

**Acts 20:16-38**

Martyrs: Paul 2

*Fought the good fight ...*

I. Ambassador in Chains

- A. To the World
- B. To the Church

II. Living Sacrifice

- A. Afflicted
- B. Imprisoned

III. Martyr for Christ

- A. Dying Every Day
- B. Executed

*... finished the race.****Children, Listen ...***

1. What was Paul's main calling in life?
2. What did he tell unbelievers?
3. What was his message to Christians?
4. Was Paul's life easy? How do you know?
5. Who does Paul say would give him a victory crown?

**Upon Departure**

The story of Saul/Paul's conversion is extraordinary. His life as an apostle and missionary has made him a larger than life figure, a man towering over the history of the church. Certainly all glory goes to God and his success is attributed to grace. But there is no question that the Apostle Paul was a remarkable man. While he was alive in Christ and lively in Kingdom work the death of a martyr always loomed ahead. You can read indications of it many places in Acts as well as Paul's own letters. One moving example of this is found in his letter to his beloved "son" in the Lord Timothy. Yet there is no hint of melancholy as he eulogizes himself.

I am already being poured out as a drink offering,  
and the time of my departure has come.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.  
Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,  
which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day,  
and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. 2 Timothy 6-8

This is an acceptable sacrifice, a battle victory, the finish line and resolute faith. He humbly anticipated a crown to be bestowed upon him by the very One who gave Him the grace of life and perseverance would to begin with. Paul received his reward upon his martyrdom. The offering was consumed, the fight was over, the race was done, his faith became sight – and he was awarded his crown. This reward is “for all who love” Christ’s appearing – in other words all true saint of God. But there must be a special sweetness in receiving it for those who suffered, persevered and finally died for their faith in Christ. May God grant our oppressed brothers and sisters great joy as they anticipate the award they will receive when they kneel before the righteous Judge on “that Day.”