

LESSON 61

Paul in Chains

ACTS 28:11-31



BIBLE TRUTH

NOTHING CAN STOP THE ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW **5 MIN**

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY **10 MIN**

Read Acts 28:11–31 from the Scriptures or read story 139, “Paul in Chains,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 **10 MIN**

Proclaim and Spread the Gospel

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ John 3:16 printed out as described
- ✓ a pair of swim goggles
- ✓ petroleum jelly
- ✓ hearing protection
- ✓ music player

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

Paul's Suffering for the Gospel

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pencils or pens
- ✓ Bibles for the class
- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

7. ACTIVITY TIME **10 MIN**

Paul in Chains

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

LESSON SNAPSHOT

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN
9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 30 MIN

What If You Were Paul?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a dramatized audio version of Acts 25:13 through Acts 28 (Max McLean does a wonderful dramatic reading of the ESV version. Listen to it free of charge on the Bible Gateway Web site: <http://www.biblegateway.com/audio/mclean/esv/acts.21>) Alternatively, prepare to do a dramatic reading of the passage yourself.

TOTAL 85 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Paul was in chains because of the gospel—Paul’s testimony had caused a disturbance among the Jews in Jerusalem who began to riot in opposition (Acts 21:27–36). While Paul was in custody, the Jews swore they would kill him (Acts 23:12–13). Knowing that he was called to go to Rome (Acts 23:11), Paul appealed to Caesar. By making this appeal Paul knew that he would be sent to Rome to stand trial. After a difficult journey, Paul finally reached Rome. Once in Rome, Paul called the local Jewish leaders together to share his story with them. He wanted to explain that he had been arrested for teaching about Jesus and sharing his testimony (Acts 28:20).

In spite of his chains, Paul continued to preach—After gathering the Jewish leaders together, Paul explained the gospel story from the Old Testament (Acts 28:23). In the end, some were convinced by what Paul shared, but others did not believe (Acts 28:24).

Paul was not hindered by the unbelief of the Jews—In spite of the fact that many did not believe, Paul remained committed to spreading the message. For two years Paul welcomed all who came to see him and preached the gospel without hindrance (Acts 28:30–31). Paul knew that many of the Jews would reject Jesus, but he also remembered that the Lord had called him to proclaim the message to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). Even while under house arrest, Paul continued the work God had assigned him.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Appealing to Caesar

Roman citizens who lived outside Rome and were charged with a crime could appeal to Caesar—they could appeal to be tried in Rome. As a Roman citizen, this is what Paul did. After his arrest in Jerusalem, concerned that he might be handed over to the Jews who wanted to kill him, Paul appealed to Caesar before Festus (Acts 25:1–12). Once Paul appealed, the matter was out of Festus’ control. Festus replied, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.”

When Paul made his appeal, Nero had not yet demonstrated hostility toward Christians. This is evidenced by the favor Paul had during his imprisonment in Rome. He was allowed visitors and given freedom to talk about Christ right under the watchful eye of the Praetorian guard.

Before Paul’s arrest the Lord had told him to have courage and also that he would preach in Rome (Acts 23:11). Paul’s appeal to Caesar was a free ticket to Rome, where he would indeed preach the gospel!

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Paul said, "It is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain" (Acts 28:20). Jesus, the Messiah, who died upon the cross and rose again on the third day, is the hope of Israel that Paul spoke about. To put it another way, Paul said, "I was arrested for preaching the gospel." Once in Rome, Paul knew that he was under house arrest and not in a dungeon so that he could preach the gospel freely. In Philippians 1:12, Paul said that the advancement of the gospel was the reason for his imprisonment in Rome.

For two years Paul stayed under house arrest, sharing with anyone who would come to listen. He proclaimed the "kingdom of God and [taught] about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:31). Even when others were preaching with false motives (to make a name for themselves) and in competition with Paul, Paul rejoiced. To him it was most important that the message go forth.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Acts 28:11–31 from the Scriptures or read story 139, "Paul in Chains," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 **10 MIN****Proclaim and Spread the Gospel****SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ John 3:16 printed out as described below
- ✓ a pair of swim goggles
- ✓ petroleum jelly
- ✓ hearing protection
- ✓ music player

This object lesson is designed to illustrate the unbeliever before God opens his ears and eyes to the truth of the gospel (Acts 28:26–27).

Prior to class, print out John 3:16 with the word “God” in very large letters. Also, smear petroleum jelly on the goggles so that the only readable word in the verse is “God.”

Ask for a volunteer. Have them put on the goggles and the hearing protection and describe for the class what they can hear and what they can see.

Turn the music on fairly loud. Stand on the other side of the room and read John 3:16 quietly to them. Then ask them if they could hear what you were reading. Show your volunteer John 3:16 and ask them to read it. They may be able to get the word God, but not the rest of the verse.

Finally have them remove the hearing protection and the goggles and ask them to read the verse from the page. Go on to explain to the children that, until God opens the eyes and ears of our heart to see and hear the truth of the gospel, we will not believe because we are dead in our sin, unable to respond to God.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN****Paul’s Suffering for the Gospel****SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ paper and pencils or pens

- ✓ Bibles for the class
- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

Read aloud together Acts 9:15–16 and explain that this is what the Lord told Ananias to prepare him for meeting Paul to whom God had appeared on the road to Damascus. Explain to the class that Paul was called to suffer much for God’s name.

Divide the class into groups of four to five and assign two to three of the following chapters from the book of Acts to each team: Acts 13—14, 16—19, 21—25, 27. Have each group go through their assigned chapters and look for ways that Paul suffered for the sake of the gospel. Give the groups five minutes to write down as many of Paul’s sufferings as they can find (with verse references). Make a composite list on the whiteboard.

Then talk about how the Lord’s words to Ananias were fulfilled and marvel over how much Paul suffered for the “hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20).

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Paul in Chains

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Draw a picture of Paul in chains sharing with others. Across the top of the paper write: “Nothing can stop the gospel!”

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 30 MIN

What If You Were Paul?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a dramatized audio version of Acts 25:13 through Acts 28 (Max McLean does a wonderful dramatic reading of the ESV version. Listen to it free of charge on the Bible Gateway Web site: <http://www.biblegateway.com/audio/mclean/esv/acts.21>). Alternatively, prepare to do a dramatic reading of the passage yourself.

Play the story of Paul's arrest and imprisonment (Acts 25:13 through Acts 28) to your class from a dramatized Bible version. It is a fascinating story. If you are going to read it, the story can be found in Acts 25:13 through Acts 28. Speak it dramatically. While this is a long portion of Scripture, Paul's shipwreck and arrest make for an amazing story that will keep the attention of your class.

Ask the following questions:

- **What do find most amazing in this story?**
(Ask your students how the story affected them personally.)
- **What do you think you would have done if you had been Paul?**
(Help them put themselves into the story.)
- **What is the message we should take from this story? How should it affect our lives?**
(First, we need to ask if we believe and place our trust in Christ. Then, we need to ask ourselves if we are committed to the mission of spreading the message.)

Ask your class if any of them would like to relate an experience of sharing the gospel with someone.