

# Unit 35: Paul's Mission to Rome

**Unit Description:** After three missionary journeys on which God used Paul to plant many churches and see many people trust in Christ, Paul returned to Jerusalem where he was arrested. Paul would eventually be sent to Rome as a prisoner, but this did not stop him from doing everything he could to preach the gospel and make much of Jesus.

**Big Picture Question:** Why should we praise Jesus? We should praise Jesus for what He has done to provide our salvation and because He will one day make all things right.



## **SESSION 1: Paul Returned to Jerusalem**

Acts 21–22



## **SESSION 2: Paul Was on Trial**

Acts 22–23



## **SESSION 3: Paul Was Sent to Rome**

Acts 24–26



## **SESSION 4: Paul Went to Rome**

Acts 27–28



## **SESSION 5: Paul Preached in Rome**

Acts 28



## **SESSION 6: We Are Here to Make Much of Jesus**

1 Thessalonians 4–5



UNIT 35 | SESSION 1

## PAUL RETURNED TO JERUSALEM

ACTS 21–22

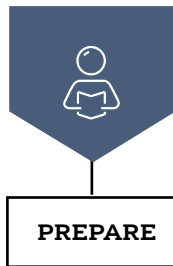
**KEY PASSAGE:** Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago.  
**Isaiah 25:1 NIV**

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why should we praise Jesus? We should praise Jesus for what He has done to provide our salvation and because He will one day make all things right.

### CHRIST CONNECTION:

Paul followed God's plan and returned to Jerusalem even though he faced danger in the city. Paul believed that God, who was faithful to raise Jesus from the dead, would help him in his troubles. We can follow God's plan to tell others about Jesus and trust God to take care of us.



## PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



## LEADER Bible Study

Acts 21 and 22 serve to build out the suspense of the troubles that lay ahead for Paul in the city of Jerusalem. Not only Paul, but other disciples had likewise heard from the Holy Spirit that dangers lay ahead of him should he continue his plans for the journey. Even still, the apostle ventured on, leaning into the high stakes and emotions felt by so many of his brothers and sisters in the faith.

What led Paul to set aside the warnings he had received about all that awaited him upon his return to Jerusalem? What guiding forces ushered this apostle forward as he considered the fate in store for him?

Paul displayed an unwavering trust and abiding hope in Jesus as he counted the cost of following Him. His answer to the pleadings of Agabus and the locals was that he was ready to sacrifice everything for the name of his Lord Jesus. His conviction on the matter of going forward with his plans was so strong, in fact, that the people's response could only be to have faith that the Lord's will would be done. Paul didn't care about reputation, status, or prestige—only Christ crucified and His name proclaimed to the Jews and Gentiles alike.

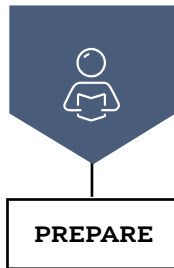
Even the apostle's defense to the mob in Jerusalem was deeply steeped in the grace of Jesus. He sought not to simply get himself

out of trouble, but to declare the worthiness of his Lord before an audience who only wanted to see him dead. He shared with them all they had in common and the one thing that kept them distinct and separate from one another: faith in the Son of God. He was driven by a hope that they would turn to saving faith in Him, too.

Reflect on the evidence of Paul's faith before his fellow disciples and those who were unbelievers. No one questioned his confidence in the Father, no matter the cost. Pray for the hearts of your students as you prepare to teach this session. May your faith grow and be displayed before those God has set before you. May they see and experience the worthiness of His love through your devotion and fervor for His gospel.

### TERMS TO KNOW

**Persecution:** harassment and suffering inflicted upon others for being different in their faith, world view, culture, or race. Persecution seeks to intimidate, silence, punish, or even kill people.



## PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

### GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



#### WELCOME

##### Activity Page

- ☐ “Follow the Route” activity page

##### Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ ball

##### Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ blindfolds, 1 per pair
- ☐ balls, 10–15



#### LEARN

##### Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video

##### Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

##### Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

##### Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ “Paul Returned to Jerusalem” video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

##### Questions from Kids

- ☐ “Unit 35, Session 1” questions from kids video

##### Missions Moment

- ☐ “Overview of Southeast Asia” missions video

##### Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ “I Will Exalt You (Isaiah 25:1)” song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ dry erase board
- ☐ dry erase marker and eraser



#### LOVE

##### Review & Bible skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- ☐ world map



#### LIVE

##### Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ tin can
- ☐ painter’s tape

##### Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ paper bags, 1 per kid

##### Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ “Share a Testimony” activity page



## WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

**SAY** “Have you and your family ever needed to use a map or a GPS tracker to get directions to a new location? Did you trust that the directions were correct? Why?”

### 1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Follow the Route” on the activity page.

**SAY** “Today, we will see how Paul followed God’s plan to go and share the gospel. Paul faced dangers as he traveled, but he trusted God to care for him.”

### 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

#### ☐ OPTION 1: TROUBLE!



Form kids into a large circle. Give kids a soft ball to pass around the circle. Tell kids that they will continue to pass the ball around the circle until you yell, “trouble!” Explain that whoever is holding the ball when you say “trouble” must then throw it at another kid. Remind kids to aim below the neck. If the ball hits the kid, he is out. If the kid dodges the ball, he is still in the game. If the kid catches the ball, whoever threw the ball is out. Play as time allows.

**SAY** “This game prepared us to be ready for the ball when you heard the word ‘trouble.’ Today, we will learn that Paul was prepared to face trouble in Jerusalem. Let’s get ready to hear how he was warned about the troubles that awaited him.”

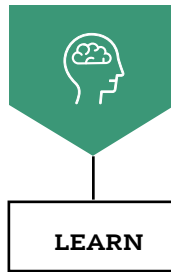
#### ☐ OPTION 2: LEAD ME

Before this session, spread 10 to 15 balls around the room. Form kids into pairs and distribute blindfolds to each pair. Direct one kid from each pair to place the blindfold over his eyes. Explain that the other kid in each pair will be the one who gives directions. Direct the pairs to stand next to each other. When you say “Go,” challenge the blindfolded kids to pick up as many balls as they can, while listening to the directions being given by their partners. Allow one minute for each round. The team who picks up the most balls wins. Repeat as time allows.

**SAY** “Those of you who were blindfolded were trusting your partner to guide you to the right place to pick up the balls. Today, we will learn how Paul trusted God to lead him to share the gospel, no matter the troubles he faced.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

# INTRODUCE the Bible Story

### 1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

**SAY** “ Hi! My name is [your name], and I’m so excited to share a story from God’s Word with you. Did you bring your Bible? Hold up your Bible if you brought it with you today. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.]

Over the past few weeks, we have been learning about the apostle Paul. Paul was a faithful servant of God who traveled and shared the gospel. Today, we will learn that Paul followed God’s plan for his life even when he knew danger awaited him in the city of Jerusalem. ”

### 2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

**SAY** “ We have a new big picture question today: **Why should we praise Jesus?** Why do you think we should praise Jesus? [Allow responses.] The answer we’ll learn is, **We should praise Jesus for what He has done to provide our salvation and because He will one day make all things right.**

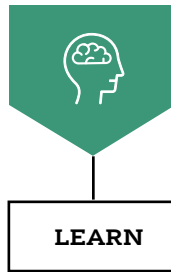
Jesus deserves our praise at all times. Even when we are in a difficult situation, we can praise Jesus. Paul knew this to be true. He knew that no matter what hardships or dangers he faced on earth, Jesus was worthy of all his praise. Jesus has saved us. So nothing we experience on this earth can separate us from Him. Jesus will return and make all things right. ”

### 3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

**SAY** “ God sent Paul on three missionary journeys. During the years Paul traveled to different cities, he shared the gospel and started many churches. Both Jews and Gentiles heard and believed the good news about Jesus. Today, we will learn that Paul returned to Jerusalem where he was arrested. Let’s learn how Paul continued to share the gospel and trust in God even when he faced challenges. ”





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LEARN the Bible Story

#### 1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Acts 21–22. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Paul Returned to Jerusalem.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

#### PAUL RETURNED TO JERUSALEM

“ Paul loved Jesus. He had been traveling to different places to share the good news. Paul wanted to go to Jerusalem. **As Paul traveled, he stopped and visited with Christians along the way. In the city of Caesarea, a man named Agabus visited Paul.** Agabus was a prophet who spoke messages from God. **Agabus asked to borrow Paul’s belt. He tied the belt around his own hands and feet. Then he said, “The Holy Spirit says, ‘This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man who owns this belt. They will give him to the Gentiles.’”**

Paul’s friends begged him not to go to Jerusalem, but Paul said, “Don’t cry! I am not only ready to be tied up in Jerusalem, I am ready to die for the name of Jesus.”

When Paul arrived in Jerusalem, the believers there welcomed Paul, and Paul began to share what God had done among the Gentiles. **People from other nations had heard the gospel and trusted in Jesus!** The believers heard this report, and they praised God. But the leaders were worried, too. **Thousands of Jews in the city had become Christians too. That was good news, but those Jewish Christians were upset because they had heard things about Paul that weren’t true.** Still, Paul didn’t let this stop him.

One day, Paul went into the temple. When some Jews saw him there, they yelled and **caused a big commotion.** The whole city was stirred up, and **a crowd grabbed Paul and dragged him out of the temple. As the crowd was trying to kill Paul, the Roman commander in the city and his soldiers heard what was happening. They hurried to Paul to figure out what was going on.** Because the crowds were so upset, **the commander decided to take Paul somewhere safe.**

Before he left, Paul asked to speak to the crowd. Paul told them about his life before he met Jesus. He had been a very religious man who tried hard to follow the law. He even mistreated Christians because he thought it was the right thing to do. Then Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus and changed his life.

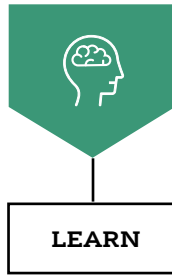
The people listened quietly until Paul said that God sent him to tell the Gentiles about Jesus. **This made them angry. They didn’t like the Gentiles.** They yelled at Paul and didn’t want to hear anything else.

The soldiers took Paul indoors. They were going to punish him, but Paul told them he was a Roman citizen. Because of this, **the soldiers had to take good care of Paul until he could have a fair trial.**

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Respond:** Invite kids to respond to the story by giving a thumbs up when they hear good news or a thumbs down when they hear bad news.

**Map it:** Display the New Testament Mediterranean Map. Point out Caesarea (F9) and Jerusalem (G9) as you tell the Bible story.



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Christ Connection: Paul followed God's plan and returned to Jerusalem even though he faced danger in the city. Paul believed that God, who was faithful to raise Jesus from the dead, would help him in his troubles. We can follow God's plan to tell others about Jesus and trust God to take care of us. ”

### 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** “ Paul followed God's command to go and preach the good news to those who had not heard. Following God's plan was often dangerous for Paul, but he continued, knowing God would care for him. Paul planned to return to Jerusalem even though he knew he would be persecuted there. How did Paul respond to his friends' concerns for his safety? Look at Acts 21:13. **[Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 21:13.]** Paul told his friends that he was ready to be arrested or even die so that others could hear the gospel and trust in Jesus. Paul obeyed the Spirit and went to Jerusalem knowing he would face trouble.

While Paul was in Jerusalem, some Jews made false accusations against him. They stirred up the crowds to attack and almost kill Paul. After Paul was rescued by a Roman commander, he was allowed to speak to the crowd. What did Paul share with them? Look at Acts 22:12-16. **[Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 22:12-16.]** Paul shared how Jesus had saved him and called him to be a witness for Jesus to all people. Even when Paul was under threat by these Jewish leaders, he continued to preach the gospel.

God was faithful to help Paul and protect him. God even planned for Paul to be born as a Roman citizen so that he could use that to his advantage. Like Paul, we can trust God and follow Him. We can have the confidence that Paul had, trusting in the same God who raised Jesus from the dead. ”

### 3 CHRIST CONNECTION

**SAY** “ Paul followed God's plan and returned to Jerusalem even though he faced danger in the city. Paul believed that God, who was faithful to raise Jesus from the dead, would help him in his troubles. We can follow God's plan to tell others about Jesus and trust God to take care of us. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

### 4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 35, Session 1” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why does life get harder after you get saved? Shouldn't it get easier?
2. How is God faithful to help us in our troubles?





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### 5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

**SAY** “Countries such as Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, and others make up what is referred to as Southeast Asia. There are many people living in these areas who have not heard about Jesus.”

Play the missions video. Tell kids that Ben Murray and his wife, Jessica, are missionaries in Southeast Asia. Tell kids that many of the languages spoken in the area where the Murrys serve don't have a written language. Share how it can be challenging to learn the language or create resources to teach the people about Jesus. Tell kids that Ben wanted to find a solution to this challenge. Explain that he helped build a recording studio at a community center run by people who believed in Jesus. Tell kids that the studio has been helpful in recording Bible stories and worship songs to share the gospel with the people group who previously had no known resources about Jesus in their language. Pray, asking God to continue providing ways for the people in this town of Southeast Asia to hear about Jesus even when challenges arise.

### 6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Isaiah 25:1 together.

**SAY** “Our key passage reminds us to praise God because He is our faithful Lord and Savior.”

Write out the key passage on a dry erase board. Invite kids to read the key passage aloud with you. Then erase one word from the key passage and challenge kids to say the key passage aloud, filling in the missing word. Continue to erase words and challenge kids to fill in the blanks as time allows.

Lead kids to sing “I Will Exalt You (Isaiah 25:1).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

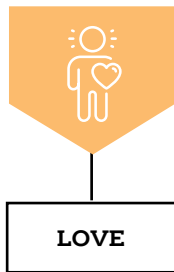
### 7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

**SAY** “Thank You, Lord, for Your faithfulness. Thank You that we can trust You to care for us, even during hard times. Help us follow Your plans for our lives. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





## THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

### **LOVE** God by Applying the Story

#### **1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)**

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Acts 22. Explain that the book of Acts covers the first 30–35 years of the early church after Jesus went back to heaven. Invite kids to recall some of the key characters in the book of Acts that they have learned so far such as Peter, John, Philip, Stephen, Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

Consider comparing the New Testament Mediterranean Map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where these stories took place. (Tip: Locate the areas in and around modern-day Jerusalem [G9].) Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 22:8.

**SAY** “Paul shared with the crowd that he was once a religious person who persecuted Christians. But Jesus changed Paul’s life. After Paul met Jesus, he counted following Jesus as most important. He followed God’s plan for his life, no matter the cost.

God used Paul to lead many to the Lord and to encourage the early church. God can use each of us to be His witnesses and point others to Jesus. We can trust that God’s plan is always good and that He will care for us as we follow Him.”

#### **2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)**

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

**SAY** “Is following God’s plan always easy? Why not?”

Tell kids that oftentimes following God’s plan will not be easy. Discuss how following Jesus means we must be willing to pick up our cross and sacrifice something such as our time, possessions, popularity, even our lives. Remind kids that we can have the same attitude Paul had as we believe that nothing is more important than following Jesus.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 16:24.)

**SAY** “Paul trusted God would take care of him. How can we trust God to care for us?”

Discuss how all throughout the Bible we see how God has faithfully loved and cared for His people. Remind kids that this is the same God we serve: He never changes. Encourage kids to remember that no matter what difficulties we face, He will care for us.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 46:4.)

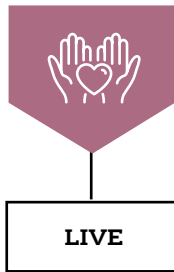
**SAY** “Paul told the crowd he used to be very religious. What is the difference between being religious and trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior?”

Explain that some people today live as Paul once lived, trying to be good and do good. Paul thought following the law would make him right with God. Discuss how we can’t be good enough to earn forgiveness for our sins. Tell kids that only trusting in Jesus saves us.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 14:6.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





## THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

### **LIVE** the Mission

#### **1 ACTIVITY CHOICE** (10 minutes)

##### ☐ **OPTION 1: KNOCK IT DOWN**



Explain that a popular kids' game in the Philippines is called Tumbang Preso which means "knock the prisoner down." Lead kids to play the game by choosing one kid to be It. Place a tin can next to It. Then place a line of painter's tape on the floor and direct the remaining kids to stand behind the line. Tell kids that they must take off one shoe and throw it at the tin can, trying to knock it down with their shoe. Once the can is knocked down, kids must run to get their shoe, without getting tagged by It, and cross back over the line. Explain that It first has to stand up the tin can before trying to tag someone to become the next It. If all the kids miss the can, then It will tap the can three times, and can tag any kid as they get their shoe. Play as time allows.

**SAY** “ Many kids in the Philippines who play this game have not heard or don't know about Jesus. But thankfully, missionaries like the Murrys have followed God's plan to tell them about Jesus. We can follow God's plan and tell others about Jesus too. ”

##### ☐ **OPTION 2: HE CARES FOR US**



Distribute a piece of paper, scissors, and a paper bag to each kid. Place markers, pens, and paper at tables for the group to use. Direct kids to cut a piece of paper into seven strips and set aside. Challenge kids to think of some examples from their own lives of how God has cared for them and write them down on one side of the strips of paper. Then invite kids to write down some Bible verses on the other sides of the strips of paper that describe God's care and how we can trust Him such as 1 Peter 5:7; Deuteronomy 31:8; Romans 5:8; Psalm 28:7; Isaiah 26:3-4; etc. As time allows, invite kids to use the markers to decorate their paper bags. Challenge kids to take their bags home and pull out a strip of paper each time they need to be reminded of God's love and care for them.

**SAY** “ Paul trusted God's plans and believed God cared for him. We can trust God and follow in obedience, knowing He cares for us too. ”

#### **2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER** (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for His care for us and asking Him to help us share the good news. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Share a Testimony” on the activity page.



JOURNAL PAGE

1. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
2. What does this story teach me about myself?
3. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
4. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
5. How does this story help me to live on mission better?



Unit 35 • Session 1

## PAUL RETURNED TO JERUSALEM

Acts 21-22

### WHY SHOULD WE PRAISE JESUS?

**WE SHOULD PRAISE JESUS FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE TO PROVIDE OUR SALVATION AND BECAUSE HE WILL ONE DAY MAKE ALL THINGS RIGHT.**

As Paul traveled, he visited with Christians. In the city of Caesarea, a man named Agabus visited Paul. Agabus asked to borrow Paul's belt. He tied to belt around his own hands and feet. Then he said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man who owns this belt.'" Paul's friends begged him not to go to Jerusalem, but Paul said, "I am ready to die for the name of Jesus."

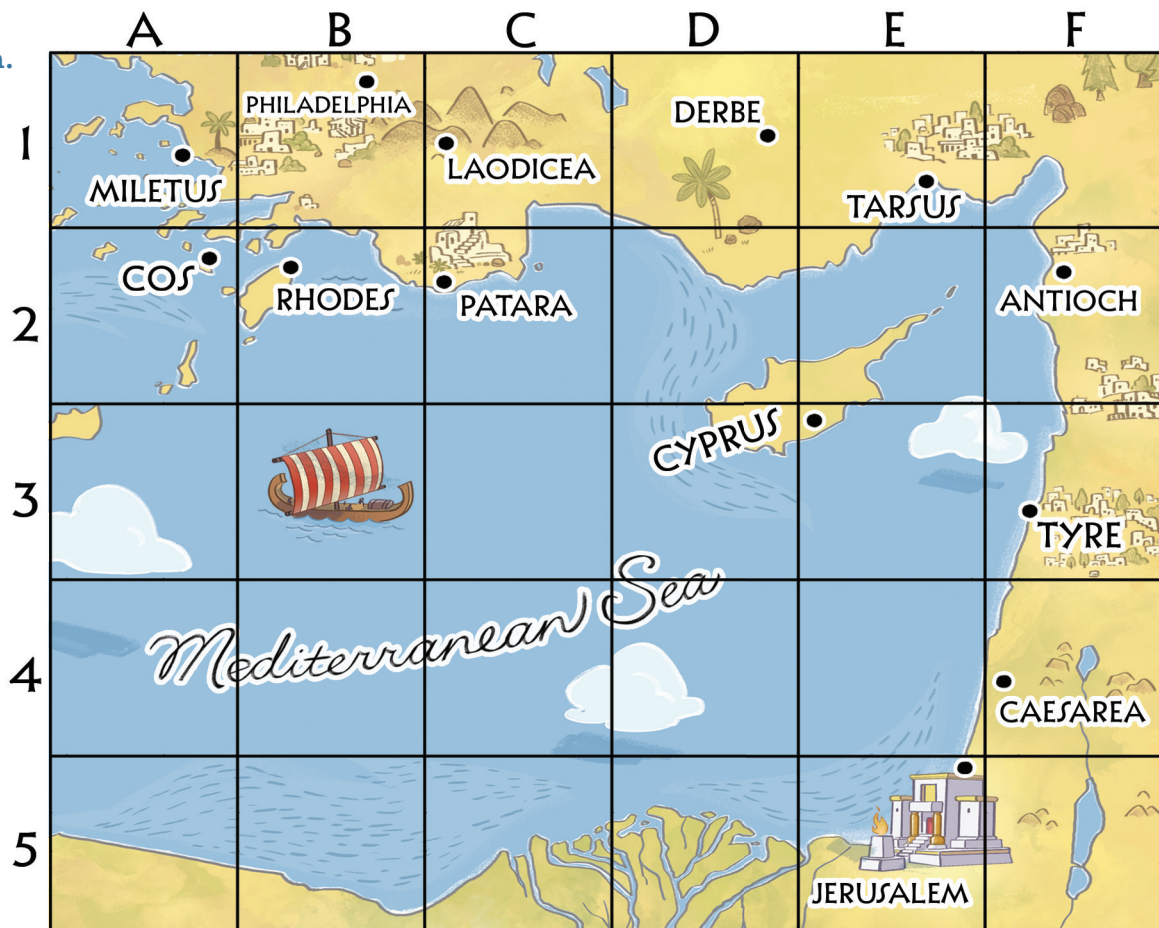
When Paul arrived in Jerusalem, Paul began to share what God had done among the Gentiles. People from other nations had trusted in Jesus! Thousands of Jews in the city had become Christians too. That was good news, but Jewish Christians were upset because they had heard things about Paul that weren't true.

One day, Paul went into the temple. When some Jews saw him there, they caused a big commotion. A crowd grabbed Paul. As the crowd was trying to kill Paul, the Roman commander in the city hurried to figure out what was going on. The commander decided to take Paul somewhere safe. Before he left, Paul asked to speak to the crowd. Paul said that God sent him to tell the Gentiles about Jesus. This made them angry. They didn't like the Gentiles. The soldiers took Paul indoors. Paul told them he was a Roman citizen. The soldiers had to take good care of Paul until he could have a fair trial.



**Christ Connection:** Paul followed God's plan and returned to Jerusalem even though he faced danger in the city. Paul believed that God, who was faithful to raise Jesus from the dead, would help him in his troubles. We can follow God's plan to tell others about Jesus and trust God to take care of us.

**Follow the Route** | Follow the route directions below to help Paul get back to Jerusalem.

- Start at the city in A1. **Mark an X.**
- Draw a line from the **X** to the city in A2. **Mark an O.**
- Draw a line from the **O** to the city in B2. **Mark a +.**
- Draw a line from the **+** to the city in C2. **Mark a ✓.**
- Draw a line from the **✓** to the city in F3. **Mark a Δ.**
- Draw a line from the **Δ** to the city in F4. **Mark a ☹.**
- Draw a line from the **☹** to the city in E5. **Draw a ♥.**



**Share a Testimony** | A testimony is sharing what God has done in your life. In the first box, write a summary of Paul's testimony. Look up Acts 22:6-21 for help. In the second box, write your testimony or ways God has been good to you.





NAME: \_\_\_\_\_



the **GOSPEL** PROJECT

## Paul Returned to Jerusalem

### BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- Paul arrived in Jerusalem and shared with others that Gentiles had trusted in Jesus!
- Later, some Jews caused trouble for Paul and almost killed him. A Roman soldier took Paul to be questioned.
- Because Paul was a Roman citizen, he was allowed a fair trial to prove his innocence.

### CHRIST CONNECTION:

Paul followed God's plan and returned to Jerusalem even though he faced danger in the city. Paul believed that God, who was faithful to raise Jesus from the dead, would help him in his troubles. We can follow God's plan to tell others about Jesus and trust God to take care of us.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Isaiah 25:1

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why should we praise Jesus?  
We should praise Jesus for what He has done to provide our salvation and because He will one day make all things right.