

## C3 - The Life & Work of Paul

### Study 1 - The Third Missionary Journey

#### BIBLE READING:

**Acts 18: 23; 19: 1, 8-20, 23-41;  
20: 1-6; 21: 1-3, 15-17**

#### KEY VERSE:

**“So, the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.”**

Acts 19: 20

After spending some time at Antioch, Paul set out again! Towards the end of his second missionary journey, he had called at Ephesus, and had given the Jews there a promise that he would come again, in the will of God. (See **Acts 18: 19-21**) Having made such a promise, he was now anxious to fulfil it. So, he came to Ephesus.

This city was to be his base for evangelism for nearly three years. First in a Jewish synagogue, and then in a school, he **“spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God”**. (19: 8)

The city of Ephesus was noted for:

- The worship of the goddess Diana (“Artemis” in Greek). The Temple of Diana, at Ephesus, is classed as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It was a most magnificent building, and annually thousands of worshippers came to it from all over the Mediterranean world. There were many evil and sinful practices linked with the worship of this false god.
- The practice of magic. Ephesus was well-known as

a city where witchcraft abounded. There were many exorcists who claimed to have contact with, and power over, evil spirits, or demons. (See 19: 13-17)

The Gospel of the Lord Jesus had a powerful impact on both these features of Ephesian life. So many people were forsaking the worship of Diana that the silversmiths, who made small souvenir shrines of the goddess, began to fear that they soon would be out of work! (See 19: 27) Indeed, there was even the possibility of the magnificent Temple becoming a ruin. According to Demetrius, the silversmiths’ leader, **“the city was filled with the confusion”**. (verse 29) A near-riot situation had developed! It shows clearly the success of the Gospel in causing people to turn **“from idols to serve the living and true God”**. (1 Thessalonians 1: 9)

The section from 19: 13-20 demonstrates the power of God in the dark world of the occult. The bonfire (verse 19) is evidence of how people who had heard and believed the gospel, were given strength by God to break completely with their former evil way of living. They quickly learned that **“No one can serve two masters.”** (Matthew 6: 24)

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. As Paul continued his work in the city for more than two years, the Gospel spread to the surrounding areas, so that **“all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks”**. (19: 10) Not only in Ephesus did a Christian church become established, but also in the outlying towns. We read in **Revelation 1: 11** of the seven churches which were in Asia. It is most likely that all of these were founded because of the Gospel coming to Ephesus at this time. What great success the message of good news had!

Eventually Paul moved on. He went to Macedonia and Greece, as well as to other less well-known parts. We can be sure that he was delighted to find that many people who had been saved on his previous visit were still trusting the Lord and living their lives to please God. In every place, the believers were encouraged by his good words. (Read Acts 20: 2)

His return to Jerusalem is recorded in 21: 15-17. The Third Missionary Journey, which had concentrated mainly on Ephesus, was finished! Even Paul himself sensed that great changes were just ahead of him. (See 20: 22-24 and 21: 10-14) We shall discover in Study 2 what happened.



## C3 - The Life & Work of Paul

### Study 2 - Opposition and Opportunities

#### BIBLE READING:

**Acts 21:17-19, 27-28, 30-36, 39- 22: 1**

**Acts 22: 22-25, 30- 23: 11**

**Acts 24: 1, 5-9, 14-16, 24-25**

**Acts 25: 10-12, 25: 22 - 26: 1**

**Acts 26: 19-32**

#### KEY VERSE:

**To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great...**

Acts 26: 22

This overview study of **Acts 21-26** covers a new phase of Paul's life. Opposition was a key feature but in turn, this gave rise to opportunities to speak to others about his faith. (See Key Verse) Although Paul no longer enjoyed the freedom and scope of his missionary journeys, God was sovereign over all that happened to him, and he remained focused as ever **"to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."** Acts 20: 24

Having returned to Jerusalem, the Christians welcomed Paul and the news which he brought of many non-Jews (Gentiles) who had been saved. Living there, however, were Jews who were very opposed to Paul's association with Gentiles. Things came to a head when some Jews from Asia recognised Paul in the Temple and physically attacked him. (21: 27) He was dragged out and the crowd would have killed him had it not been for the intervention of the Roman soldiers. As Paul was being rescued and about to enter the barracks, he took the opportunity to ask the tribune (commander) for permission to address the crowd.

#### A SPEECH TO THE PEOPLE - ACTS 22: 3-29

Paul gave a detailed account of his conversion. (see C1 Study 2) He received a good hearing until he mentioned that the Lord had told him to take the message to the Gentiles. Again, the crowd became so violent that the tribune ordered Paul be taken into the barracks and **"examined by flogging"** (22: 24) But just as they were about to start, Paul surprised them by declaring his Roman citizenship. It was against the law to bind or flog a Roman citizen so the tribune decided that Paul should instead appear before the Jewish council or Sanhedrin the next day.

#### DEFENCE BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN - ACTS 22: 30 - 23: 11

Paul's defence had scarcely begun when he mentioned that

he stood on trial because of **"the hope of the resurrection of the dead."** (23: 6) A Christian's 'hope' based on Christ's resurrection is not wishful thinking but an absolute certainty, and for Paul, gave both power for his service and was his future prize. (see **Philippians 3: 10-11**) The Sadducees were a sect within the council who did not believe in resurrection and at that point an argument between them and the Pharisees ensued. (23: 7) Trouble erupted once more, and Paul had to be rescued. That night he received a message from the Lord telling him to take courage because he **"must testify also in Rome."** (23: 11) What reassurance this was that God was in control!



Jerusalem in the early 1900's (Source: Wikipedia)

#### TRIAL BEFORE FELIX - ACTS 24: 10-26

This took place at Caesarea where Paul had been taken for safety. Paul explained that he worshipped God and believed all that was written in the Law and the Prophets. Again, he testified plainly of his hope in God and the fact of the resurrection. We read that several days later Felix along with his wife listened to Paul speak further about **"his faith in Christ Jesus"**. (24: 24) However, Felix did not reach a verdict about Paul nor about his message and its personal implications.

#### TRIAL BEFORE FESTUS, THE NEW ROMAN GOVERNOR - ACTS 25: 8-12

Two years passed before Paul's defence took place before the new governor and some Jews who had come down from Jerusalem to lay charges against him. Paul firmly denied them, but he realised he would never get a fair hearing from the Jewish council. He made the big decision to appeal to Caesar Augustus in Rome! (25: 11) This was his right as a Roman citizen, and it also made sense of the promise that he had already been given before leaving Jerusalem.

#### KING AGRIPPA - ACTS 26: 1-29

While Paul was waiting transportation to Rome, Festus had royal visitors – King Agrippa and Bernice, both of whom belonged to the Herod family. Festus discussed Paul's case with Agrippa who wanted to hear Paul speak for himself. So once again Paul recounted his life-story, telling of his hope (26: 6), how he had been sent to the Gentiles and how this was God's plan fulfilled through the Messiah who would suffer and rise from the dead. (26: 17-18) Despite his chains and all that had happened to him, Paul was as passionate as ever that others should come to know Christ. **"...I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am..."** (26: 29)

# Answer Sheet

## C3 - The Life & Work of Paul

### Study 1 - The Third Missionary Journey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Return address on back of answer sheet

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Read Acts 18: 19-21, then answer these questions briefly:

- a) What city is named in these verses? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What did the Jews ask Paul to do? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) What promise did he make to them? \_\_\_\_\_

 /3

#### 2. Answer the following:

- a) Fill in the grid below using the information in **Acts 19: 8-10**:

Buildings where Paul made known the Kingdom of God	Length of time spent here

 /4

- b) Explain in your own words why he left the first building and moved to the second.
- \_\_\_\_\_

 /1

#### 3. Explain who Demetrius was, what his concern was and what action he took.

\_\_\_\_\_

 /3

#### 4. Summarise briefly the advice given by the city clerk to the mob in Acts 19: 35-40.

\_\_\_\_\_

 /3

#### 5. Write TRUE OR FALSE after each statement:

- a) God enabled Paul to do very special miracles at Ephesus. \_\_\_\_\_
- b) The books of magic, which were burned, were worth thirty thousand pieces of silver. \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Alexander was responsible for stirring up the citizens of Ephesus. \_\_\_\_\_
- d) For about two hours the crowd shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius and Timothy were some of Paul's helpers on this journey. \_\_\_\_\_
- f) The Third Missionary Journey ended at Antioch. \_\_\_\_\_

 /6

#### 6. Many churches were formed at this time. Write out the names of three places where this happened, using Revelation 1: 11.

\_\_\_\_\_

 /1

#### 7. According to Acts 20: 17-38, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church to meet him at Miletus.

- a) Read **verses 22-25** and say what feelings he had about his future life.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Why were tears shed freely as they led Paul to his ship? (See **verses 36-38**)
- \_\_\_\_\_

 /4

**THINK:** Consider Paul's clear focus and priorities in **Acts 20: 24**. What an example for us! Ask God to help you have a clear purpose in your Christian life and to live it out day by day.

**TOTAL =**  /25

# Answer Sheet

## C3 - The Life & Work of Paul

### Study 2 - Opposition and Opportunities

#### 1. Answer these questions about the opposition at Jerusalem:

- a) Who stirred up trouble? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What accusations did they bring against Paul? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) What news reached the tribune? \_\_\_\_\_
- d) How did the soldiers try to protect Paul on the way to the barracks? \_\_\_\_\_
- e) What word would you use to describe Paul's desire to address the crowd? \_\_\_\_\_

/6

#### 2. Paul refers to the resurrection in his discourses. (23: 6, 24: 21)

- a) Using **1 Corinthians 15: 17, 20-23** explain why the resurrection is central to Christian faith.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- b) How does Paul describe the importance of the resurrection to him in **Philippians 3: 10, 11**?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

/5

#### 3. Paul spent much time waiting in various places during this phase of his life.

- a) What were Paul's circumstances in Caesarea? (**Acts 24: 23**) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Where was Paul left at the end of Felix's rule? (**Acts 24: 27**) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) As Christians, what should our attitude in times of waiting in our lives? (**Psalms 37: 7** and **Psalms 139: 16** may be helpful.) \_\_\_\_\_

/5

#### 4. Felix, Festus and King Agrippa all had conversation with Paul about his faith.

- a) Read **Acts 25: 24-25**. What did Paul talk about and what was Felix's response? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Why did Festus want King Agrippa to speak with Paul? (**Acts 25: 23-27**) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- c) What explanation did Paul give of the opportunity to speak to King Agrippa? (**Acts 26: 22**) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- d) How did Festus respond to Paul's testimony? (**Acts 26: 24**) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

/6

#### 5. In the end Paul appealed to Caesar. (Acts 25: 11)

- a) Explain why he did this. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What assurance did he have about the future? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

/3

**THINK:** Paul had the opportunity to tell the story of his conversion in **Acts 22** and again in **Acts 26**. If you are saved you have a story too! Think through the details you need to include, and practise telling it or write it down. Pray about sharing it with others.

TOTAL = /25

# Answer Sheet

## C3 - The Life & Work of Paul

### Study 3 - The Journey to Rome

#### 1. Answer the following:

- a) What was the name of the centurion who was in charge of Paul? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) In what way did he show kindness to Paul at Sidon? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) In what way did he save Paul's life at the very end of the voyage? \_\_\_\_\_

 /3

#### 2. Answer TRUE OR FALSE to these statements:

- a) Paul was not the only prisoner being taken to Rome. \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Phoenix was a better harbour to winter in, than Fair Havens. \_\_\_\_\_
- c) When the storm was at its height, Paul was afraid to speak about his faith in God. \_\_\_\_\_
- d) The storm lasted for about 8 days. \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Paul knew it was God's will for him to be brought before Caesar. \_\_\_\_\_

 /5

#### 3. Explain briefly how Paul demonstrated his faith in God during the journey to Rome.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

 /4

#### 4. Write a few sentences about how a Christian's faith in God can be a help when problems and difficulties arise in life.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

 /3

#### 5. "The native people showed us unusual kindness." (Acts 28: 2)

- a) Name the island where these people lived. \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Mention one specific act of kindness, which they performed. \_\_\_\_\_

 /2

#### 6. Answer the following:

- a) Relate briefly, in your own words, the incident about Paul and the snake. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What conclusion did the local people come to when they saw that Paul was unharmed? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- c) How do you think Paul would explain the fact that he had not been harmed? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

 /3

#### 7. Write short answers to these:

- a) Who was Publius? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) How did he treat Paul and his friends? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) What was the matter with his father? \_\_\_\_\_
- d) In what way was Paul able to help him? \_\_\_\_\_
- e) What effect did this have on the rest of the community? \_\_\_\_\_

 /5

**THINK:** Do I have the courage to speak up for God at difficult times in my life?

TOTAL =  /25

# Answer Sheet

## C3 - The Life & Work of Paul

### Study 4 - The Closing Scenes

#### 1. Paul held a day-long meeting with the leading Jews. (Acts 28: 23-29)

- a) What was Paul attempting to do? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) In what way did the Jews respond to what Paul said? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) At the very last, from which Old Testament prophet did Paul quote? \_\_\_\_\_

/4

#### 2. From the letters which Paul wrote, we can learn the names of some of his visitors. Use these references to write a list of six of his visitors:

**Ephesians 6: 21, 22; Philipians 4: 18; Colossians 4: 7-12**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

/6

#### 3. 'Waiting time' does not need to be 'wasted time'.

- a) How long had Paul to wait at Rome for his case to be called? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) At what other place had he been held for a similar period? (forgotten? See **Acts 24!**) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) In what ways does Paul's story illustrate the truth of the above statement? \_\_\_\_\_

/4

#### 4. Read 2 Timothy 4: 16-17.

- a) Suggest some reasons why no one "**stood**" with Paul, but "**deserted**" him, at the first stage of his trial.

\_\_\_\_\_

- b) In what way was he compensated for the lack of human supporters? \_\_\_\_\_

- c) Write out the Lord's promise to us, from **Hebrews 13: 5**. \_\_\_\_\_

/6

#### 5. In his years of 'missionary work' Paul suffered a lot for the sake of Christ and his gospel. Read 2 Corinthians 11: 22-33, then answer briefly:

- a) How many lashes, in total, did he get from the Jews? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) How often was he beaten with rods? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) According to this chapter, how often was he shipwrecked? \_\_\_\_\_
- d) What pressure was he under "**daily**"? \_\_\_\_\_
- e) From what city did he escape in a basket? \_\_\_\_\_

/5

**THINK:** As you complete this series of Studies on Paul, what challenges in his life are applicable for you today?



## C3 - The Life & Work of Paul

### Study 3 - The Journey to Rome

#### BIBLE READING:

**Acts 27: 1-44; Acts 28: 1-16**

#### KEY VERSE:

**“So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.”**

Acts 27: 25

Eventually Paul started his long journey to Rome, to be tried by Caesar. As a prisoner, he was under the constant eye of a Roman centurion. On the ship, there were also other prisoners. Thankfully, Paul had the company of a few Christian friends, among whom were Luke and Aristarchus.

In spite of difficult sailing conditions, the first stage of the voyage was completed safely. At Myra they had to transfer to another ship, and they set sail again. Progress was very slow, due to adverse winds. With much difficulty, they reached the harbour of Fair Havens, on the island of Crete. **(verse 8)**

Normally, in those days, sailing would be suspended in winter. On this occasion, the season was already far advanced, and Paul warned of the dangers of setting out again. However, the majority were in favour of proceeding along the coast to Phoenix. When a suitable wind began to blow, they decided to chance it! But before they had gone far, a fierce storm arose! They were blown completely off course and failed to reach Phoenix.

Now they were in real trouble! For days on end, the storm raged. There was no sun to be seen by day, and no stars by night. Without these navigational aids, they had no idea where they were. Just when things were at their worst, Paul spoke to the captain and crew. He assured them that all would be well, even though the ship would be lost. He spoke unashamedly about the fact that an angel of God had revealed this to him, and he believed, without question, that everything would work out **“exactly as I have been told”**. (Key Verse)

What an amazing man! How strong was his faith in God and in His word! When it came to the point where the ship was about to run aground, Paul was virtually taking command of the whole situation. He ensured that the panicking sailors did not abandon ship, just when they were most needed. **(verses 30-32)**

The final minutes on board the doomed ship were very dramatic! With its bow firmly stuck, the stern began to break up. The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to stop

them from escaping, but the centurion managed to stop this and all 276 of them, either by swimming or by clinging to pieces of wreckage, reached land safely! It was all just as God had made known to Paul in the night-time visit by His angel. **(verses 23-26)**

Paul and the other survivors soon discovered that they were on the island of Malta. There is no evidence that the inhabitants of Malta had had any previous contact with Christians, or the Gospel. Most probably, they were people who believed in many Greek and Roman gods, and whose lives were dominated by ancient superstitions. In spite of their spiritual darkness, they were kind and generous towards the survivors.

As Paul was gathering sticks to put them on a fire, a poisonous snake glided out of them and fastened itself on his hand! The local people looked on aghast. **“No doubt this man is a murderer...,”** they said. **“though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live”**. Paul, however, just calmly shook the viper off - and suffered no harm! The people watched for signs of his hand swelling, or even to see him drop down dead! When neither of these things happened, they changed their minds, and said he must be a god!

It was three months before the centurion was able to arrange onward transport to Rome, for Paul and his companions. When the time came to leave the islanders generously provided things which were needed for the journey. The voyage to Puteoli was uneventful. From there, after a week's stay, the journey was completed on foot. Some of the Christians in Rome, on learning that Paul was on his way, travelled out to meet him. At last, he entered the great city and was placed under house-arrest.

The journey to Rome was an unforgettable experience for all, and not least for Paul! Once again, he had proved, in the most extreme circumstances, the faithfulness of God, and the value of trusting Him, even when everything seemed hopeless.



St Paul's Bay, Malta

## C3 - The Life & Work of Paul

### Study 4 - The Closing Scenes

#### BIBLE READING:

**Acts 28: 16-31; 2 Timothy 4: 6-8**

#### KEY VERSE:

**“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”**

2 Timothy 4: 7

Paul’s imprisonment in Rome was not as harsh as it might have been! **Verses 16, 23 and 30** point to what we might term ‘house-arrest’. It is clear that he was granted private accommodation and was allowed to have many visitors with whom he had in-depth discussions on the thing, which mattered most to him – such as **“the kingdom of God”**. (**verse 23**)

Paul was a Roman citizen, and, as such, had privileges, which were denied to other prisoners. (**Acts 22: 22-29**)

While waiting for his case to be called, he had considerable liberties. It proved to be a long wait, and Paul used his time in various ways:

- Shortly after his arrival, he met with the leading Jews of Rome and set out the facts of his case. (**verses 17-19**) In replying to him, they said that they had not received any reports, either good or bad, about him, but they did know that **“this sect”** (i.e. the Christians) is spoken against everywhere. (**verse 22**) They wanted to hear more from Paul and on the agreed day many Jews came to Paul’s lodging. All day the discussions went on. Paul’s great contention was that the Old Testament promises of a Saviour had all come true in Jesus - His life, death, resurrection and ascension. These events had proved that He is truly the Christ, and therefore, the Jews should accept Him as the fulfilment of their hopes. At the end of lengthy discussions, the Jews were divided in their attitudes. (**verse 24**). Sensing their unbelief, Paul’s last word to them was that God’s offer of salvation is not limited to Jews only. It is intended for Gentiles also, and they will listen. (**verse 29**)
- Over the two-year period, Paul frequently had visitors. (**verses 30, 31**) Although he was confined to his lodgings, shackled to one of the soldiers who guarded him in four-hour shifts, he was free to speak about the Gospel to all who came. So his preaching and teaching continued **“with all boldness and without hindrance”**. (**verse 31**)
- Paul also used his time to write to friends and churches,

in other parts of the Empire. Probably four of the New Testament letters were written at this time - Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. These letters, inspired by God, the Holy Spirit, contain teachings about Christ, His Church, God’s ultimate purposes, etc.

- The best known of Paul’s ‘final words’ are found in **1 Timothy 4: 6-8**. As he writes, he uses various word-pictures to express his thoughts about what lies ahead. Note FIVE ‘pictures’:
- He sees his life as a holy offering to God, in the very act of being **“poured out”**. (**verse 6**)
- He is like a ship casting off from harbour and sailing to another shore. He knows, **“the time of my departure has come”**. (**verse 6**)
- As a **“good soldier of Christ Jesus”**, he rests content in the knowledge that he has **“fought the good fight”**. (**verse 7**)
- He thinks about the very popular athletic games which were such a feature of those days and sees himself as a competitor who has been ‘running the Christian race’ for many years. He realises his race is now finished! (**verse 7**)
- Just like someone who has been entrusted with the safe keeping of precious treasure, he is happy that he has **“kept the faith”**. He means that he has preserved intact all the great truths that God had revealed to him.

What lies ahead? When the executioner’s sword falls, and his natural life ends, what then? Paul is confident that beyond this present life is something infinitely better! There awaits him **“the crown of righteousness”** which **“the righteous Judge will award to me on that Day”**. (**verse 8**)

Paul’s unswerving loyalty to his Lord, his untiring efforts to spread ‘the good news’, and his genuine concern for others provide us with a wonderful example. Let us try, with the Lord’s help, to be ‘imitators’ of him, just as he also imitated Christ. (**1 Corinthians 11: 1**)



The Roman Forum, the political, economic, cultural, and religious center of the city at the time of Paul. (Source: Wikipedia)

This is the third of three units on **The Life & Work of Paul**.