

They passed through the ambush untouched. Patrick and his men met with the King and Queen, they were so impressed with these Christian men that they allowed Patrick and his men to preach without restraint. For weeks Patrick and his small band of believers walked the length of Ireland spreading the Gospel. The Druids pressed upon the King constantly to put an end to their preaching, but the King was caught between the Druids and his sympathetic wife.

Everything came to climax on Easter. The Irish people did not celebrate Easter, this troubled Patrick deeply. However, the Irish did throw a feast in honor of their own gods in the Kings banquet hall. Their custom was to lite a huge fire, it was the biggest fire in the land and *no other fires were to be lit on this night*. This year their banquet fell on what should have been Easter. Patrick had an idea, he decided to build another fire on a hill near the palace. As the King and the members of his court ate and drank their fill they were suddenly interrupted! One of the King's guards rushed in to inform him that someone had lit a fire a the adjacent hill. The King rushed to the window and looked out to see the greatest fire he had ever seen. The Druid priests were furious. The Druids demanded for the King to destroy Patrick and his fire. But Patrick and his followers had grown popular with the people. The Queen rose up and insisted that the King have Patrick brought to him. Patrick was brought before the King and Queen for questioning. Patrick explained his actions to the King and poured out his heart before their Majesties. Patrick had no fear as he expressed his beliefs to the King and Queen. He impressed upon them the message of Salvation and of

the Christian faith. The Druid priests standing near by would hear no more. They stooped to drastic measures. They invited Patrick to have some wine with them, before the chalices were served one of the priests slipped some poison into Patrick's cup. The wine was served to the King and Queen first then to the Druid's high priest and then to Patrick. The high priest made a sly remark concerning the Christian tradition of taking wine in their communion. Patrick being a devout man of prayer listened to the leading of the Spirit as he offered his cup to the Druid priest, the priest backed up in a corner refusing to take the cup. The Queen becoming suspicious ordered the high priest to drink from the cup. The priest made every excuse possible for not partaking of the chalice. Patrick rose up in fierce tone, "do you think that the God of heaven that saved me from my sin and sent me back to the very country that enslaved me would allow me to be overtaken by some evil druid trick!" Then turning to the King and Queen Patrick declared, "As the Lord God is my witness, the fire you see burning on the hill tonight will burn in the hearts of men throughout this land – with or without your leadership – God will go forth in this land." Patrick dismissed himself and left the palace. The King was furious with his high priest for attempting to poison his guest. His eyes were now opened to the evil that he had allowed to roam free in this kingdom. He immediately banished the Druid priests from his council.

As time past the Druid influence on the people of Ireland diminished. The temples and statues were destroyed and the druid practices were soon forgotten. Patrick's sacrifices and obedience to God had not be in vain. Through his stand for his faith he

saw an entire nation turned to the Lord. The Bible and all of history is full of stories of men and women who stood for God in some of the most difficult times imaginable. Some like Patrick gave up their homes, families and even their lives to take the gospel to those who had never heard the name of Christ. The apostle Paul summed it up in Romans 5:3-5 (Amplified).

Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character (approved faith and tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces the habit of joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation. Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us, for God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us.

Story taken from the Audio Series:
Adventures in Odyssey – Patrick: A Heart Afire I & II

*Chicago River on
St. Patrick's Day*



St. Patrick

Why was Saint Patrick called a saint? We are all saints according to the Bible, but some people are called saints for their exceptional and outstanding lives and Patrick was one of those people. Patrick was born on the west coast of England (not Ireland) in a village called Burtisald. He spent his childhood in England with his parents. His father was Calpornius, a very well off man, a village official and a deacon in the church and his grandfather had been a priest. But Patrick did not share in his family's faith; he confessed later that at that point in time he did not know the one true God. As a young boy Patrick was often getting into trouble. Patrick's offenses including stealing chickens and running through the village on a horse nearly trampling three people. His parents were beside themselves, they didn't know what to do with their troubled son.

In the midst of this seemingly petty



domestic issues the waters of war were stirring. The king of Ireland, King Niall, was considering attacking Britain. Britain was flourishing with gold, iron works, livestock and SLAVES. This was one of the main reasons why King Niall wanted to raid Britain – the slaves that he would be able to obtain. He wanted more servants for his palace and workmen for the fields and for the mines in Ireland. King Niall did not come to this reasoning alone, his *druid priests* had a big influence on his decision. The Druids (drew-ids) were a mystical evil religious group dating back hundreds, even centuries earlier. The Druids concocted the plan for invading Britain, they presented their scheme to King Niall; the greedy King decided in their favor. He asked them what could he give them as a reward for their idea. The Druids only request was that some of the bounty be given to them to use in their temples as sacrifices for their gods. King Niall replied and granted them as many goats and sheep as they wanted. But the Druid priests *were not* speaking of goats and sheep, but of *human* sacrifices. The king shuddered at the thought of sacrificing humans, but the Druids convinced the king that the gods would bring ruin on his kingdom if he did not supply their demands. Even though King Niall didn't like the idea he granted their request. The king gathered his ships and soldiers and prepared them for the voyage to England. The Irish attacked the coast of England and raided the local villages including Burtisald. Patrick watched his home destroyed, as he was taken prisoner along with some of his young friends. The prisoners were placed aboard ship and taken back to Ireland. Patrick was terrified, he didn't know if his family was still alive or

not. All he knew was that he was headed for a life of slavery. Patrick had another thought that occupied much of his mind. He thought that this was God's punishment for all his years of sin. Patrick was taken to a slave market on the docks of a British harbor. Unfortunately, there were Druid priests among the buyers at the slave market and they picked Patrick as one of those who would be taken to the temple. But on the journey to the temple Patrick was taken captive by a local Irish man and was taken to his farm. Luckily for Patrick his new owner was no lover of the king or of the druids. He was a wealthy farmer who owned vast fields. He put Patrick to work on his land as a slave. Patrick was faced with circumstances beyond his capacity to bare, he found himself praying to the God he had shunned for so many years. After awhile the rich farmer saw that Patrick could be trusted with more responsibility. He allowed Patrick to take his flocks of sheep out to the surrounding pastures, for the next six years, which really became a blessing in disguise. How was this a blessing? Being alone with the sheep gave Patrick time to think, reflect and *pray*. Here in the lush green fields of Ireland, bond in captivity, Patrick found God! As Patrick's relationship with God grew he began having dreams and he heard God speak to him several times. On one occasion he heard the Lord tell him he would go home again and another time he heard that "his ship was ready" and he saw an image of a ship in a harbor. After seeing this Patrick went to his owner and asked him for his freedom. His owner liked Patrick very much, but couldn't bring himself to let such a fine worker go . . . Not yet anyway. After being denied his freedom, Patrick left his master and walked

straight off the property to find the ship in his dream. After days of traveling Patrick found the ship! It was getting ready to set sail to France then to Britain. Patrick won his way on board and after six years Patrick was on his way home!

Days later when the ship docked in Britain, Patrick proceeded to find his home village. He wasn't sure if it would still be standing or if his family was still living there or if they were still alive. Patrick couldn't have been more joyous to find that not only was the village standing, but it had been rebuilt and was bigger than before. When Patrick found the remains of his childhood house, there were so many memories that filled his mind as he looked upon the once happy home. As he stood there gazing into the past he felt a hand on his shoulder – it was his father! Patrick's family was still alive and were living in the servants quarters behind the old house. After almost seven years Patrick was reunited with his family, but Patrick's journey was not over. Not long after returning home Patrick had another dream. In this dream he was receiving letters . . . letters from all the lost souls of IRELAND! They were all calling out to him in one voice, "*we pray thee holy youth, come look upon us in Ireland once more we beg thee, return, return.*" Patrick prayed to the Lord, "*you have filled my heart with despair and with joy, if this is what Thou hast saved me for then I will go.*" Patrick studied in England for awhile and found fellowship with some brothers of the faith. Patrick and his followers sailed to Ireland to begin their ministry. Once they arrived at the Irish coast they were stopped by Irish soldiers. They were asked what their purpose was for coming to Ireland. Patrick spoke up and said, "we have come to share the

Lord Jesus Christ with the people of Ireland." The soldiers threatened to turn them away, but after reflecting they realized that these were foreigners and they didn't want to stir up any international affairs. They went to inform the King (now a new king) of these men and their mission. When the King heard of these men he was astonished at their boldness, his Druid priest were alarmed at the idea of having CHRISTIANS in their midst. The Druids tried to convince the King to send the men away, but the QUEEN spoke up on behalf of Patrick and his men, while persuading the King to allow them safe passage into Ireland. The King told the soldier to bring the men to him at once. The Druid priests were now enraged at the thought of intruders, so they sent some well paid soldiers to kill the men on their way to the palace. As the priests and soldiers waited in ambush for Patrick and his brethren to come up the road, one of the priests saw them as they approached and signaled the captain. The captain hesitated and looked puzzled. "Attack them Captain", said the priest. "Attack what my lord?" "I only see some deer coming down the road," answered the Captain. "No it's the Christians!" Attack them now before they're gone." "My lord they are only deer," insisted the Captain. The Lord had shielded Patrick and his men disguising them as deer.