

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 1. The Journey to Rome (Part 1)

READ: Acts 27: 1-44



KEY VERSE: Acts 27: 25

"Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me."

Eventually Paul started his long journey to Rome, to be tried by Caesar. As a prisoner, he was under the constant eye of a Roman centurion. On the ship, there were also other prisoners. Thankfully, Paul had the company of a few Christian friends, among whom were Dr. Luke and Aristarchus.

In spite of difficult sailing conditions, the first stage of the voyage was completed safely, with their arrival at Myra. Here, they had to transfer to another ship. It had come from Alexandria, in Egypt, and was on its way to Rome with a cargo of wheat. Soon they set sail again!

Progress was very slow, due to adverse winds. With much difficulty, they reached the harbour of Fair Havens, on the island of Crete. (v. 8) Their troubles, however, were far from over!

Normally, in those days, sailing would be suspended in winter - ships would 'tie up' for several months, in some suitable port. On this occasion, the season was already far advanced, and Paul, as an experienced traveller, warned of the dangers of setting out again. However, the majority were in favour of proceeding along the coast to Phoenix, where there was a better harbour. When a suitable wind began to blow, they decided to chance it! But before they had gone far, a mighty storm arose! They were blown completely off course, and failed to reach Phoenix.

Now they were in real trouble! For days on end, the storm raged. There was no sun to be seen by day, and no stars by night. Without these navigational aids, they had no idea where they were. In a bid to stay afloat, they did all the things that experienced sailors were trained to do. (See vs. 15-19) But still the storm continued unabated and **"all hope that we would be saved was finally given up"**. (v. 20)

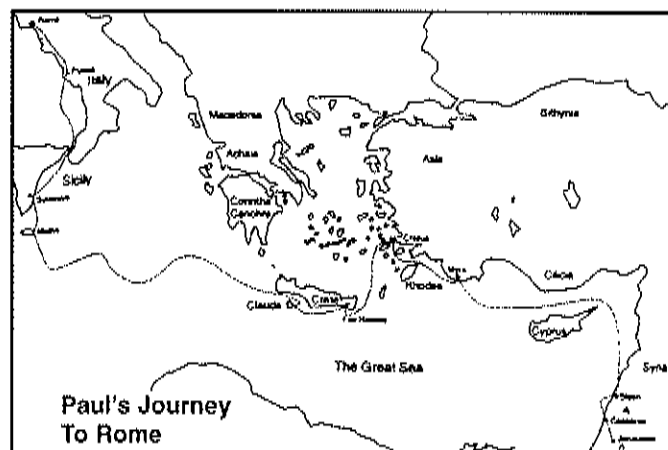
Just when things were at their worst, Paul spoke to the captain and crew. After rebuking them for not listening to his earlier advice, he assured them that

all would be well, even though the ship would be lost. He spoke unashamedly about the fact that an angel of God had revealed this to him, and he believed, without question, that everything would work out **"just as it was told me"**. (Key Verse)

What an amazing man! How strong was his faith in God and in His word! We can be sure that his unwavering trust in God must have made a great impression on all aboard the storm-tossed ship. In very frightening circumstances, he remained calm and level-headed. When it came to the point where the ship was about to run aground, Paul was virtually taking command of the whole situation. He ensured that the panicking sailors did not abandon ship, just when they were most needed. (vs. 30-32) How reassuring his words were as he urged everyone to take some food, **"since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you"**. (v. 34)

The final minutes on board the doomed vessel were very dramatic! With its prow firmly stuck, the stern began to break up, under the ceaseless pounding of the heavy seas. Now was the moment for everyone to cast himself into the raging waters! All 276 of them, either by swimming or by clinging to pieces of wreckage, reached land safely! It was all just as God had made known to Paul in the nighttime visit by His angel. (See again vs. 23-26)

It was an unforgettable experience for all, and not least for Paul! Once again, he had proved, in the most extreme circumstances, the faithfulness of God, and the value of trusting Him, even when everything seemed hopeless.



Study 1. The Journey to Rome (Part 1)

- 1** A. WRITE THE NAME OF THE CENTURION WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF PAUL.
 B. IN WHAT WAY DID HE SHOW KINDNESS TO PAUL AT SIDON?

 C. IN WHAT WAY DID HE SAVE PAUL'S LIFE AT THE VERY END OF THE VOYAGE?

3

- 2** TRUE OR FALSE:-
 i. Paul was not the only prisoner being taken to Rome.
 ii. Phoenix was a better harbour to winter in, than Fair Havens.
 iii. When the storm was at its height, Paul was afraid to speak about his faith in God.
 iv. The storm lasted for about 8 days.
 v. Paul knew it was God's will for him to be brought before Caesar.

5

- 3** FOLLOWING THE ANGEL'S REVELATION TO PAUL, HE SPOKE TO THOSE ON BOARD ABOUT, "THE GOD TO WHOM I BELONG AND WHOM I SERVE". (SEE V. 23)
 i. Explain in what sense Paul 'belonged' to God.

 ii. TODAY, is it possible for us to 'belong' to Him? If so, how can it happen?

 iii. In what ways did Paul 'serve' God?

 iv. How might a young Christian today 'serve' Him?

4

- 4** READ THESE TWO STATEMENTS:-
 1. 'I BELIEVE IN GOD.' 2. 'I BELIEVE GOD.'
 a. Explain, as clearly as you can, how they differ in meaning.

 b. What did Paul mean when he said, "I believe God.?" (Key Verse)

4

- 5** VERSE 35 TELLS US HOW PAUL "GAVE THANKS TO GOD IN THE PRESENCE OF THEM ALL".
 i. For what was he thanking God?

 ii. Make a list of four things for which you could 'give thanks' to God.

 iii. What Paul did was not done in secret - it was public. How can we, today, publicly honour God and bear witness for Him?

5

- 6** WRITE A FEW SENTENCES ABOUT HOW A CHRISTIAN'S FAITH IN GOD CAN BE A HELP WHEN PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES ARISE IN LIFE.

4

Total marks for this study

25

Study 4. The Closing Scenes

READ: 2 Timothy 4: 6-22 and
2 Corinthians 11: 22-33.



KEY VERSE: 2 Timothy 4: 7

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

The Acts of the Apostles ends with an unfinished story! You remember how its final verses tell us that **"Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house ... preaching ... and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ ..."** We are left wondering what happened to him! What was the outcome of his **"appeal to Caesar"**?

The fact of the matter is that the New Testament gives us no account of his trial before Caesar. However, many scholars, having examined all the evidence carefully, believe that he was acquitted and set free. It is thought that he engaged in further missionary work, but before long was rearrested, and taken again to Rome to face trial.

At this point of history, the Roman Emperor was Nero, a man noted for his cruelties, particularly following the great fire of Rome. (A.D. 64) Nero put the blame for the fire on the Christians and very many of them, including Peter and Paul, were brutally put to death. In Peter's case, death was by crucifixion, but Paul, as a Roman citizen, was spared such a shameful and slow death. In his case, it was beheading; the probable site of his execution may still be seen, on the Ostian Way, outside Rome.

When we are thinking of Paul's last days, the verses you have read in **2 Timothy 4** are of special interest. It is generally believed that he wrote this letter just a little while before he was beheaded. Think about these points:-

- i. To a large degree, he was alone. Many of his former friends and helpers were no longer with him, for a variety of reasons.
(Note verses 10-12, 16 & 20)
- ii. He specially longed for Timothy's company, so he urged him to come. **See verses 9 & 21.** (Timothy, as far as we know, was in Ephesus, about 1,000 miles away!)
- iii. With the approach of winter, he requested Timothy to fetch him a cloak from Troas, also his books and writing materials.
- iv. He continues to prove the faithfulness of the Lord - even though men have let him down!

The best known of Paul's 'final words' are found in **verses 6-8**. Read them again, and picture in your mind the aged apostle calmly awaiting the day of his execution. As he writes, he uses various word pictures to express his thoughts about what lies ahead. Note FIVE 'pictures':-

- i. He sees his life as a holy offering to God, in the very act of being **"poured out"**. (v. 6)
- ii. He is like a ship casting off from harbour and sailing to another shore. He knows, **"the time of my departure is at hand"**. (v. 6)
- iii. As a **"good soldier of Jesus Christ"**, he rests content in the knowledge that he has **"fought the good fight"**. (2 Timothy 2: 3 & 4: 7)
- iv. He thinks about the very popular athletic games which were such a feature of those days, and sees himself as a competitor who has been 'running the Christian race' for many years. He realizes his race is now finished! (v. 7)
- v. Just like someone who has been entrusted with the safekeeping of precious treasure, he is happy that he has **"kept the faith"**. (v. 7) He means that he has preserved intact all the great truths that God had revealed to him.

What lies ahead? When the executioner's sword falls, and his natural life ends, what then? Paul is confident that beyond this present life is something infinitely better! There awaits him **"the crown of righteousness"** which **"the righteous judge will give to me on that day"**. (v. 8) He had suffered many injustices and much ill treatment here, as the verses in **2 Corinthians 11** show, but in **"that day"** all will be well!

As you complete this series of Studies on Paul, allow the challenge of his life to speak to you! Can you truly say, as Paul did, **"To me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain"**? (Philippians 1: 21)

His unswerving loyalty to his Lord, his untiring efforts to spread 'the good news', and his genuine concern for others provide us with a wonderful example. Let us try, with the Lord's help, to be 'imitators' of him, just as he also imitated Christ. (See **1 Corinthians 11: 1**)

Study 4. The Closing Scenes

1 AS PAUL WRITES TO TIMOTHY (2 TIMOTHY 4: 9-20), MANY OF HIS FORMER HELPERS ARE FAR AWAY. WHERE IS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING?

a. Demas b. Crescens c. Titus 3
 d. Tychicus e. Erastus f. Trophimus

2 "AT MY FIRST DEFENCE NO ONE STOOD WITH ME, BUT ALL FORSOOK ME." (2 TIMOTHY 4: 16)

i. Suggest some reasons why this was so.

ii. In what way was he compensated for the lack of human support?

iii. Write out the Lord's promise to us, from *Hebrews 13: 5*. 5

3 THE NEW TESTAMENT OFTEN REFERS TO CHRISTIANS AS BEING LIKE COMPETITORS IN A RACE.

i. Write out, from 2 Timothy 4, the clause where Paul used this idea about himself.

ii. Read *Hebrews 12: 1 & 2*, then write briefly **IN YOUR OWN WORDS** how a Christian can be a) HELPED b) HINDERED in 'the Christian race'. 5
 a)
 b)

4 A. WHAT HOPE, OR EXPECTATION, DID PAUL HAVE, AS HE THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT LAY BEYOND HIS SOON COMING EXECUTION? 4

B. IN *PHILIPPIANS 1: 22 & 23*, HE IS WRITING ABOUT A SIMILAR TOPIC. WHAT DOES HE SAY IS "FAR BETTER"? 4

5 IN HIS YEARS OF 'MISSIONARY WORK' PAUL SUFFERED MUCH FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL. READ 2 CORINTHIANS 11: 22-33, THEN ANSWER BRIEFLY:-

i. From what city did he escape in a basket? 4
 ii. How often was he beaten with rods?
 iii. According to this chapter, how often was he shipwrecked?
 iv. What pressure was he under "daily"?

6 HAVING COMPLETED THESE STUDIES ABOUT PAUL, WRITE A FEW SENTENCES TO EXPRESS WHAT YOU FEEL ARE THE CHALLENGES OF HIS LIFE FOR YOU TODAY. 4

100
Total marks
for this Unit

Return your study sheets to:

25
Total marks
for this study

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 2. The Journey to Rome (Part 2)

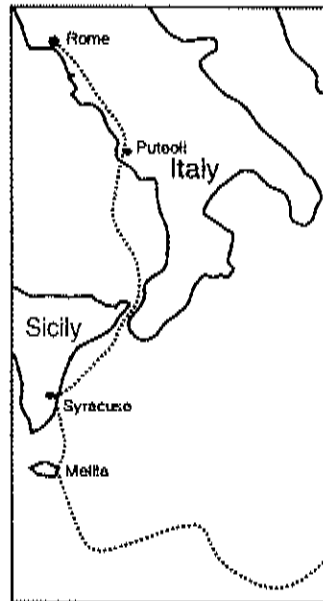
READ: Acts 28: 1-16



KEY VERSE: Acts 28: 15

“When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.”

Picture the survivors of the shipwreck - all 276 of them - standing on the beach of an unknown island, in the dim light of a winter's morning! They have lost everything and now, cold and wet, they face an uncertain future. The one thing for which they can be thankful is the fact that they are alive! They certainly had had a close brush with death.



They soon discovered that they were on an island called Malta (or Melita). Today, it is a popular Mediterranean holiday resort, and the survivors' traditional landing place is known as St. Paul's Bay.

There is no evidence that the inhabitants of Malta had had any previous contact with Christians, or the Gospel. Most probably, they were people who believed in many Greek and Roman gods, and whose lives were dominated by ancient heathen superstitions. These false ideas held the people with an iron like grip. They lived in fear of the unknown, fear of death, fear of spirits and fear of the gods. They had never heard a message of peace, forgiveness and hope, such as the Lord Jesus had brought!

In spite of their spiritual darkness, they were kind and generous towards the survivors. They did their best to make their 'guests' welcome, and soon they had a good fire going. We can be sure that this relief from the driving rain and the cold was much appreciated.

Paul, as ever, was at the centre of all that was going on. True to form, he had been busy gathering sticks,

and just as he put them on the fire, a poisonous snake glided out of them and fastened itself on his hand! The local people looked on aghast. **“No doubt this man is a murderer ... ,”** they said. **“He has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow him to live!”** (v. 4) Paul, however, just calmly shook the viper off - and suffered no harm! The people watched intently for signs of his hand swelling, or even to see him drop down dead! When neither of these things happened, they changed their minds, and said he must be a god!

We can be sure that Paul did not miss the opportunity to tell them about the one true God and His Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we can have eternal life.

It was not only the ordinary people who were kind to the survivors. Publius, **“the leading citizen of the island ... received us and entertained us courteously for three days”.** (See v. 7) In this case also, Paul used the situation as an occasion for bearing witness to the power of the true God, in the healing of Publius' father. When news of this event spread over the island, many other sick people came, and God performed miracles of healing.

It was three months before the centurion was able to arrange transportation to Rome, for Paul and his companions. During the period of waiting, many friendships were formed, and the islanders generously provided things which were needed for the journey. (v. 10) But, best of all, the good news of the Lord Jesus had been planted in many hearts. We believe many of the local people will be eternally thankful to God for so arranging events that the Gospel came to their island home. How wonderful are His ways!

The voyage to Puteoli was uneventful. From there, after a week's stay, the journey was completed on foot. Some of the Christians in Rome, on learning that Paul was on his way, travelled out to meet him. What a thoughtful thing to do, and what an encouragement it was to Paul! (See v. 15)

At last, he entered the great city - under very different conditions than he had originally planned. (See Acts 19: 21 & Romans 1: 9-12) He knew, however, beyond all doubt, that God was in complete control of his future, whatever it might be.

NewLife WorkSheet

Study 2. The Journey to Rome (Part 2)

- 1** "THE PRIMITIVE PEOPLE SHOWED US UNUSUAL KINDNESS." (v. 2)
- Name the island where these people lived.
 - Mention one specific act of kindness, which they performed.
 - Christians are called upon to show kindness to each other. Read, and write out *Ephesians 4: 32*.
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.....

3

- 2** A. RELATE BRIEFLY, IN YOUR OWN WORDS, THE INCIDENT ABOUT PAUL AND THE SNAKE.
.....
.....
- B. WHAT CONCLUSION DID THE LOCAL PEOPLE COME TO, WHEN THEY SAW THAT PAUL WAS UNHARMED?
- C. HOW DO YOU THINK PAUL WOULD EXPLAIN THE FACT THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN HARMED?
.....
.....

4

- 3** WRITE SHORT ANSWERS TO THESE:-
- Who was Publius?
 - How did he treat Paul and his friends?
 - What was the matter with his father? (Use a recent translation, if possible.)
.....
 - How did Paul help Publius' father?
.....

4

- 4** A. MIRACLES OF HEALING WERE A FEATURE OF THE WORK OF THE LORD JESUS, DURING HIS PUBLIC SERVICE. Name ONE example of such, from the Gospels. (Give the reference, if you can!)
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- B. FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO HEAVEN, HIS APOSTLES HAD POWER TO PERFORM SIMILAR MIRACLES. The first one recorded in *The Acts of the Apostles* is found in *chapter 3*. What is it?
.....
- C. WHAT WAS THE MAIN POINT, OR PURPOSE, OF SUCH MIRACLES?
(Read Acts 2: 22 & Hebrews 2: 3 & 4, for help with your answer.)
.....
.....

4

- 5** A. READ ACTS 28: 11-14 AGAIN, THEN WRITE THE NAMES OF THE THREE PORTS MENTIONED.
.....
- At which place did Paul enjoy a week long stay, with Christian friends?
 - How long did they have at Syracuse?
 - Use an atlas, or a map, to find the name of the island where Syracuse is.

4

- 6** PAUL "THANKED GOD AND TOOK COURAGE". (KEY VERSE)
- What was the reason for Paul doing these two things?
.....
 - These short statements show us how one Christian can encourage another. Fill in the missing word/s in each of them:-
"..... one another." James 5: 16
"..... one another." 1 Thessalonians 4: 18
"..... one another." Galatians 5: 13
"..... one another." Hebrews 10: 24
"..... one another." John 13: 34

6

25

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 3. Prisoner in Rome

READ: Acts 28: 16-31



KEY VERSE: Acts 28: 28

“Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!”

Paul's imprisonment in Rome was not as harsh as it might have been! **Verses 16, 23 and 30** point to what we might term 'house-arrest'. It is clear that he was granted private accommodation and was allowed to have many visitors with whom he had in-depth discussions on the thing, which mattered most to him – such as **“the kingdom of God”**. (v. 23)

While making full use of the liberties, which he had, he never was without painful reminders of the fact that he was a prisoner. Note the reference to **“the soldier who guarded him”** (v. 16) and also to **“this chain”**. (v. 20)

In understanding his situation, we must keep two facts in mind:-

1. Paul was a Roman citizen, and, as such, had privileges, which were denied to other prisoners. (See Acts 22: 22-29)
2. Paul was not a convicted lawbreaker. It is true that accusations had been made against him, both at Jerusalem and at Caesarea, but these had never been given a fair hearing. Neither the Jews' Council at Jerusalem, nor the provincial governors, Felix and Festus, had had any success in resolving the matter. Paul, therefore, had used his right of Roman citizenship to appeal to Caesar, requesting to have his case heard by the supreme tribunal in Rome. While waiting for his case to be called, he had considerable liberties, as we shall see.

It proved to be a long wait! We may wonder, how did Paul use his time! There are several answers which we may consider:-

1. Shortly after his arrival, he considered it would be wise for him to meet with the leading Jews of Rome. Perhaps his bitter Jewish opponents back in Jerusalem had already poisoned their minds

against him! In that case, the sooner he set the record straight the better! So, when they assembled, he set out the facts of his case. (See vs. 17-20) In replying to him, they said that they had not received any reports, either good or bad, about him, but they did know that **“this sect”** (i.e. the Christians) is **“spoken against everywhere”**. (v. 22) Seeing this was so, they wanted to have further meetings with Paul.

2. On the agreed day, many Jews came to Paul's lodging. All day the discussions went on. Paul's great contention was that the Old Testament promises of a Saviour had all come true in Jesus - His life, death, resurrection and ascension. These events had proved that He is truly the Christ, and therefore, the Jews should accept Him as the fulfilment of their hopes.

At the end of lengthy discussions, the Jews were greatly divided in their attitudes. **“Some believed ... and some believed not.”** (See v. 24, also v. 29) Sensing their unbelief, Paul's last word to them was that God's offer of salvation is not limited to Jews only. It is intended for Gentiles also, and they will hear it! Read the **Key Verse** again.

3. Over the two year period, he frequently had visitors, according to **verses 30 & 31**. Although he was confined to his lodgings, shackled to one of the soldiers who guarded him in four hour shifts, he was free to speak about the Gospel to all who came. So his preaching and teaching continued **“with all confidence”**. (v. 31)
4. Paul also used his time to write to friends and churches, in other parts of the Empire. Probably four of the New Testament letters were written at this time - Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. These letters, inspired by God, the Holy Spirit, contain profound teachings about Christ, His church, God's ultimate purposes, etc.

So we can see that in very many ways, the 'Roman captivity', as it is often called, was a very busy and fruitful period in the life and work of Paul.

Study 3. Prisoner in Rome

1 A. EXPLAIN, AS CLEARLY AS YOU CAN, WHY PAUL HAD COME TO ROME.

.....

B. USING REFERENCES FROM THE VERSES YOU HAVE READ, DESCRIBE THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH HE WAS BEING HELD.

.....
.....

4

2 PAUL HELD A DAYLONG MEETING WITH THE LEADING JEWS. (vs. 23-29)

i. What was Paul attempting to do?

.....

ii. In what way did the Jews respond to what Paul said?

.....

iii. At the very last, from which Old Testament prophet did Paul quote?

.....

4

3 A. WRITE OUT THE KEY VERSE.

.....

B. WHAT WORD, COMMON TO JOHN 3: 16, ACTS 10: 43 & ROMANS 10: 13, OFFERS THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION TO ALL, BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES?

.....

2

4 A. READ PHILIPPIANS 1: 12-14, AND EXPRESS IN YOUR OWN WORDS HOW THE FACT THAT PAUL WAS A PRISONER "TURNED OUT FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL".

.....

B. READ PHILEMON vs. 8-16, AND FIND THE NAME OF A MAN WHO HAD BEEN SAVED THROUGH COMING INTO CONTACT WITH PAUL, THE PRISONER. WRITE HIS NAME HERE.

.....

C. USING THE INFORMATION GATHERED FROM PHILEMON 8-16, WRITE A SENTENCE ABOUT THIS CONVERT.

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.....

5

5 FROM THE LETTERS WHICH PAUL WROTE, WE CAN LEARN THE NAMES OF SOME OF HIS VISITORS. USE THESE REFERENCES TO WRITE A LIST OF SIX OF HIS VISITORS:-

I. EPHESIANS 6: 21 & 22; II. PHILIPPIANS 4: 18; III. COLOSSIANS 4: 7-12.

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.....

6

6 'WAITING TIME' DOES NOT NEED TO BE 'WASTED TIME'.

i. How long had Paul to wait at Rome for his case to be called?

ii. At what other place had he been held for a similar period? (Forgotten? see Acts 24: 27 & 23: 33)

.....

iii. In what ways does Paul's story illustrate the truth of the above statement?

.....

.....

4

25

Total marks
for this study