

Paul's Last Days and Letters



Scripture Reference:

[Acts 28:16-31](#) and [Colossians 4:16-18](#)

Suggested Emphasis: We can tell others about Jesus through the written word: bibles, tracts, correspondence courses, books, letters etc.



Background Study



Story Introduction



Telling the Story



Review Questions



Songs



Learning Activities



Other Online Resources

Story Overview:

For the two years Paul was in Rome he was allowed to live in his own rented house with Roman guards keeping an eye on him. While there he often invited the Jews to come to his house and hear about Jesus. Some of the Jews became Christians. Paul also spent time writing epistles (letters) to the churches he had visited. Paul wrote to them about how to live the Christian life. Many of these letters are the recorded books that we find in our New Testaments. This is the last record of Paul recorded in the New Testament.

Background Study:

[Click here for an overview of the Book of Acts](#)

When Paul arrived in Rome, he was not thrown in a prison. Instead he was allowed to rent a house to live in. He was then placed under house arrest. He was not allowed to leave the house, but he could move freely within it. Since he was scheduled to appear before Caesar there would probably have been a Roman soldier from the palace (Praetorian) guarding him at all times.

The palace guard was an elite group of soldiers. They were encamped just outside of Rome. Their primary purpose was to guard the emperor. Their secondary purpose was to guard prisoners waiting for trial in the imperial court.

Paul spent time with at least five or six of these soldiers every day. They had no choice but to hear him preach.

Paul stayed in this situation for two years. A prisoner who appealed to Caesar as Paul had done was automatically taken to Rome for trial. He was kept under arrest until his accusers arrived. When they arrived, the trial would begin. If the emperor felt the charges were unwarranted (as these were), he would order the accusers executed instead of the prisoner. For this reason, many times the accusers would not show up. If they did not come to Rome to accuse the prisoner within two years, the prisoner was set free. He could never again be brought to trial by the same accusers for the same offense.

Paul used his imprisonment for King Jesus. Even though he was under arrest, he continued to preach to any non-believers who came to see him. He even preached to the soldiers with him. He continued to teach any Christians who visited him. He wrote letters to the churches he had already established on his previous missionary journeys to encourage and teach them. He used all his time for Jesus Christ in any situation.

The book of Acts ends with Paul under house arrest. The timing of some of his letters depends on how his last years were spent. Church traditions and scholars hold various views. One view is that Paul might have been executed at the end of this two year imprisonment. Another view is that he was released at the end of this two year house-arrest, continued his missionary work but then later arrested again and executed.

In the letter to Colossae Paul mentions how these letters should be shared with other churches ([Colossians 4:16-18](#)). Paul wrote some of these letters himself, like Colossians. Others he likely dictated to someone else to do the physical writing.

With these and other writings there are thirteen of the letters/epistles that bear the name of Paul and that make up our New Testaments. Through the Epistles, God encourages and guides His people.

Paul uses various greetings (beloved, saints, the church, etc.) as he wrote the following:

- Romans: to the church in Rome
- Corinthians: to the church in Corinth
- Galatians: to the churches of Galatia
- Philippians: to the church in Philippi
- Thessalonians: to the church in Thessalonica
- Ephesians: to the church in Ephesus
- Colossians: to the church in Colossae

Paul also wrote some letters to individual people:

- Philemon
- Timothy
- Titus



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[List of all lessons on this website](#)

Way to Introduce the Story:

Help the children find the book of Philippians in their bibles. Most bibles will have a note at the beginning that credits Paul with the writing of this book. Also note Paul's name in the first verse. "Letters were written in a different way when Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians. The letters (or epistles as they were called) did not begin with "Dear people in the church at Philippi" as we might write a letter. The person who wrote the letter often put their name at the beginning. This is what Paul (and Timothy, his helper) did. Next he wrote the name of the people he was writing to. Then he wrote a greeting. Paul wrote lots of epistles.

Remember how the Lord told Paul that he would be going to Rome ([Acts 23:11](#))? Today we are going to learn about what happened when Paul got there. He didn't just sit around doing nothing. He wrote some letters!"

**Depending on the age and attention span of your class you could go on and examine any of Paul's epistles (Romans, I & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, I & 2 Thessalonians, I & 2 Timothy, Titus, or Philemon).*
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The Story:

After a long and dangerous journey by ship Paul and the centurion guarding him arrived in Italy.

Paul was still a prisoner because over two years earlier some angry Jews had told lies about him being a troublemaker. But Paul was not a troublemaker. Wherever he went Paul always told people about Jesus.

Paul had known for quite some time that God wanted him to go to Rome to talk to people about Jesus. So during his court trials back in Caesarea Paul had told the governor that he wanted to stop doing trials in Caesarea and to go straight to Rome to appear before the emperor, Caesar.

Time passed but finally Paul and a Roman guard were put on a ship and sent to Rome. It was a dangerous trip but even though there was a shipwreck God kept Paul and everyone on board safe.

When Paul was in Rome he was still a prisoner. He was allowed to rent a house to live in but he was always guarded by a soldier.

Paul had to wait a long time before he could appear before Caesar for a trial. What do you think Paul did while he was waiting?

If you guessed that Paul told people about Jesus then you are correct. Paul was only in Rome for three days before he began inviting the Jewish leaders to his house to tell them about Jesus.

Paul would begin teaching in the morning and then keep teaching until the evening. Each day more and more people came to hear Paul preach.

Paul taught them about the kingdom of God. Since these people already believed in the Old Testament Paul reminded them that long ago it was written in the Old Testament that God would send a new king to rescue the whole world from the power of sin and death. That king was Jesus. Because he defeated the power of sin and death at the cross and resurrection, he could save people from their sin.

Some of the people that Paul taught were so happy to hear that Jesus was God's son. Others did not believe. But still, Paul did not stop sharing the Good News about Jesus.

The Bible does not record how Paul's two year imprisonment in Rome concluded nor does it record whether or not Paul had the opportunity to appear before Caesar. But Acts does end by saying that the message continued to be

preached without hindrance.

The Bible does, however, record some letters that Paul wrote while he was in prison. God, through the Holy Spirit, helped Paul write some very important letters that helped people know more about following Jesus.

For the rest of his life Paul told people about Jesus. When he could not be with people to tell them he would still tell them in the letters he wrote.

Even when bad things like shipwrecks and prison happened to him Paul did not stop following God. When he was very old this is one of the last things Paul wrote in a letter to his friend, Timothy. Paul said, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Now, a crown is waiting for me. I will get that crown for being right with God." 2 Timothy 4:7-8a, ICB

Paul was a great man of God.

Paul wrote letters while he was in prison but he also wrote others before and after that time. Another word for "letters" is "epistles". If you open your Bible to the New Testament you will find some of the Epistles Paul wrote.

- Romans: to God's people in Rome
- Corinthians: to the church in Corinth
- Galatians: to the churches of Galatia
- Philippians: to the church in Philippi
- Thessalonians: to the church in Thessalonica
- Ephesians: to the church in Ephesus
- Colossians: to the church in Colossae

Paul also wrote some epistles to people. These people were:

- Philemon
- Timothy and
- Titus

How many of Paul's epistles can you find in your Bible?

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download the slideshow](#) or [click here to download the pictures to print.](#)

Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Or use the following video:

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Review Questions:

1. How did Paul get to Rome? In a ship.
2. What is an epistle? A letter
3. Where was Paul when he wrote many of the epistles? In prison in Rome.

Song Suggestions:

- [B-I-B-L-E](#)
- [Books of the New Testament](#)
- [I Can Be a Missionary](#)
- [L-O-V-E Song](#)
- [Read Your Bible, Pray Every Day Song](#)
- [This Little Light of Mine](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Find the city of Rome on a map
- Help the children find the table of contents in their bibles and point out all of the epistles that Paul wrote.
- Invite a guest speaker to class today to tell how they use the written word to teach people (people who send out correspondence courses would be good).
- Write notes or send pictures to someone to explain something from God's word.
- Older children could design their own newspaper ad for the church or for correspondence courses.
- To review, either you or the children can draw a large outline of Paul on a whiteboard or piece of paper (even drawing with a stick in the sand works fine if you are outside). Then, after you have taught the lesson ask the children to think about what they have just learned from the Bible. Have them write descriptive words and/or draw pictures inside and around the outlined illustration of Paul. When you see what the children are writing or drawing you may be surprised or encouraged by what insights they have picked up from the story. This is also a good opportunity to correct or add to anything you might not have covered as



well as you could have when you were teaching.

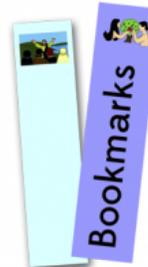
If you prefer, you can [download and print the illustration of Paul provided here](#) and then have the children write and draw on it for the review.

- Alternatively, if you are teaching a series of lessons about Paul then you might draw an outline of him on a large poster or paper and then add descriptive words about him each time you study a new lesson.
- [Click here for the 16 lessons about the Life of Paul grouped together as a set.](#)

Crafts:

- Create a poster depicting a truth from the Bible. You might use a Bible verse or story.
- Make a relief map of Paul's Journeys featuring the place in today's story. If you are studying about Paul's journeys over a few lessons then you could add more details to the map each time you learn about another stop on the journey. Instructions on how to make a relief map at <http://www.squidoo.com/salt-dough-maps>

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for "Paul Writes Letters from Prison" printables to print \(A4 paper\)](#)
[Click here for "Paul Writes Letters from Prison" to print \(Letter size-USA\)](#)
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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets- Paul's ministry in Rome \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets- writing about faith- Romans \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [A good selection of printable puzzles as well as games and activities \(gardenofpraise.com\)](#)
- [Wordsearch of Books of New Testament \(christiananswers.net\)](#)
- [Review: Create a "passport" that covers the life of Paul. Good visual ideas and activities. Could be split up to go with several lessons or taught all together as a review of previous lessons concerning Paul \(kidsbibledebjackson.blogspot.co.nz\)](#)
- [Youtube video \(2 minutes 20 seconds\) about Paul's Letters](#)

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/new-testament-epistlesbooks/>
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