

# 6-8 YEAR OLD CLASS

## Lesson 1 - Background to Paul, Conversion

### Introduction

WELCOME everyone! We are excited to be teaching you this year. We are going to look at the life of the Apostle Paul and some of the adventures he had while preaching the gospel. There are SO many exciting things we could cover, so we are just going to look at a few of them this week!

Just a few classroom “rules” to start ...

- We expect everyone to listen carefully and participate.
- If you have a question or comment, please raise your hand.
- Please don't speak while others are speaking.
- Please try and go to the bathroom before class starts.
- Have fun being together and learn lots!

### Background to Saul

What was Paul's name before it was changed to Paul? **Saul** – what does it mean? “Asked for”.

We don't know a lot about the early life of Paul, when he was a child. We are given a few hints about a couple of things, particularly from Paul's speeches towards the end of Acts. Here are a couple of things we know:

#### *Give out worksheet and do “facts on Saul/Paul”.*

- Born in Tarsus (**Acts 21v39, 22v3**) ... probably around AD1 – just a few years after Jesus.
- He was a Jew – he says of himself ... “Hebrew of the Hebrews” (**Phil 3v5**)
- Of the tribe of Benjamin (**Phil 3v5**)
- He was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee (**Acts 23v6, 26v5, Phil 3v5**). There were some good Pharisees though – can anyone think of one? Nicodemus, possibly Joseph of Arimathea?
- Given a good education growing up! He was very familiar with Hebrew Scriptures – which helped him later when he was converted!
- In “Paul the Apostle” by W.H. Boulton – he suggests Paul's parents wanted him to become a rabbi and sent him to Jerusalem to gain the right education (**Acts 22v3**).
- Probably taught the trade of cloth-weaving and tent-making from his father.

### Persecuting the Ecclesia

- Who knows where we first read about Saul?
  - **Acts 7v58** – when Stephen was stoned, the people laid their coats at the feet of Saul – and Saul was “consenting unto the death” of Stephen (**Acts 8v1**) ... meaning, he was pleased that Stephen was killed.

When we first meet Saul, he isn't a very nice person at all! It's hard to believe some of the things that he did to the followers of Christ! He was like a wild animal on a rage.

- He put people in prison – both men and women (**Acts 8v3, 22v4**).
- He had people killed.
- He forced people to run away because they were so scared of him. They thought they would be safer to leave Jerusalem (**Acts 8v4**).
- He hated people who believed in Jesus and tried to stop them from believing in Jesus.

Saul thought these followers were actually enemies of God and he was trying to get rid of them. He thought he was doing the right thing. But ... everything was about to totally change in Saul's life!

## **Conversion (Acts 9v1-9)**

Saul asked the High Priest for letters which said he was allowed to bring any followers of Jesus from Damascus to Jerusalem and put them in prison there.

Saul was travelling along the road to Damascus with a group of men. They were almost at Damascus and suddenly ... he saw a light that was even brighter than the midday sun! Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice from heaven saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

Saul – "Who are you Lord?"

Jesus – "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting"

And when Saul looked up, he saw Jesus.

Saul – "What shall I do, Lord?" – he was shaking because he was so scared.

Jesus – "Arise and go to the city, and it shall be told thee what to do".

The men that were with Saul were amazed because they could hear a voice, but didn't see anyone and couldn't understand what the voice was saying.

**"Persecute" question on worksheet.** What does "persecute" mean? To treat someone in a cruel or unfair way, because of what they believe.

The men who were with Saul had to hold his hand and lead him into Damascus. Why? God had made him blind and he would be like this for 3 days.

**Activity ... select 3 people ... one to be blindfolded (Saul), two people to lead him to Damascus.** Can you imagine what it would be like to be blind? How would you feel? Was it easy to lead a blind person?

Just imagine ... Saul entered Damascus a very different man! He was no longer on a rage to get all the believers of Jesus ... he was now a humble follower of Jesus!

For 3 days and 3 nights Saul sat in a house in Damascus. He didn't eat or drink anything. He could not see anything. What do you think he had lots of time for? THINKING! He sat and thought about all the wrong things he had been doing. No doubt he prayed to God to forgive him too.

## **Ananias Comes to Visit (Acts 9v10-22)**

Meanwhile, Jesus appeared to another man named Ananias. Jesus asked Ananias to go to a street called Straight, to the house of Judas, and ask for Saul of Tarsus. Ananias was too frightened to go at first! He had heard about the terrible things that Saul had been doing to the true believers. He was scared for his own life. But Jesus said unto Ananias, "Go thy way: for he (Saul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." (Acts 9v15) Even though Saul had done some evil things, there was an important work that Jesus had for him to do now. He was going to teach many people, even Gentiles and kings, about the life and death of Jesus.

Ananias went and did what Jesus said. He laid his hands on Saul, and Saul was able to see again. He was then baptised! Saul was now a changed man ... he believed in the true God and was eager to share the gospel with others. So Saul's enthusiasm and energy to get rid of all the believers was directed in a new way ... the right way. It shows that God can work with anyone – no matter how bad they are!

You can imagine people being afraid of Saul when he first changed – given how bad he was before. People may not have trusted him or thought he wasn't genuine. But that's another lesson for us ... if people do truly change, we need to accept them and be kind to them.

## **The Basket Escape (Acts 9v23-25)**

There were some people who weren't happy that Saul had changed ... the Jews. They had been Saul's friends before, but now that he had changed, they hated him and wanted to kill him (Acts 9v23). The Jews watched the gates of Damascus night and day, to try and catch Saul. But the disciples let Saul down the wall of the city in a basket at night. Saul escaped safely to Jerusalem. Lesson: God looked after Saul and protected him from the Jews who wanted to kill him!

Example: The Jews in Damascus wanted to kill Saul because he believed in Jesus. The disciples let Saul down the wall of the city in a basket at night.

### **Lapbook items**

- *Passport and pocket.*
- *Basket flap – write inside what happened to Saul.*

## **6-8 YEAR OLD CLASS**

### **Lesson 2 - Paul and Barnabas in Iconium and Lystra**

*Materials: garlands, pictures of Zeus and Hermes, 3 activity sheets (handouts), balloons for stick together relay.*

What did we learn about Paul yesterday? It's pretty amazing that Saul-Paul was first trying to persecute and kill the people that believed in Jesus, but then became someone that instead tried to convert people to believe in Jesus! That's the power God has to change minds, isn't it?! Sometimes there are people who do the wrong thing – sometimes we are even doing the wrong thing –but God can help anyone change who is willing!!!

Now we start to learn about some of the trips Paul took to teach people about Jesus and the good news of the Kingdom of God! Today we're going to learn about what is often called his FIRST missionary journey.

How many of you made a journey to get here to Bible Schol? It was a pretty long journey, wasn't it?! Can you imagine how lonely it might have been if you were all alone? Isn't it nice that you had your family to come with? Do you know what was nice for Paul? God sent a friend to go with him on his journey too, so he wasn't alone. Paul's friend's name was Barnabas. Did you know Barnabas' name has a special meaning? His name means "son of encouragement." Do you think it would have been encouraging to Paul to have a friend in the truth as he went around preaching the gospel? Sometimes Paul would have had to face very difficult things, but God provided someone to encourage him so that he could get through them!

What about us? Do we have special friends that encourage us? Do you think friends who don't know God's word can encourage us in the truth? Where do we find friends who will help encourage us in God's word and help us to do the right thing? That's right! Your friendships at Bible School and at meeting are very special because God gives you friends to help you as you are trying to obey God!

What kind of friend should we be to those around us? We should ENCOURAGE our friends like Barnabas encouraged Paul. How do you think we can do that? We can be a good example to our friends so that you remind each other to do the right thing and treat each other kindly. You can talk about God's word with one another. You can talk about things that you have learned in the Bible readings in the mornings or in your classes during the daytime. God wants us always to be talking about His Word with each other, so that's one of the best ways we can be an encouragement to our friends, like Baranabas.

*Give out worksheet and do the "friendship" part.*

So let's look at where Paul and Barnabas went on the map (point to map, direct them to their map?) They started in Jerusalem and then they got on a ship and sailed to an island called Cyprus and preached the word of God in the synagogues there. They went to Perga and taught at the synagogue there, but the Jews were envious of Paul and Barnabas and treated them unkindly. However the Gentiles were glad to hear the Word of God and believed. After the Jews began to persecute P&B, they left the city shaking the sand off their shoes as they went.

From there P& B went to Iconium (find on map), but the unbelieving Jews there again caused trouble and they wanted to stone P& B, so P& B escaped and fled to Lystra and Derbe (find on map.)

And this where our story gets really interesting!! You see, the people in Lystra didn't believe in one God. They believed in many, many gods. They had a god for the sun, a god for the moon, a god for the sea, a god of war, a god of music... they had a god for almost everything! Zeus was the KING of all the gods, and another god Hermes was his son and messenger. This is what the people believed in Lystra – the place that Paul and Barnabas came to!!!

When Paul and Barnabas arrived in Lystra they saw a man who was a cripple from birth and had never, ever walked. What do you think Paul did? When he saw the man had faith to be healed, he said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And guess what happened? The man leaped and walked!!! What a wonderful miracle!!! God's power is truly great!

But there was a problem! Did the people Lystra believe in God? Who did they believe in? So instead of praising God for the miracle, they thought that Paul and Barnabas were Zeus and Hermes, some of their false gods! They grew very excited, and started shouting "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" The priest of Zues came and brought oxen and flowers to P&B planning to make a big sacrifice to them.

How do you think Paul and Barnabas must have felt? Did you know there's another story in the Bible of people thinking that someone was a god. It actually happened shortly before this story. The king of the land was named Herod and he sat on his throne and gave a speech to a huge crowd of people. When he was finished talking the people shouted, "It is the voice of a god, not a man!" The people were calling Herod a god!!! How did Herod feel about that? He seemed to be quite happy that all the people thought he was a god! But what would God have thought of that? We find out what God thought! We're told that an angel of God struck him since he didn't give glory to God. So WORMS ate him, and he died!

Do you think Paul and Barnabas would have liked to be called a god like Herod? NO! They wanted to give glory to God! No worms for Paul and Barnabas!!!! Paul and Barnabas were so upset that they tore their clothes and ran to the crowd crying out, "Why are you doing this? We are men just like you! And we're preaching to you that you should stop worshipping useless things (like Zeus and Hermes) and turn to the LIVING God, who made heaven and earth and everything that is in them!!" Paul and Barnabas tried to convince them that there weren't many gods, but ONE TRUE GOD who created everything!!!

Even then it was very difficult to stop the people of Lystra from offering sacrifices to them, but they finally did. We can learn a very, very important and hard lesson from this. Do we ever have people calling us gods like Herod or Paul and Barnabas? No... BUT we can still remember the lesson that glory belongs to God! What does that mean? If we do a good job with anything we need to remember to thank and praise God and give him the glory. So if we are a very, very fast runner... should we be proud about that? No, we should remember who made our legs! We couldn't run very fast, if God hadn't given us any legs! What if we have done a good job at school? Should we be proud about that? No, we need to remember who created our mind! What if we have been kind and good? Should we say, "Hey, look at me! I'm so nice!" No, we should remember that good that we do, we have learned from God's word. We can't take credit for it. Paul tells us in one of his letters that "It is God that works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." God wants us to be reading and thinking about His word, so that we will choose to act like Him. But when we do, we should give glory to God. Not say... hey look at me, how nice I am! Because it was really God's word that taught you what you must do! RIGHT?!!!

### ***Do "Giving God the glory" part of the handout.***

So Paul and Barnabas have just healed the lame man & the city wanted to offer to them as gods.... But then something terrible happened! Do you remember how the Jews in Antioch and Iconium wanted to stone Paul and Barnabas? Guess who came to town?!!!! The Jews came to town and persuaded the people – who had just thought P&B were gods – that they should stone them!!!! And so they did!!! They stoned Paul!!!! (have stones and re-enact a little, leaving in suspense). There was Paul lying motionless on the ground. Not so very long ago he was the one in the crowd that stoned Stephen, and now Paul has been stoned☹ All the disciples must have been so upset! When the stoning was over they all gathered around Paul, and suddenly he got up!! He wasn't dead after all!!!! The disciples were overjoyed and they would have helped him get out of that city.

Paul and Barnabas continued their journey and they continued to preach about the gospel, and they also went around and encouraged believers. It must have been a hard time for them. But Paul and Barnabas strengthened and exhorted the disciples that it is through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom of God. What are tribulations? (hardships, trials) How do you think Paul and Barnabas and the believers were facing tribulations?

*Do "Other faithful Bible characters" part of the handout – Adam (failed), Noah, Joseph, Moses, David, Jesus.*

Jesus experienced terrible treatment while he was on the earth. Do you remember the crowds in Jesus time were as temperamental as the crowd in Lystra towards Paul and Barnabas. On one day they sang Hosannah and praised him as he rode through the streets of Jerusalem, but it was the next week the crowds of people were crying out for him to be crucified. When we follow Jesus, we will experience suffering sometimes just as he did. Let's add your name to the handout and think about how we can experience suffering for following Jesus. But we can be comforted to remember that these sufferings help to prepare us for the Kingdom!

**Activity** – Stick together relay (with balloons) Paul and Barnabas sticking together on their travels!

#### Lapbook items

- *Lame man pentagon shutter flap.*
- *Lame man leaping figure.*
- *Booklet of maps of 4 missionary journeys.*
- *Passport cities ... Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Antioch in Pisidia, Perga, Attalia, Antioch in Syria*

## 6-8 YEAR OLD CLASS

### Lesson 3 - Paul and Silas in Philippi

#### Review of Day 2 and Intro

Who was Paul's special friend that he took with him on his first journey? What are some of the places that Paul visited on this journey? What miracle did Paul do in Lystra? What did the Jews from Antioch and Iconium do to Paul?

- Today we're going to look at some things from the second missionary journey of Paul (refer to map).
- Paul visited some of the same places he did on first journey, but went much further west this trip.
- This time, Paul takes his special friend Silas.
- Barnabas is in a different place (Cyprus) preaching with Mark (**Acts 15v39**).
- Paul saw a vision (dream) one night – the man said "Come over into Macedonia and help us".
- Paul always went where God wanted him to go ... immediately he left in a boat for Macedonia and came to the main city – **Philippi**. *Give out stamp for passport.*

#### Lydia (Acts 16v12-15)

On the Sabbath day, Paul and Silas went out of the city by the river. People gathered here to pray and they thought it would be a good place to preach. Why didn't they go to the synagogue? Because there was no synagogue there. There were only a few Jews living in Philippi – it was a Roman colony so made up mainly of Romans and Greeks.

There were only women gathered by the river – Paul and Silas still spoke to them. One lady who was listening was called Lydia. She sold purple cloth and dye – that's what her job was. Lydia already worshipped God and was glad to hear what Paul and Silas had to say! She listened carefully to their words, and God helped her to understand the Truth. He "opened her heart" and she believed the things Paul and Silas preached. Soon she was baptised, as well as other people in her house. Lesson: Lydia was so keen to learn and listen to the things of the gospel. We need to have an open ear and mind, to listen to the things of God.

She really wanted Paul to stay at her house. It seems as though Paul didn't want to go at first – he didn't want to be a hassle to anyone. But Lydia kept asking ... she was very hospitable and friendly and wanted to show her thankfulness to Paul! Lesson: Are we friendly and kind towards other people? Are we so willing to share with others, like Lydia?

#### The Girl with a Sick Mind (Acts 16v16-24)

There was a young girl in Philippi who was sick in her mind. She worked for some wicked men who pretended she could tell what was going to happen in the future. People gave these men money to hear her speak and they became rich. But it was very wrong to do this – to make money out of someone who was really sick in their head!

She kept following Paul and Silas around and yelling, "These men are the servants of the Most High God which show unto us the way of salvation!" It was true what she was yelling out, but she kept saying it over and over again, in a silly way. It showed that she had a sick mind. Paul felt sad for her and healed her of her sickness. She became a normal, sensible girl again!

But ... when the wicked men who the girl used to work for, saw that she was healed, they were very angry! You would think they would be happy for someone who was sick, but is now healed! But they were angry because they couldn't make money from her any more. What terrible men!

They dragged Paul and Silas to the market place, to the rulers of the city. They said that Paul and Silas were causing trouble. The magistrates tore off their coats and had them beaten many times until their backs were sore. Imagine that? Being beaten because you used God's power to heal a sick girl! But it didn't end there ... they were then thrown into prison!

### **Paul and Silas in Prison – the Earthquake (Acts 16v25-32)**

The jailor was told to keep them safely. He put them in a special part of the prison where they couldn't escape, then he put their feet in stocks so they couldn't go anywhere. The jailor knew that if these men got away, he would be killed. The jailor must have thought they were dangerous men – but they weren't at all!

So here Paul and Silas were ... backs bleeding from being beaten, thrown into prison for no good reason at all, and feet put in stocks. How do you think you would have felt? Probably pretty mad, and feeling sorry for yourself! But not Paul and Silas ... here they were praying and singing hymns!! The other prisoners could hear them! What an amazing example to us ... of praising God and trusting in Him, even in a very difficult time of trial. They knew that God was watching over everything that was going on, and they put their trust in God. How do we react when something bad happens to us? Do we feel like God has forgotten about us?

Does anyone know what happened next?!!!

At midnight, there was a huge earthquake!!! The prison shook, the doors of the prison burst open and all the prisoners' chains fell off! They were now free! But they didn't run away. When the jailor woke up from sleeping and saw that all the prison doors were open – he thought the prisoners would have all run away. He knew that if they did run away, he would be killed for not doing his job properly. So he took out his sword and was going to kill himself!

But Paul cried out very loudly, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here!" How amazing is that?? If you were a prisoner and your chains fell off ... would you run away as quick as you could??!!

The jailor called for a light and ran into the prison where Paul and Silas were. He was trembling. He knelt down in front of Paul and Silas and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" He knew Paul and Silas were different to other prisoners. He knew they had a special message to share with him.

Paul and Silas said to the jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, and your house!" They preached the gospel to the jailor and those that lived in his house ... right then and there! They didn't waste any time. Lesson: Are we so eager to share our special message with others? Paul and Silas could have complained they were in too much pain from the beating ... but no, they took the opportunity to share the gospel!

### **The Jailor and His Household Believe (Acts 16v33-34)**

The jailor then did a very kind thing ... he bathed Paul and Silas' sore backs, where they had been beaten. What a change from the rough jailor who threw them into prison just hours before! He was so grateful that he was able to meet Paul and Silas and hear the special message they had. Paul and Silas' suffering had made it possible for him to learn the Truth and be saved. He then got baptised and other people in his house.

The jailor brought Paul and Silas to his house and they all shared a meal together. They were so happy and praised God for the wonderful things he had done! So what a wonderful ending to this story in Philippi! How excited must Paul and Silas have felt when the jailor and his house were baptised! They had learnt about the gospel, all because of Paul and Silas being thrown into prison.

### **Departing from Philippi (Acts 16v35-40)**

The next day, the magistrates asked Paul and Silas to leave Philippi. They were afraid of getting into trouble for putting them into prison. Before Paul and Silas left, they went to Lydia's house and spoke to the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. They then left and went on their way (to Thessalonica).

Does anyone know the book of the bible that is a letter Paul wrote to the B&S at Philippi? Philippians. He wrote this letter years later. The Philippians were very dear to Paul and he calls them his "joy and crown" (Phil 4v1).

#### **Lapbook items**

- *Lydia petal flap (glue piece of purple material inside).*
- *Philippi sequencing game.*

## 6-8 YEAR OLD CLASS

### Lesson 4 - Paul Preaches in Ephesus

*Materials: cards for a magic trick, paper and pencils to draw things that keep us from God to “burn”, money worksheet.*

What did we learn about Paul yesterday.....

Today we're going to learn about some of the things that happened during Paul's visit to Ephesus. Ephesus was not a place in Israel, it was a place full of idolatry just like Lystra! In Ephesus, people worshipped a goddess named Diana and had a temple to her. Other people practiced magic – and by tricked people into believing the magic!

Now Paul and the other apostles had the power to do miracles. Where did they get the power to do miracles (holy spirit)? Can we do miracles today? Why not?

While Paul was in Ephesus, God gave him the power to do some extra special miracles. The people believed in idols and magic, and God helped Paul to make it very clear that what Paul was doing was something far greater than the magic that they could do!! With the power of the holy spirit he not only healed sick and diseased people, but he could even heal them by sending a handkerchief that he had been holding back to the sick person! The people were amazed!!! The holy spirit helped to establish that when Paul was preaching God's word, the people would know what he was saying was TRUE because of the miracles that he did!

Some Jews who claimed to be able to also heal people with a diseased mind. They found a sick person and they tried to cure him in the name of Jesus. But the sick person said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know but who are you?” And he jumped on them and attacked them so that they ran out of the house without any clothes and wounded from the man. All the Jews and Greeks heard about this, and how do you think they felt about Paul and what he was preaching? They would have known Paul was telling the truth and it wasn't some silly magic trick that they had been used to. And so the people feared God.

When the people started to realize that Paul was truly healing sick by the power of the holy spirit they started to realize that what they believed was not right. Do you know what they believed? They believed in magic! Now I'm going to show you a magic trick... (card trick). Do you think that was really magic or was it just a trick (show them how it's done). Some magicians can make people disappear! Do you think they really make people disappear or is it just a trick? Well these people started to realize that magic was really just a trick. Now they could see Paul healing for REAL. They wanted to follow the true God instead of magic trickery, so they realized they needed to get rid of all of their magic books.

So they brought their books and burned them up in a fire in front of everyone! Isn't it wonderful that they realized that they needed to get rid of things that displeased God and that took them away from serving God? Do you think we have anything like that in our life? *Let's get out a piece of paper (fold it in quarters and have the kids write or draw one thing in each of the quarters.* Divide the paper into four and “burn” it.)

Now the Bible tells us that the costs of the books were FIFTY THOUSAND PIECES OF SILVER!!!!!!!!!! That's a lot of money that they threw into the fire, isn't it!!!!!! But obeying God was worth a lot more money than that!!!! We're now going to meet someone who is a LOT more concerned about money than about serving God.

His name was Demetrius. Demetrius saw the miracles that Paul was doing and all the people beginning to learn about God and follow him, and he became very, very upset. Do you know why? He was a silversmith – he would take silver and shape it into the figure of the idol Diana...and then he would sell it!! People from all

over would come to Ephesus to worship Diana and buy the idols that Demetrius made, and so Demetrius was getting quite a lot of money from that!!! However, now that Paul was around he became very upset that he would no longer have people buying the idols he made!!! Do you think he really believed in Diana? He would have seen the miracles that Paul did and realized that no pretend god could do anything like that! But what was more important to him was making MONEY.

Do you know what Jesus told his disciples? He told them, “You cannot serve God and money.” If money is the most important thing in your life, there is no way that you can serve God. Let’s stop and think of some Bible examples of people who, like the believers who burned their costly magic books, also decided that serving God was worth a lot more than the money that they had! Abraham (had to leave his country and everything he had), Moses (chose to suffer with the people of God than endure the passing pleasures of sin), Elisha (from a family of wealth, but went and followed Elijah), Nehemiah (left the royal court to go to the desolate land of Israel.) [Go through worksheet.](#)

So Demetrius called together the other craftsman who made idols, let’s read what he said v. 25-27. Now when the other craftsmen heard that they were furious!!!! They started crying out, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” They shouted and shouted so that the whole city was in an uproar. FOR TWO HOURS they shouted..... do you think they were hoarse?

Finally, the city clerk quieted the crowd: “Men!!! Ephesians!!!!” He cried out. “Everyone knows that the city of the Ephesians is the temple for the great goddess Diana that fell from Zeus. These men are not robbers, and if you don’t quiet down we are all going to get into trouble for the uproar, and with that everyone went back home again.

#### Lapbook items

- [Ephesus triangle petal flap with books and fire inside.](#)
- [“Paul at Ephesus” mini book.](#)

## 6-8 YEAR OLD CLASS

### Lesson 5 - Captured, Trials and Shipwreck

#### **Review of Day 4 and Intro**

What city was Paul in yesterday? Who did the people of Ephesus worship at first? What happened to all the books of magic? Who was the silversmith that caused a lot of trouble? Who is the one true God?

- Today we're going to look at some things towards the end of Paul's life.
- Paul has now finished his three missionary journeys and he is going to travel to Rome.
- We are going to see him go through some terrible trials ... but still remain faithful to God.

#### **Captured in Jerusalem (Acts 21v27-40, 23v12-24)**

We don't have time to deal with this in detail, but Paul was captured in Jerusalem. Some of the Jews Paul had argued against during his missionary journeys, saw him in the temple and accused him of doing bad things. This was not true – he was just preaching the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. Paul was beaten and put into prison in Jerusalem.

Paul's enemies thought of another plan to try and kill him. More than 40 Jews got together and promised they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul. They wanted the chief priests and scribes to bring Paul down the next day and question him ... they would be ready to kill him when he came down. Poor Paul – all he had done was preach the good news of the Kingdom and the name of Jesus ... and now people wanted to kill him! Lesson: Paul remained faithful to God and God protected him! He was able to save him from this wicked plan and bring him safely to **Caesarea** – to Felix. *Give out stamp for passport.*

#### **Short Overview of Paul's Trials (Acts 23v25 – 26v32)**

Paul had been falsely accused of starting riots and defiling the temple. But we know that Paul was innocent of these things. He was kept in prison in Caesarea where he appeared before governors and leaders – including Felix, Festus and even the Jewish King Agrippa and Queen Bernice. At each court appearance, Paul spoke freely about his faith in Jesus Christ. No one could ever prove him guilty ... because he hadn't done anything wrong!

#### **Voyage to Rome and Shipwreck (Acts 27)**

Paul was a prisoner in Caesarea for a long time. Eventually, Paul told the Roman governor that he wanted to appear before Caesar – in Rome. So Paul and a number of prisoners were put on a boat and headed towards Rome. Soldiers also went with them to guard them.

They sailed to a place called **Myra**. *Give out stamp for passport.* They boarded another ship and set sail again to **Fair Havens**. *Give out stamp for passport.* They should have stayed here because winter was coming and it was dangerous to go to sea in a sailing boat in the winter. The captain of the ship wanted to continue sailing but Paul warned the Centurion that they should stay in Fair Havens. The Centurion didn't want to listen to Paul, because he was only a prisoner. But we are going to see what happened!!

They set off sailing again, and not long after, the wind changed from a soft breeze to a big strong wind! The ship was tossed about by huge waves ... they didn't see the sun or stars for many days ... it was dark and scary and everyone (except Paul) thought they were going to die! I bet they wished they had listened to Paul now!! Paul wasn't nasty about it though ... he didn't say, "I told you so" ... instead he comforted them by saying, "Be of good cheer, for no one will lose his life; but we will lose the ship. For the angel of God stood by me this night and said, 'Fear not Paul, thou must be brought before Caesar: and lo, God hath given thee all of them that sail with you.'" Paul wasn't afraid to stand up and say this about his God. Lesson: Are we able to stand up and say things like this with confidence? *Do this "fill in the blank" on the worksheet.*

Some of the men working on the ship knew they were coming near land and they were worried the ship would run onto the rocks. They put four anchors down and these sailors tried to escape from the ship and let everyone else drown. They let down a little boat so they could try and get away. But Paul said, “Unless these sailors stay in the ship, ye cannot be saved”. So the soldiers cut the ropes of the little boat.

Paul encouraged everyone to eat some food, because they had fasted and not eaten for 14 days! He took some bread and thanked God and began to eat. Paul really believed that God would save them and this cheered everyone up and they all ate some food as well! When they had all eaten enough, they threw the cargo of wheat into the sea, to try and make the ship lighter.

When it was morning, they could see they were near an island. The sailors thought they could see a place to bring the ship into safely. But as they were heading for the shore, the ship got struck on the bottom of the sea. The front of the ship was stuck hard, but the back of the ship started to break apart because of the heavy waves beating on it.

The soldiers wanted to kill all the prisoners in case they should swim away and escape! But the Centurion would not let them do that, because he wanted to save Paul. He could see that Paul was different. He had come to admire Paul on this dangerous journey, and saw that he really trusted in his God. The Centurion ordered everyone to jump into the water and swim for land. Some swam and others floated on bits of boards that were broken from the ship. So they all reached land safely ... just as Paul had said ... all 276 of them! They were on the island of **Melita**. *Give out stamp for passport.*

### **Island of Melita (Malta) (Acts 28v1-10)**

The people on the island of Melita were very kind to Paul and the others who had been shipwrecked. They lit a fire for them because it was cold and raining. Lesson: How quick are we to do kind things like these people? Paul must have been tired from swimming, but he still helped to gather sticks for the fire. That’s another lesson: He didn’t just sit back and let others do the work – he got in there and helped! As he laid the sticks on the fire, a poisonous snake bit him on the hand. The people of Melita thought he was a murderer – even though he had escaped the shipwreck, he was now going to die from the poisonous snake. But he didn’t! The people then thought he was a god! How silly! They didn’t realise that the ONE TRUE GOD was looking after Paul.

They stayed on the island of Melita for 3 months, until the winter was over. Paul spent this time teaching the people about the Kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. When it was time to leave, the people of Melita gave them many gifts. *Do the questions on the shipwreck and Melita on the worksheet.*

### **Paul in Rome (Acts 28v11-31)**

So the Centurion put all the prisoners on another boat that was sailing for Italy. Rome wasn’t near the sea, so they had to land at a place called **Puteoli** and travel by road from there. *Give out stamp for passport.* Even though Paul had never been to Puteoli before, the believers there made him feel very welcome and asked him to stay for 7 days. The Centurion allowed him to do this ... he must have been Paul’s friend now!

They then set out along the road to Rome and B&S in Rome came down to meet Paul and travel with him to Rome. They finally reached **Rome** ... what an adventure it had been!! *Give out stamp for passport.* The prisoners were put in a prison, but Paul was allowed to rent a house and even have visitors. There was a Roman soldier there to guard him though, because he was still regarded as a prisoner.

Paul was kept very busy in Rome ... even though he was a prisoner. He taught the gospel to Jews first, and then Gentiles. He told the Jews that “... for the hope of Israel, I am bound with this chain.” Some people believed; others did not.

Paul also wrote many epistles (letters) to ecclesias ... some that he had visited throughout his missionary journeys. Can you think of any epistles that Paul wrote? We have to remember that they are not just Paul's words in these letters ... they are the words that God told him to write.

Paul spent two years in this hired house. No doubt there were times he felt lonely. He had lived such a busy life before this ... travelling around and meeting lots of new people. But now he wasn't allowed to leave the house – he was a prisoner. No doubt he would have had time to think about a lot of things. Lesson: Paul used his time wisely, and never missed an opportunity to preach God's word to others.

One of the last things that Paul wrote was ... *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* **2 Timothy 4v7-8.**

We are not told in the Bible what exactly happened to Paul and how he died. But we know that Paul is now dead, but God will soon raise him from the dead when Christ returns. He has left an amazing example for us to follow. He has also written many important things for us to learn from. May we soon meet our Apostle Paul in the Kingdom! ***Do the final question on the worksheet.***

#### Lapbook items

- *Shipwreck puzzle.*
- *Roman soldier finger puppet.*