

**Paul in Rome**

Passages: Acts 27–28

*Memory Verse*

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” (Psalm 34:19)

<b>Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]</b>	<b>Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]</b>	<b>Good Work [Behavior]</b>
We may encounter tribulations, but God protects those who do His will.	1. God is our protector. 2. God is faithful.	Trust in God’s protection.

*Overview*

**Events and Spiritual Teachings**

- A. Paul’s Journey to Rome
- B. Paul in Rome

**Life Application:** Traveling on Our Spiritual Journey

**Memory Verse**

**Conclusion:** Like Paul, let us trust in God’s guidance on our own spiritual journey so that we can also serve as a living testimony of His power and protection to those around us.

### Introduction

After defending the gospel before so many different authorities, Paul was finally on his way to Rome. He knew that the journey would not be a smooth one, but he also knew that God would be with him the whole way. Today, we are going to take a closer look at Paul's journey to Rome and examine how he endured the various hardships along the way.

### A. Paul's Journey to Rome

*(Note: Numbers correspond to Figure 1)*

#### 1. Jerusalem to Caesarea (Acts 23:33)

We left off from the last lesson with Paul in Caesarea. He had been arrested in Jerusalem and then taken to Caesarea, to preserve his life from a group of Jews who plotted to kill him.

#### 2. Caesarea to Sidon (Acts 27:1–3)

Paul and some other prisoners were handed to a centurion named Julius. They set out on a ship and landed in Sidon. It was here that Julius allowed Paul to go to his friends so that he could receive care.

The Bible does not explicitly state why Paul needed care, but through this act of kindness, we can clearly see God working in Paul's life. The centurion was under no obligation to give such freedoms to a prisoner, but God opened Julius' heart to give Paul this opportunity to receive care before they continued their journey. Today, we may also be on the receiving end of acts of kindness from others. Instead of simply attributing it to luck or taking it for granted, we should remember to give thanks to God, because everything that happens to us is in His hands.

#### 3. Sidon to Myra (Acts 27:4–6)

From Sidon, they traveled to Myra in Lycia. Here, they transferred to another ship bound for Italy.

#### 4. Myra (Acts 27:7–8)

Wind conditions made the journey from Myra difficult. However, the ship managed to land in a location named Fair Havens.

#### 5. Fair Havens (Acts 27:9–12)

Fair Havens was a sheltered port on the southern side of Crete. Since they were sailing at a time of year dangerous for sailing, they would have to find a place to dock their ship for the winter and wait for better sailing conditions. But a lot of time had already been lost, so the captain hoped to leave this port and get around to Phoenix on the western end of Crete, where there was a better port. This was when Paul warned them that the voyage was going to be a disaster. The source of Paul's knowledge is not mentioned, but it is likely that this knowledge was a revelation from God. The centurion did not listen to Paul's warning, but instead chose to sail onward under the advice of the captain and the ship's owner.

In the eyes of man, the centurion's decision to follow the advice of a sailor rather than a prisoner from Jerusalem made sense. What would a prisoner from Jerusalem know of sailing and weather conditions? Often, the decisions that we know God wants us to make seem illogical or even nonsensical. But our advantage is that we are not making these decisions based on our

own knowledge. They are based on God's will, who is all-powerful and all-knowing.

#### **6. Crete to Malta (Acts 27:13–28:1)**

When a gentle wind began to blow, they thought the weather was clear for sailing. But suddenly, the fair conditions changed into a strong cyclonic wind known as the Euroclydon. As a result, the ship was caught up in the sudden storm and forced out to sea. In order to save the ship, they began to throw cargo overboard. But despite their efforts, they could only let the ship be driven by nature's force.

Let's read Acts 27:20–26. God assured Paul that he would reach Rome. Paul trusted in God's power and protection, and his firm belief in God allowed him to comfort everyone else on the boat. Paul did not stop trusting God despite the storm, his hunger, or even the threat to his life from the centurion's soldiers. One way or another, he knew he would reach Rome because he knew God was watching over him.

Everything from waking up in the morning to traveling safely from one place to another are all ways that God watches over us each day. In everything, big or small, He is guiding us on our path. Even when things are not so peaceful, we should still trust that God is watching over us. Being a child of God does not guarantee us a problem-free life. Even Paul, a chosen apostle, still encountered many serious and life-threatening situations. Some followers of Christ may even encounter greater tribulations than many of our non-believer acquaintances. The biggest difference, however, is that we have God's protection. No matter the situation we are in, it is safely in God's hands. When we fully understand this, we can maintain a heart of peace and trust as Paul did.

Let's read verses 27–38. Paul was not exempt from experiencing hardships even while doing God's work. But he did not resent these hardships or become dispirited. In fact, he encouraged the non-believers around him – the ones who imprisoned him, who had refused to listen to his warnings before setting sail – and did not bear malice for their lack of understanding or belief. We can also see that unlike with his initial prophecy, this time the soldiers clearly began to trust in Paul and listen to his warnings and encouragements instead of brushing them aside.

Let's continue reading verses 39–44. Julius saw that the words Paul spoke came to pass, and thus witnessed God's power through him. God both preserved Paul's life and also demonstrated His power to those around him. Today, we may also endure storms in our lives while doing God's work. But our attitude and reaction to these hardships is a reflection of our faith, and our trust in God. God's work in our lives is a testament to His power and authority over all, and our own actions in the face of tribulation can also be a powerful witness of God's truth to non-believers.

#### **7. Malta to Syracuse, then Rhegium, then Puteoli (Acts 28:2–14)**

Once again, those around Paul witnessed God's power through him. Let's read Acts 28:3–10. We can see how God preserved Paul's life, showing again that God's will and power are greater than any force of nature. And because Paul healed many of their sick, the people of the island honored and aided them until they were ready to set sail, once again showing God's protection through the kindness of others.

For three months they remained on the island, before finally sailing out on an Alexandrian ship

that had wintered on that island. They landed at Syracuse and stayed three days before heading to Rhegium. They then sailed to Puteoli the next day. Paul and his companions stayed with the brethren there for seven days, before finally arriving in Rome.

### **B. Paul in Rome (Acts 28:15–31)**

While in Rome, Paul remained under house arrest for two years. Being neither a dangerous criminal nor a political threat, Paul was allowed to live by himself with only a soldier to guard him. During his house arrest, he continued to preach and spread God’s word to any willing to receive the gospel. Though imprisoned, he could, and did, continue to boldly and freely preach the gospel.

When he was not preaching, Paul wrote letters to other churches, teaching and encouraging them even while a prisoner. While we don’t know for certain what Paul wrote during his imprisonment, it is generally believed that Paul wrote the “prison epistles” during his time in Rome. They are the following:

1. Ephesians
2. Philippians
3. Colossians
4. Philemon

Throughout his journey, despite the many dangers, Paul never lost sight of the commission that God had given him: to go to Rome and preach the gospel there. Paul had confidence that God would protect him, and thus was prepared to sacrifice anything for the gospel. No matter where he was or what state he was in, Paul preached the gospel and encouraged the brethren all the way to the end, all because he had full faith in God’s protection and power.

### *Check for Understanding*

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- 1. Name three ways God protected and encouraged Paul during his journey to Rome.**
  - a. Paul found favor in the eyes of Julius the centurion, who allowed him to receive care.
  - b. God preserved Paul’s life from both the storm and the poisonous snake.
  - c. God appeared to Paul to bring him comfort and assurance of His abidance.
- 2. The centurion’s decision to set sail made sense in man’s eyes. As children of God, how should our own decisions differ?** It is important to seek God’s guidance when making decisions. We should not make decisions based on common standards or our knowledge of the world.
- 3. How did Julius the centurion change in his view of Paul from the beginning of the journey to the end?** Julius initially ignored Paul’s warning, but as the journey went on, began to trust his words.
- 4. What happened to Paul after he arrived in Rome?** When Paul arrived in Rome, he was allowed to live by himself with a soldier to guard him. He was under house arrest for two years. However, he could and did continue to preach the gospel.
- 5. Which epistles did Paul likely write during this time period in Rome?** Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

### *Life Application*

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#### **Traveling on Our Spiritual Journey**

The journey that Paul made from Caesarea to Rome was a long and difficult one, with many trials and tribulations along the way. Today, we are also on a spiritual journey. Like Paul’s, ours is a long and difficult one. Our destination, however, is not Rome, but our home in heaven.

As we travel on our spiritual journey, there will be times when we are faced with many difficulties. Let's discuss the following questions:

1. What are some possible obstacles you may face on this spiritual journey? *(Have students share.)*

Some examples may be:

- Temptations [media, internet, games]
- Extracurricular activities that take place on the Sabbath
- Broken relationships with siblings or parents
- Stress from schoolwork
- Loss of family members
- Financial difficulties
- Health issues
- Persecution or people who mock you for your beliefs
- Peer pressure

2. How have you experienced these, and how did you handle these obstacles?

When we encounter such obstacles, we must be like Paul and trust in God's guidance and protection. This can be quite difficult when we look at a situation and can only see negative, discouraging, or impossible outcomes. Read the following verses, and then consider some ways to improve and uphold our trust in the Lord during our spiritual journey.

- **Psalm 119:105**

It is important for us to study and to know the word of God because it is a light that allows us to see the direction that we should go.

- **Proverbs 3:5–6**

If we are willing to trust in God's protection and rely on Him instead of our own strengths, then we will see how God always guides us in the direction that we should go.

- **Proverbs 16:9**

Though it is important for us to plan, God already has everything in His hand. We can trust that He will direct us in the right way. However, we must give God room to work in our lives by being wise with our time and decisions.

- **Matthew 6:33**

To seek God's kingdom and His righteousness means giving God top priority in our life and aiming to do what is pleasing in His eyes. When we are able to do so, God will take care of all the other aspects of our lives.

- **James 1:5**

If we feel that we are lacking in wisdom, we should simply ask God for more wisdom, and He will grant it to us. This is a promise that He has given to us.

From Paul's journey, we can see that God was with Paul every step of the way, and that Paul was able to find comfort in His abidance. In the same way, these verses are an encouragement to us during times of difficulty or when we don't know which way to turn. However, if we are able to place our trust in Him and continue to walk in His ways, God will help us through it all.

### *Memory Verse*

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"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all." (Psalm 34:19)

### **Meaning**

Just like Paul, it is inevitable that we will encounter difficulties on our spiritual journey. But we do not have to be afraid of any afflictions because God is with us, and He will deliver us out of them. We need only trust in Him, pursue His righteousness, and be upright children in His eyes.

### *Conclusion*

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Paul encountered many difficulties on his journey, but he never lost heart and was fully convinced that God would deliver him safely to Rome. It is this conviction that both carried him through all of his difficulties and allowed him to serve as a witness and demonstration of God's power to those around him. Let us also trust in God's guidance on our own spiritual journey so that we can also serve as a living testimony of His power and protection to those around us.

## Lesson 12 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does this verse teach us about our spiritual journey?  
*That it is inevitable that we will encounter difficulties. But we do not have to be afraid of any afflictions, because God is with us and will deliver us out of them.*
2. What can we learn about God's protection from Julius' kindness towards Paul?  
*That God will open the hearts of those around us and protect us through the kindnesses of others. When we experience this, we should always give thanks because everything that happens to us is in God's hands.*
3. Why did Julius' decision to sail make sense in the eyes of man? How should our decisions differ?  
*It made more sense to follow the advice of a professional than that of a prisoner bound for Rome. As God's children, our own decisions should be based on His will, no matter how illogical it may seem, because our God is all-knowing and all-powerful.*
4. How can we maintain a heart of peace and trust, as Paul did, in any situation?  
*By fully understanding that we have God's protection in every tribulation we encounter.*
5. What is important about our attitude and reactions to hardships we encounter?  
*They are a reflection of our faith and our trust in God. Our actions in the face of tribulation can also be a powerful witness of God's truth to non-believers.*
6. Using one of the verses we studied in the Life Application section, explain how you can improve and uphold your trust in God during your spiritual journey.  
*Refer to Life Application section; personal answers.*

Figure 1: Map of Paul's Journey to Rome (<https://www.thebiblejourney.org/the-bible-journey/12-pauls-journey-to-rome82062/paul-addresses-the-crowds/>)

