



Paul Testifies to the Gospel in Rome

Acts 28:16–31



LESSON GOAL

The child will turn to God when they hear the Gospel.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- Paul told the Jews in Rome that he was innocent.
- The Jews did not believe the Gospel.
- Paul shared the Gospel and taught God's Word while in Rome.

KEY VERSE

"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"

—*Acts 28:28*

APPLICATION

- Share God's good news by living an obedient life.
- Pray that God will send a missionary from your church to share the Gospel.
- If you're saved, pray that God will continue to open your ears to His truth.

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

4

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

In Acts 1:8, Jesus told the apostles that after receiving the Spirit they would proclaim the Gospel to the “ends of the earth.” The book of Acts records the spread of the Gospel in accordance with Jesus’ promise. The Gospel first was preached in Jerusalem and then throughout Judea and Samaria. In Acts 10, God revealed to Peter that He wanted the Gospel to go to the Gentiles as well. Soon after this revelation and the salvation of Cornelius, the Holy Spirit sent Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:2). On each of Paul’s three missionary journeys, Paul proclaimed the Gospel in an ever-widening circle to both Jews and Gentiles.

When Paul’s third journey ended with Paul’s imprisonment in a Jerusalem barrack, the Lord revealed that Paul was not finished spreading the Gospel. The Lord next sent Paul to Rome where he would testify before Caesar (Acts 23:11). The book of Acts ends with Paul in Rome waiting to appear before Caesar. Before closing though, Luke emphasizes that the Gospel will continue to advance unhindered, just as it did throughout the Roman empire for nearly thirty years. As God’s good news of salvation presses on, each one who hears it must ask themselves if they will respond with ears that hear.

Paul’s Arrival (Acts 28:16)

After spending three months on the island of Malta where Paul and his companions had been shipwrecked, Paul finally arrived in Rome. The Lord had protected Paul throughout his journey (27:1–28:6), provided for him on the island of Malta (28:10), and allowed Paul’s to enjoy the friendship of Italian believers along the way (28:11–15). When Paul arrived in Rome, he was “permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him” (28:16). The Lord blessed Paul by allowing him to stay in his “own rented house” instead of being thrown in prison (28:30). From his house, Paul had the opportunity to continue His Gospel ministry.

Paul’s Innocence (Acts 28:17–22)

After being in Rome for only three days, Paul called together the leaders of the Jewish synagogues (Acts 28:17). Paul followed his normal pattern of proclaiming the Gospel to the Jews first and then the Gentiles. Before Paul presented the Gospel to the Jews, he first declared that he was innocent of the charges the Jews in Jerusalem had brought against him. Because he was going to testify to Jesus, Paul wanted the Jews to know that he was a credible witness and not a lawbreaker and rabble rouser.

Contrary to the Sanhedrin’s charges (21:28), Paul announced his innocence: “I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers” (28:17). Even though he was innocent, Paul explained that he had been “delivered as a prisoner

from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans” (28:17). Paul told the Jewish leaders that the Roman officials confirmed Paul’s innocence (23:28–29; 24:22–27; 25:18–19). Even though the officials wanted to set Paul free because he did not deserve death, they kept him imprisoned because the “Jews spoke against it” (28:18–19). Because the Roman official yielded to Jewish pressure, Paul had no recourse but to appeal to Caesar (28:19). Paul made clear that his appeal to Caesar was not an attack on the Jews but an attempt to defend himself from the Jews’ attacks. Instead of being the Jews’ enemy, Paul was in chains “for the hope of Israel” (28:20). Paul had been persecuted not because he was against the Jews but because he preached Jesus as the Messiah, the long awaited hope of Israel.

The Jews response to Paul was surprising. They denied having received letters from Jerusalem concerning Paul or hearing anything bad about him from any of the Judean visitors (28:21). Although commentators can only speculate why the Roman Jews hadn’t heard about Paul’s case (or if they were telling the truth), the Jews had of course heard about Christ (28:22). The Jewish leaders described the Christian faith as a “sect” of Judaism, which was “spoken against everywhere” (28:22). Knowing that Paul represented this sect, the leaders wanted to hear Paul explain his views (28:22). Paul and the leaders decided on a day when Paul would testify to them about the Messiah (28:23).

Paul’s Testimony (Acts 28:23–29)

When the Jews came to hear Paul on the appointed day, Paul “explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God” (Acts 28:23). Even though the kingdom of God has not yet been revealed in its final form (the Millennial Kingdom and eternal state), God’s kingdom has arrived with the coming of the King. Jesus is the King who rescues men from the dominion of sin and Satan and brings them under submission to His own reign. In order to persuade the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah, Paul taught them from “both the Law of Moses, and the Prophets” (Acts 28:23). Luke records how Jesus, Peter and Paul each used Scripture to prove that Jesus was the Messiah (Luke 24:44-47; Acts 2:17-36; Acts 13:32-39). Although Paul spent all day with the Jews (“from morning till evening”), only some of the Jews were persuaded while others refused to be convinced by Scripture that Jesus was the Christ (28:24). Regardless of which city Paul went to, the Jews were always divided in their response to Christ (Acts 14:4; 17:4-5; Acts 18:6-8; Acts 19:8-9).

When the Jews started disagreeing over Paul’s testimony to Christ but before they left (28:25), Paul rebuked them for responding to God’s Word just like their ancestors had. Paul quoted from Isaiah 6:9-10 where the Lord revealed to the prophet Isaiah that Israel would hear his message but would not respond. Like the Israel of Isaiah’s day, the Jews of Paul’s day heard his message but did not understand it because their hearts were hard (Acts 28:26-27). God’s Word entered their ears but did not change their lives.

Because of the Jews’ hardness to the Gospel, Paul explained that “the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!” (Acts 28:28). When entering a new city, Paul’s practice was to preach in the synagogues until the Jews rejected the Gospel. When the Gospel was spurned by the Jews, Paul then proclaimed the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46-47; 18:6; 19:8-10). (Although the majority of Jews have rejected their Messiah, many Jews, both in the book of Acts and today, have repented and placed their faith in Christ.) Even though the majority of Jews continue to reject the Gospel, they will not always do so. In Romans 11:25-26, Paul explains that “blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved.” When God is finished saving the Gentiles, the Jews will at last respond to Christ with hearing ears, seeing eyes and understanding hearts. Until then, God has sent

salvation to the Gentiles who will hear it, not because they are better than the Jews but because God has chosen to have mercy upon them (Rom. 9:18).

The Jews hated the truth that God had sent salvation to the Gentiles. They were indignant that Paul would accuse them of being spiritually deaf to truth that Gentiles would hear. In Acts 22, when Paul spoke to the Jerusalem mob, the mob listened quietly until Paul told them that Jesus had sent him to the Gentiles (Acts 22:1,21–22). At that moment, the mob suddenly shouted “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!” (Acts 22:22). Although these Jews did not shout for Paul’s death, they left when they heard about God’s plan to save the Gentiles (Acts 28:25).

Paul’s Ministry (Acts 28:30–31)

Paul continued to serve the Lord in Rome for the next two years (28:30). Because he was under house arrest, Paul was able to receive “all who came to him” (28:30). The book of Philippians, written while Paul was under house arrest, suggests that Paul had a ministry both to the soldiers who guarded him (Phil. 1:13; Acts 28:16) and to the saints of Caesar’s household, a group which may have included both members of Caesar’s family and his servants (Phil. 4:22). During his imprisonment, Paul also wrote Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. Even though he was in prison, Paul had both “confidence” and freedom (“no one forbidding him”) in “preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 28:31). Physically not far from Caesar himself, Paul boldly proclaimed to both Jews and Gentiles that they needed to repent and submit themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ and enter into His kingdom.

Conclusion

The book of Acts ends with Luke’s record that Paul preached “with all confidence, no one forbidding him” (Acts 28:31). Although the outcome of Paul’s first imprisonment is unknown, Paul was eventually released. Church history tells that after Paul reached his goal of Spain he was imprisoned in Rome a second time. During his second Roman imprisonment, Paul wrote the letters to Timothy and Titus. The New Testament doesn’t record Paul’s death but church history records that Paul was beheaded at the command of Nero.

In some ways, Acts ends abruptly. The reader is left wondering what happened to Paul and his appeal before Caesar. But the Holy Spirit makes no mistake. The ending of Acts is the perfect conclusion to God’s record of how He spread the Good News of His Son. In the beginning of Acts, Jesus told the apostles they would be His witnesses in “Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Acts traces the Gospel’s spread throughout Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria but when the Jews reject the Gospel, God reveals his plan for bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles through His apostle Paul. At the close of Acts, Paul continues to preach in the power of the Spirit and the Gospel continues to advance unhindered. None of the Gospel’s opponents could stop the Gospel’s spread. The book ends with a clear call to all who are willing, whether Jew or Gentile, to hear God’s Gospel and turn to Him.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Where were they trying to take Paul?

They were trying to take Paul to Rome.

What happened as they sailed to find a good place to spend the winter?

There was a great storm and instead of it taking a few hours to arrive it took a couple weeks.

What did the crew do with all the things on the boat?

They wanted to make the boat light so they threw everything off the boat.

Were the men on the ship worried?

Yes, they were very worried that they would be killed in the storm.

Who came to Paul with a message one night?

An angel came to Paul and told him not to be afraid because all of the people on the boat would be safe.

What did Paul tell the sailors to do?

He told them to run the boat into the ground of an island.

What happened when the boat crashed onto the beach?

The sailors swam to shore and all were safe as God had promised.



Difficult Concepts

Prisoner's living situation: When people in America are arrested, they are taken to jail. There they live in cells behind bars; however, in Paul's case, he was actually a prisoner inside a normal house. He was not allowed to leave the house, and was probably always chained to one of his guards. Many times, the prisoners had to pay for their own houses that they were captives in!

Gospel to the Gentiles: God used Paul for a very special mission—he preached the Gospel to the Gentiles. A Gentile was any person who was not a Jew. The Old Testament focuses almost entirely on the Jews. Part of the new and exciting message of the New Testament was that God had a special plan for the Gentiles as well. God wanted to bless the Gentiles by allowing them to be saved and to have a relationship with Him, just like the kind of relationship He wanted to have with the Jews. If your students understand what adoption is, explain that God graciously chose to adopt the Gentiles even though He already had some very special children.

Innocence and false accusation: Paul was a prisoner. Normally, people who are prisoners have broken the law; however, Paul was innocent. He had done nothing illegal or wrong. Some men told lies about him and gave false accusations. Ask

the students if anyone has ever told their teachers or their parents that the student did something bad. Was it true or not? In Paul's case, he had not done anything bad.

Caesar: Caesar was the title of the man who ruled the Roman Empire. Some countries have Kings. The Egyptians had "Pharaohs." Americans have Presidents. The Romans called their leader "Caesar." Ask the students if they know who our President is.



Red Light, Green Light to Rome

Paul went through a lot before arriving in Rome. While being in chains he experienced a fierce storm at sea and was shipwrecked for two whole months. In today's lesson we see that God is faithful to His promise and Paul makes it safely to Rome. To illustrate this arrival play a game of "Red Light Green Light" with the students. Make the finish line the destination of Rome. Like Paul, a great deal of patience will be required of the students before they reach Rome.



Welcome to Town

Set out a welcome mat in front of the entryway or door to the class. Give a presentation about when you first moved to town or share a travel log of visiting a new city. Describe how you got there. Show pictures of city highlights and talk about different places you visited and people you met. Finally, describe Paul's welcome to the city of Rome.



Invitation

As each child come into class, hand them a small note card inviting them to come to a special meeting later in the class. Perhaps serve a special snack before beginning the lesson. Be sure to describe Paul's invitation to the Jewish leaders of Rome to come visit him and hear the gospel.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done." —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

After Paul arrived in Rome with the soldier who was guarding him, he was allowed to stay at his house instead of go to prison, though he still had to have the soldier guard him. This was a great blessing because it allowed Paul to continue his ministry and have people come over to his house. Three days after he arrived in Rome, he invited the Jewish leaders to come over so he could talk to them. He thought they would know about what happened to him in Jerusalem, when the Jews there got very angry at him for telling them about Jesus and tried to have him killed.

The Jewish leaders said they had not heard about what happened. When they heard Paul talk about Jesus, though, they asked him to explain what he believed, because they had heard about Christians, but didn't know much about them. They set up a time for anyone who wanted to hear about it to come over to Paul's house and he would tell them.

When they came a few days later, Paul preached the gospel to them, telling them about the Kingdom of God, and about Jesus, showing them from the Old Testament that Jesus was the Messiah that God had promised them. Some of the Jews believed what Paul said, but many did not. They argued with each other about it, but Paul stopped them and reminded them of a passage in the Old Testament, saying that when Messiah came, many would hear the truth, but would not believe it.

Paul then told them that since he had given them the message and so many had rejected it, that he would now take the message of salvation through Jesus to the Gentiles and that they would hear it and believe. This, of course, made the Jews angry. They did not like to think that God would offer salvation to anyone but themselves, and they left his house arguing with each other about it.

Paul spent the next two years in his house in Rome, inviting anyone, Jew or Gentile, who wanted to hear about Jesus to come and he preached to them. The Lord allowed Paul to preach for that whole time without anybody causing problems for him.



Lesson Questions

Where was Paul heading on his journey?

Paul was heading to Rome.

Where did Paul live while he was under arrest?

Paul was allowed to live in his own rented house while he was under arrest.

What did Paul tell the Jewish leaders in Rome?

He told the Jewish leaders that he was innocent of why he had been arrested. He also told them about the kingdom of God and the good news about Jesus.

What did the Jewish leaders think about what Paul had said?

They said that they hadn't heard about Paul but they would like to. When Paul shared the good news about Jesus some believed and others did not.

What did Paul say to those that rejected his message?

Paul said that they were rejecting God's Word just as their ancestors had done.

How long did Paul share the good news about Jesus while in Rome?

Paul continued to share the gospel with many people while in Rome for two years.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



Lesson Stations

Begin today's lesson, by having the students follow Paul's journey to Rome. At the first station, have a sign that says Malta. Bring in some boards, rope and a sheet to remind the children that Paul shipwrecked on Malta. Have the children next get in their "boat" and "row" to Puteoli. In Puteoli (Acts 28:13), Paul stayed with the brethren for seven days. Count off seven days for the children. Each day the children can put down their head to pretend to sleep, raise their hands to their mouths to eat, fold their hands to pray, and open their hands like they are opening Scripture. Each of these actions can be done on each of the seven days. When the seven days are over, the children can walk on a journey first to a sign that says "Appii Forum" (a marketplace) and second to a sign that says "Three Inns." At each stop, have the children pretend to read and pray with the Christians who come to visit Paul. The last stop of the journey can be a cardboard house with Rome written above it and a helper posing as a guard outside. Tell the children that when Paul got to Rome he did not have to go to prison but could stay in a house. Have each of the children pretend to write letters while in prison.



Ears to Hear

Help the children understand how the Jews could have ears but not be hearing (Acts 28:26–27). Tell the children that you're going to tell them how they can have a piece of candy. You're going to give them an instruction. But when it comes time to give the instruction, tell the kids to all cover up their ears. Then whisper to the children the instruction (something silly like "Jump up three times and turn in a circle"). If the children play fair, then none of them will have heard the instruction. Thank the children for being obedient to your instruction to close their ears and tell them they can have a piece of candy afterwards, but then explain the parallel. The Jews were being promised incredible blessings by God if they repented and believed but instead the Jews were like people who chose to put their hands over their ears. They had ears but they were not really listening to the Gospel. Their hearts did not want to follow God's instructions for how to receive eternal life.



Role Play

Using real chains or chains made from paper, chain yourself to a helper. Ask the students how they would feel if they were chained to another person all day. Show them how hard it would be to move around. After talking about all the bad aspects, ask if they are any good parts about being chained to someone. Show them how Paul could minister to his "captive audience." Any time he talked, prayed, or wrote a letter, the guard would see it.



5

The Spread of the Gospel

Remind the students that throughout Acts the Gospel has spread despite all opposition. Ask them what they think will happen to the spread of the Gospel now that Paul is in chains. How can the Gospel still spread? Discuss ways the Gospel spreads today: the Bible, books, radio, the internet.



Review

Bring in the map from last week marking where Malta and Rome are. Remind the students why Paul was going to Rome: God promised Paul he would preach the Gospel there. Paul was on a mission. Show a maze or draw one on the board. Explain that no matter how many obstacles Paul faced, he was intent on reaching his goal of preaching the Gospel.

Praise and Worship

Lord, I Lift Your Name On High

Make Me A Servant

He Is Able

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children." —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.



"Welcome Door Hanger"

Materials: "Welcome Door Hanger" craft page, half-sheet of cardstock or foam sheet, scissors, glue, crayons.

Directions: Use a half-sheet of cardstock or a foam sheet to make a door hanger. On one side, have the students glue on letters to spell "welcome." Decorate the other side with a crown (the kingdom of God), a cross (Jesus), and the Bible verse, Acts 28:23.



"Morning Until Evening"

Materials: copies of "Morning Until Evening" craft page, scissors, brads, crayons

Directions: Cut a slit in the arch. Color and decorate the sun, moon, stars, and the pictures on the strip. Cut off the strip at the bottom of the page, fold it, and attach it to the arch with a brad. To make the page stronger, glue the edges onto a sheet of construction paper, being careful to avoid gluing in the arch area.



World Map

Prepare a general world map for each student. Have arrows pointing out from Jerusalem to the entire world. Tell the students to color everywhere the Gospel spread. Have them color the entire map.

Coloring Pages

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.

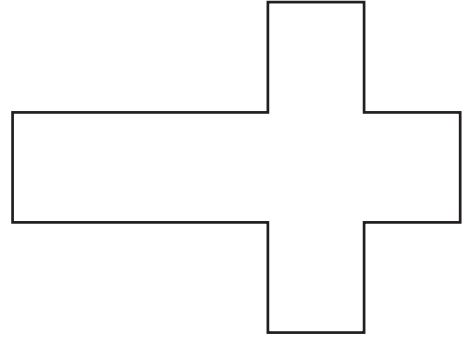
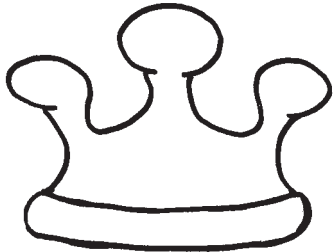


MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" —Acts 28:28

Welcome Door Hanger

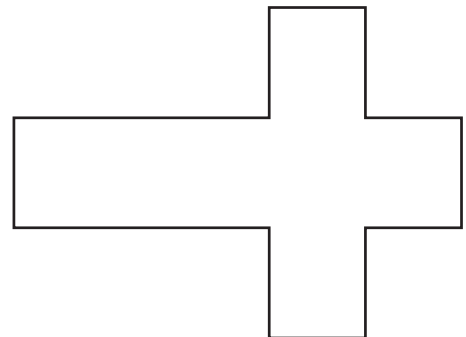
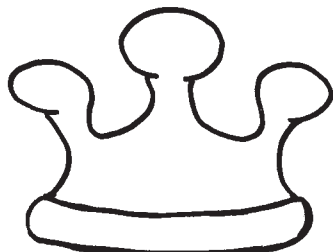
Welcome



"So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus...from morning until evening."

—Acts 28:23

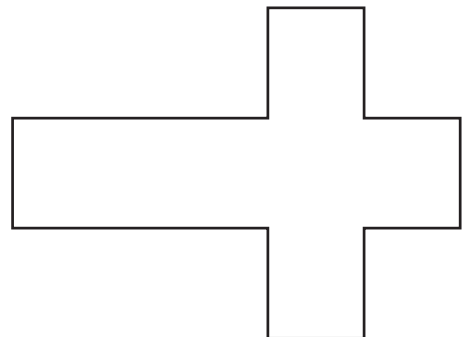
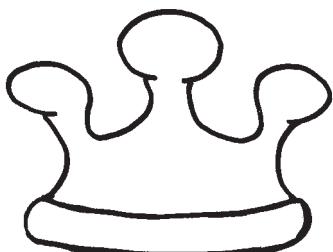
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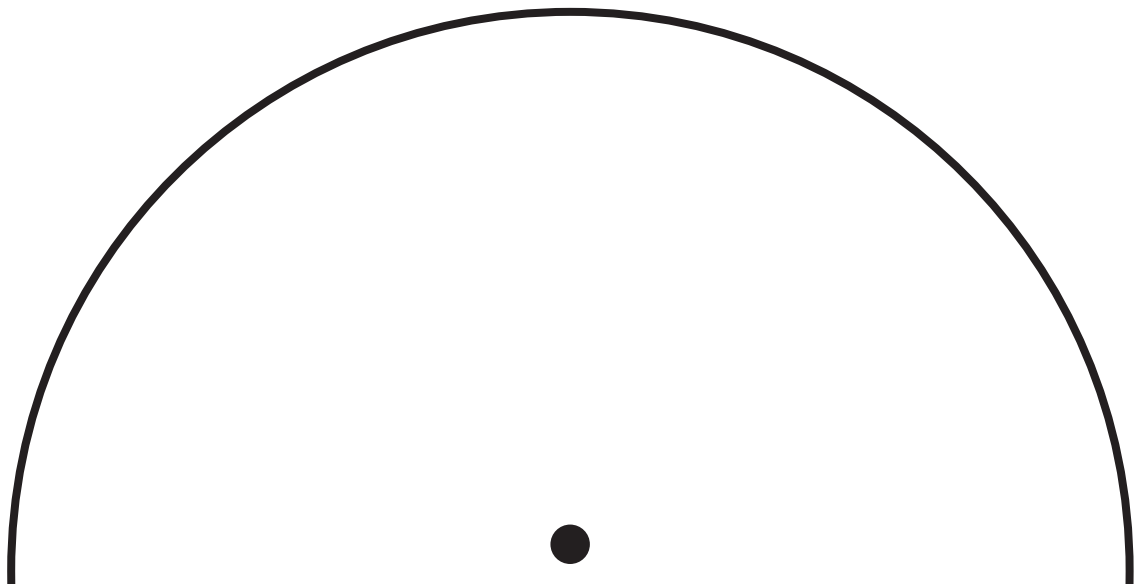
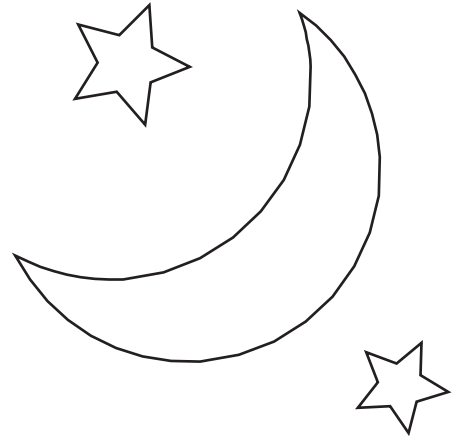
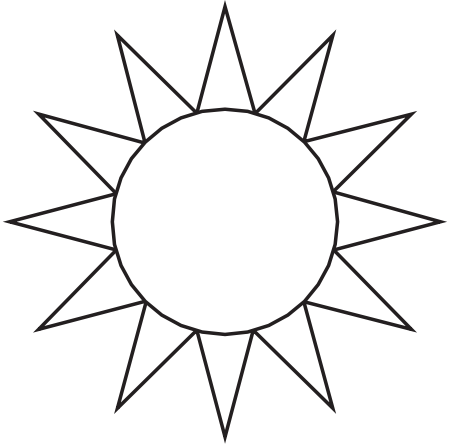
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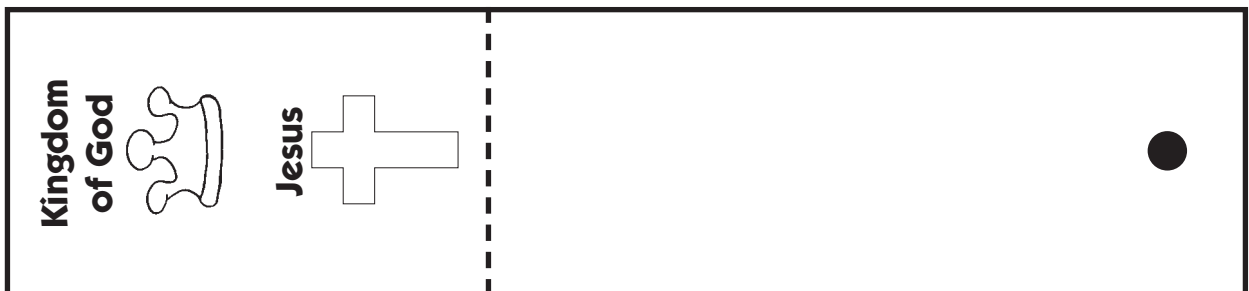
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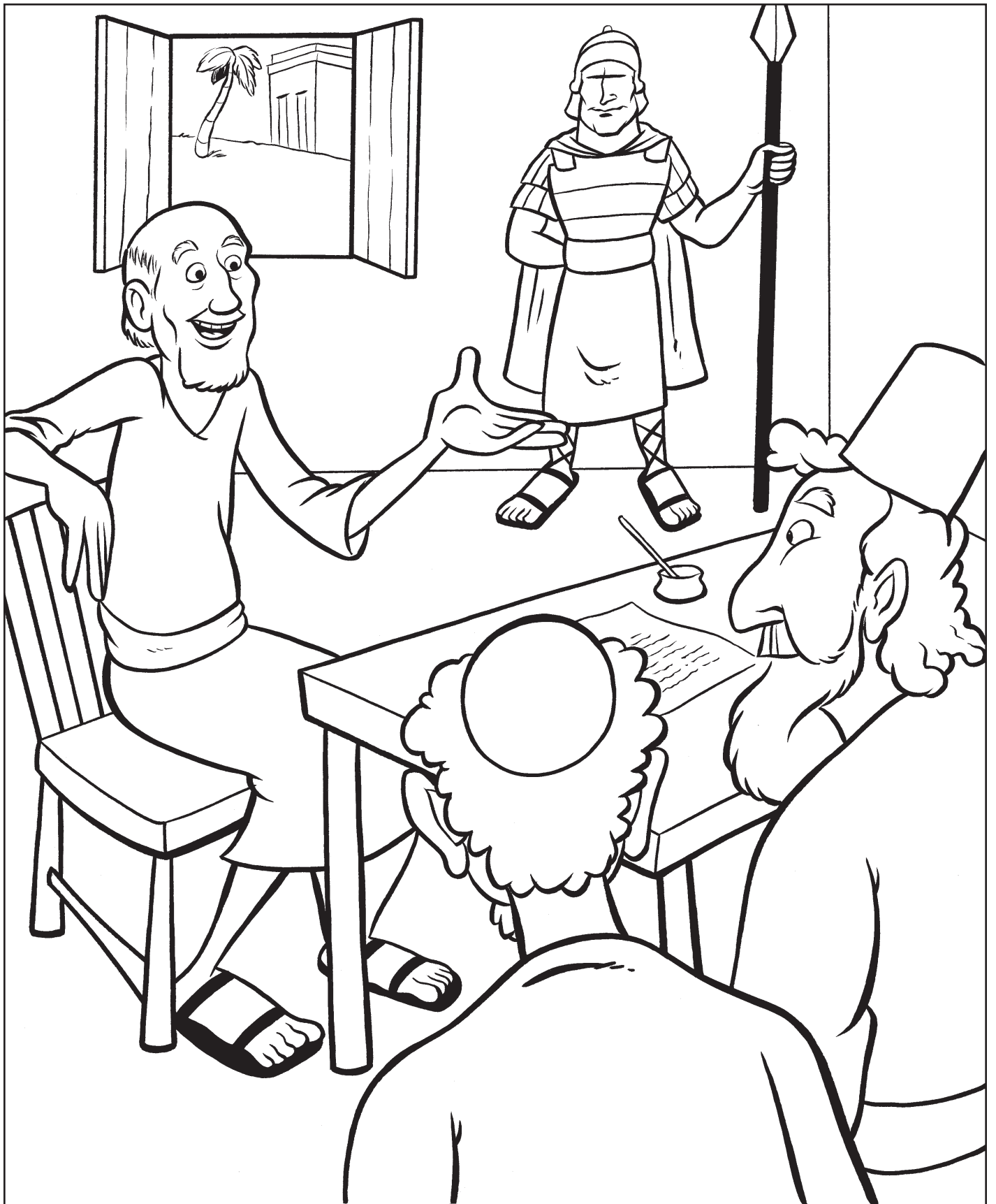
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Morning until Evening



“So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus...from morning until evening.” –Acts 28:23





“So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.” —Acts 28:23



**"And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved."
—Acts 28:24**

