temple.

 So, knowing he had to do something to get them to listen to him, he gestured with his hand in the way that Jews did in those days to gain the attention of an audience. And when the Jews saw he was respectful of a simple Jewish custom like that, they stopped screaming for his blood and started listening instead. And he spoke in Hebrew to *further* gain their attention.

 Here I should pause and point out that Paul then went on to speak to them in Hebrew for the next 21 verses in chapter 22, and the apostle Luke, who wrote the Book of Acts, wrote what he said in Hebrew down in Koine Greek, the language the New Testament was written in. I mention this because people say that you can’t make a perfect translation from one language to another. And the reason *Christians* say that is to make you think you can’t trust English versions of the Bible because they are translated from Greek and Hebrew.

 But we know that *Luke* made a perfect translation of what Paul said in Hebrew because the Greek words he used to translate Paul’s Hebrew words appear in the perfect Greek text of the New Testament.

 And this isn’t the only time that something like that happened in Scripture. Look what it says about Joseph’s brethren in Genesis 42:23:

 **“And they knew not that Joseph understood them; *for he spake unto them by an interpreter.”***

Joseph had been speaking *Egyptian* to his brethren, but Moses wrote down what he said *in Hebrew,* in what must have been a perfect translation, because what he wrote is included in the perfect text of the Hebrew Old Testament.

 We see this again in Ezra 4:7,11:

 **“...in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam...unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the *Syrian* tongue...*This is the copy of the letter that they sent unto...Artaxerxes...”***

And Ezra then proceeded to write down a copy of those Syrian words in Hebrew, in what must have been a perfect copy of those Syrian words, because what he wrote is found in the perfect, divinely-inspired text of the Hebrew Old Testament. The point is: the Bible may have been written in Hebrew and Greek, but you can trust the copy of God’s Word you have in English.

 Now we’re not going to study chapter 22 in this lesson, but look what happened in the first two verses. Verse 40 ends by saying that Paul spoke to the crowd in Hebrew, saying,

 **“Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.**

 **“(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)” (Acts 22:1,2).**

When Paul gestured with his hand in that Jewish custom, those Jews piped down and began to listen to him in silence. Then, when he respectfully spoke to them *in their language,* they gave him even *more* silence. I think there’s something we can learn from that. If you want people to listen to *you* when you tell them about Christ, it helps to speak to them in their own language.

 You say, “But I don’t know any other languages!” Well, let me ask you: do you know why God wrote the Old Testament in Hebrew? It’s because He wrote it *to His Hebrew people.* Do you know why He wrote the New Testament in Greek? It’s because He wrote the New Testament *to Gentiles of all languages,* and all Gentiles spoke Greek in those days, ever since Alexander the Great Greek conquered the world, and forced those conquered peoples to learn Greek.

 So Greek was a *universal* language. And there are *other* universal languages. Music is one of them. The notes on the scale mean the exact same thing in every language, and can be understood by people of all languages. Mathematics is *also* a universal language. The numbers 2+2=4, no matter what language you speak.

 And if you’re not a musician or mathematician, there are *other* universal languages that the simplest of us can speak. *Kindness* is understood in every language. So is *honesty,* and *patience,* and *forgiveness,* and a whole lot of *other* virtuous things. If you speak to people of other languages by displaying those virtues, they are going to be *way* more likely to listen to you when you speak to them about Christ.

 So I trust that you will lay this article down determined to adorn what you say about the Lord with a life that backs up what you say.