

ACTS CHAPTERS 22:30-23:35

God's Sovereign Care for Paul



20

July 24, 2005
2.ACT20

Lesson Goal

Students will trust in God's sovereign control over their lives.

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain why Paul was brought to the Jewish Council.
- Explain what happened at the Council hearing.
- Explain how we see God's sovereignty in this story.
- Explain how you see God's sovereignty in your life.

Memory Verse

Acts 23:11 ~ "Take courage! As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

Application

- God will guide and guard our daily path.
- God works all things for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.
- God's Word is our source for comfort and encouragement.

TEACHER PLANNING SHEET

Prepare Your Heart

- Read and study through the passage meditatively.
- Prayerfully seek how God would have you personally apply this passage to your own life. Write these down.

Prepare the Lesson

- Choose from the various ideas in the lesson plan.
- Write down an approximate time frame for each.
- List the materials needed.

HOOK

Time

BOOK

Time

LOOK

Time

TOOK

Time

Materials
Needed:

ACTS CHAPTERS 22:30-23:35

God's Sovereign Care for Paul



20

1st–3rd Grade
July 24, 2005
2.ACT20EL

MEMORY
VERSE
✪

“Take courage!
As you have
testified about
Me in
Jerusalem, so
you must also
testify in
Rome.”
Acts 23:11

✪

HOOK

Tug of War (Game/Discussion). If weather permits, form teams to play Tug of War outside. Explain that today the students will hear how violent an argument became between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Their tug of war nearly tore Paul to pieces. Find out how God intervened.

Vows (Discussion). Ask the students the following questions:
What is a vow? *A vow is a solemn promise or pledge to an act, service, or way of life.* Have you ever made a vow? Sometimes we make promises we can't keep. How serious are we when we make a vow, only to break it? Tell the students that today you learn of some Jews that were so angry with Paul that they made a serious vow not to eat or drink until something happened. Have them listen to today's Adventure to hear what it was they wanted to see accomplished. Do you suppose they kept their vow?

Say "Uncle" (Discussion). Ask the students if their moms and dads have brothers. What do they call these men? Who has the most uncles? Are there any students who have no uncles? Who has the youngest uncle? Do any students have a special man they call "uncle" even though he is not their father's or mother's brother? Share a few special "uncle" stories. Tell them that in today's Bible adventure they will see how a young man had great courage and told the Roman commander that there was a plot against his uncle. Who do you think his uncle was? Tell them to listen to the adventure and find out.

Fishing (Game/Discussion). Set up a "fishing" booth like you would find at any carnival. Have each student cast a fishing line into the booth where an unseen teacher ties a small prize to the end. *(Prizes can be supplied by the teacher or taken from the teacher resource room. Make prizes different so they can be chosen individually for each student. For example, boys and girls would generally receive different prizes.)* **Debrief:** How did the prizes appear on the fishing line? Did the students have anything to do with the prize they received? Did they receive their particular prize by random chance? Reveal the teacher inside the booth. This teacher gave each student the item he/she thought the student would like. Do you think that your teacher knows you pretty well and that they want what is best for you? Well, try to imagine this: God controls the smallest details of His children's lives, and He promises He will give us what is best for those that are His children. Don't you think that God knows you and what is best for you better than your teacher does? In today's Bible adventure we will see how God's sovereignty or control over the details in Paul's life started him on his journey to Rome from Jerusalem.

Presentation Ideas

God Speaks to Paul (*Illustration/Coloring Page*). Acts 23:11, **2.ACT20EL.GF1**.

Paul Taken to Governor Felix (*Illustration/Coloring Page*). Acts 23:23, 24, **2.ACT20EL.GF2**.

Bible Adventure for 1st- 3^d grades

Have any of you ever heard someone say, “This world is totally out of control!”? Sometimes it seems that way, doesn’t it? However, we get a different view if we spend any amount of time reading and studying God’s Word. From creation on through God’s care for Israel, from the sending of Jesus Christ to this earth to the setting up and maintaining of the Church, God’s hand can be seen in thousands of different ways. We see His involvement in the lives of His people and in the affairs of this world. It’s not out of control—it’s in His control! God moves in even the small details of this world. He has not left us to fend for ourselves. Quite the opposite, He exercises divine care and guidance over all things. We call this “sovereignty.”

As we read through the book of Acts, it is obvious that the sovereignty of God is very much at work in the life of the Apostle Paul. Paul journeyed to Jerusalem, was arrested in the temple and accused falsely of bringing Gentiles into the temple and defiling it. As he made his defense before the Roman commander, Lysias, it became known that Paul was a Roman citizen. Lysias was frightened to learn this, but still held Paul in jail overnight.

The next morning, because he could not just release Paul without finding out his guilt or innocence, he took the Apostle’s bonds off and commanded the Sanhedrin to assemble, so that Paul could appear before them. Paul began to speak to them, but the high priest, Ananias, ordered some men who stood near Paul to punch him in the mouth. This was not only cruel, it was also illegal, and made Paul angry. He spoke out against the priest and said that God would strike him for such a clear breaking of Jewish law. After the crowd quieted down, Paul realized that some of the men there were Pharisees, and some were Sadducees. Do you remember the main difference between these two sects of Jews? The Pharisees believed in a resurrection of the human body—the Sadducees did not. Listen to what Paul said to the Sanhedrin. “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead.” Now, what Paul spoke was absolute truth. His hope in the resurrection was solidly built on Jesus rising from the dead. But his words were like an explosion in the middle of the Sanhedrin. There was an immediate split between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who had been feuding about the issue of resurrection for years upon years. In the uproar some of the Pharisees stood and shouted that they could find no evil in Paul. Isn’t that something? Their feud was so bitter that they even forgot that Paul was one of those hated Christians. Lysias feared that Paul might be injured in the midst of the fighting, so he commanded his soldiers to bring Paul to the Roman barracks.

The next night the Lord appeared to Paul and encouraged him. He told Paul that he would be a witness for him in Rome. This made Paul glad, for it was

something he had wanted to do. The next day, at least forty Jews in Jerusalem gathered and took an oath together. They would eat or drink nothing until they had killed Paul. They wanted the Jewish leaders to ask Lysias to bring Paul back before the council, and then they would kill him before he even got there. Little did these men know they were going to be hungry and thirsty for a long time!

Paul's nephew somehow learned of the evil plot against his uncle. He went to the barracks, told Paul, then Commander Lysias about it. Commander Lysias ordered two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to take Paul to Caesarea by night, and to deliver him safely to Felix, the governor there. Commander Lysias sent a letter telling Governor Felix about Paul and that since Paul was a Roman citizen, Lysias was sending him to Felix to hear his case. Felix ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace until his accusers arrived. Can you see the hand of God at work here? As governor, Felix would have been the one person with enough authority to send Paul on to Rome.

Let's go back to that word "sovereignty," God's care and guardianship of us. If we look at Paul's life as a Christian so far, we can see God's sovereignty at work in his life. In Corinth, Jesus reassured Paul and told him not to fear because his work was not yet done. The Holy Spirit told Paul that he would reach Jerusalem, even though suffering waited for him there. At the same time those Jewish men were plotting to kill Paul, Jesus was telling Paul that he would go on to be a witness for Him in Rome. All Paul had was the promise of Jesus' words. He wasn't given a road map or told exactly what lay ahead for him. God didn't eliminate all his enemies. Yet God was unmistakably guiding his steps and reminding him of His presence. It was this reassurance that helped Paul to keep going in hard circumstances. That same reassurance can be found in God's Word to us today. We have the assurance that God will guide and guard our daily path. Listen to these verses:

- "...being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6 NIV
- "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28 NIV
- "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." Matthew 10:29-31 NIV

Can you think of other verses that tell of God's sovereignty in our lives? There are many, and we can use each one to build on our confidence that God is in control of all things, including the course of our lives. That's great to know!!

Aim Questions:

- 1. Why was Paul brought before the Jewish Council? What happened there?** *Because the Roman commander wanted to know exactly what the accusations against Paul were. The Pharisees and Sadducees got angry, and Paul was almost torn apart.*
 - 2. What news did Paul's nephew bring to him? What did Commander Lysias do when he heard the boy's news? What did Commander Lysias do when he heard the boy's news?** *That 40 zealous Jews taken an oath and were planning an ambush to and kill Paul. He moved Paul, under Roman guard, to Caesarea.*
 - 3. Through all of this, what did Jesus say to Paul? What did that mean would happen to him?** *Take courage you will be my witness in Rome. It meant that nothing would happen to Paul to keep him from Rome.*
-

4. In this passage we see God's sovereignty. What does the word "sovereignty" mean? *In complete control with complete understanding of all that has, is, and will happen on earth and in the heavens.*
5. Give examples that you know of from the Bible where God's sovereignty was shown. Give examples from people you know or have heard of where God's sovereignty has been shown.



How Many What??? *(Story)*. Using the word pictures, have the students find out "how many what" it took to get Paul safely to Caesarea, **2.ACT20EL.GF3**.

Memory Verse Triangle *(Craft)*. Each student will need **2.ACT20EL.GF4 Pg. 1 & 2**, scissors, coloring crayons and glue or tape. Have students color and cut out the pictures on **2.ACT20EL.GF4 Pg. 1 & 2** as instructed on the gf to review the memory verse.

Escape to Trial *(Worksheet)*. Answer the questions to complete the puzzle, **2.ACT20EL.GF5**.

A.C.T.S. 22:30 – 23:35 *(Worksheet)*. To whom did the Lord stand near and say, "Take courage! As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome"? *Paul* To what city did the commander tell two of his centurions to get a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to escort Paul? *Caesarea* What was the oath that the Jews formed? *Not to eat until they killed Paul*. After Paul had been placed in the barracks, the Lord appeared to him. What did the Lord say to Paul? See memory verse Acts 23:11. **2.ACT20EL.GF6**

God's Sovereignty *(Worksheet/Discussion)*. Discuss what the word "sovereignty" means *(God exercising divine care and guidance over all things)*. Have the students color the picture and answer the questions at the bottom of the page, **2.ACT20EL.GF7**. As the plot to kill Paul was unfolding, who stood near Paul? What did He say to Paul? What did this mean?

Aim Questions *(Worksheet)*. Have the students answer the Aim Questions about today's Bible Adventure, **2.ACT20EL.GF8**.



Paul's Encourager *(Craft/Discussion)*. Have the students cut out the picture and the mixed-up verse, **2.ACT20EL.GF9**. Glue the verse in the correct order and the picture on a piece of colored construction paper. Have the students color the page. As the students are working on this, discuss the following: When the Lord spoke to Paul, what did it mean? What does "sovereignty" mean? Is there a time in your life where God's sovereignty was shown?

Where's Paul? (Worksheet). Claudius Lysias ordered 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen and 200 spearmen to take Paul to Caesarea. Paul is in the midst of the cavalry. Have the students find Paul as he is shown on the right, **2.ACT20EL.GF10**.

Acts Review Relay (Relay Game). Divide the class into teams. Make as many copies of **2.ACT20EL.GF11** as there are teams. Cut cards apart, and stack face down on a table for each team. Each relay line will need a teacher or helper to check correctness. At the signal, students are to pick up the first card on the stack and make up a sentence using the person, place or action listed first. The sentence must be true based on our study of Acts. If they cannot accomplish this, they must go to the next word. Play continues until they are successful. The card is set aside as completed when the student successfully uses one of the words in a sentence, and the student returns to the end of the line. If he cannot form a sentence from any of the words on his card, the card is placed on the bottom of the stack, and the student returns to the end of the line. The first team to use all their cards wins.

God Cares (Worksheet). Sovereignty is defined as the divine care and guardianship of God. We have learned how God has taken care of the Apostles all the way through Acts. Even when death was what some faced, God gave them the courage to face what was ahead. How does God care for you? On **2.ACT20EL.GF12**, using the word "CARE", make an acrostic, listing the ways He provides or cares for you. It may be a friend or family member.

Suggestions:

C - continuously, Christ arose, courage, compassion, caring family and friends, church

A - always, abilities

R - regularly, righteousness, rewards in heaven

E - every day, elders

Uncle Paul and Me (Story/Discussion). Read this first-person story as a class, and have each student illustrate his/her copy, **2.ACT20EL.GF13 Pgs. 1-6**. After reading each page, discuss illustration ideas, and allow students to begin a drawing as the reading continues. This will reinforce the details of the lesson. Note: the last paragraph contains thoughts that can be used to begin a discussion of God's providence in Paul's life. (This story could also be presented as a one-man play by a puppet or an older student dressed in costume),

This workbook is not available at this time.

A.C.T.S. Action Cards (Workbook). Encourage students to continue using the Apostle action cards to memorize the significant statistics throughout the book of Acts. The main events of Acts 22:30-23:35 are:

A. Paul

C. From Jerusalem to Caesarea.

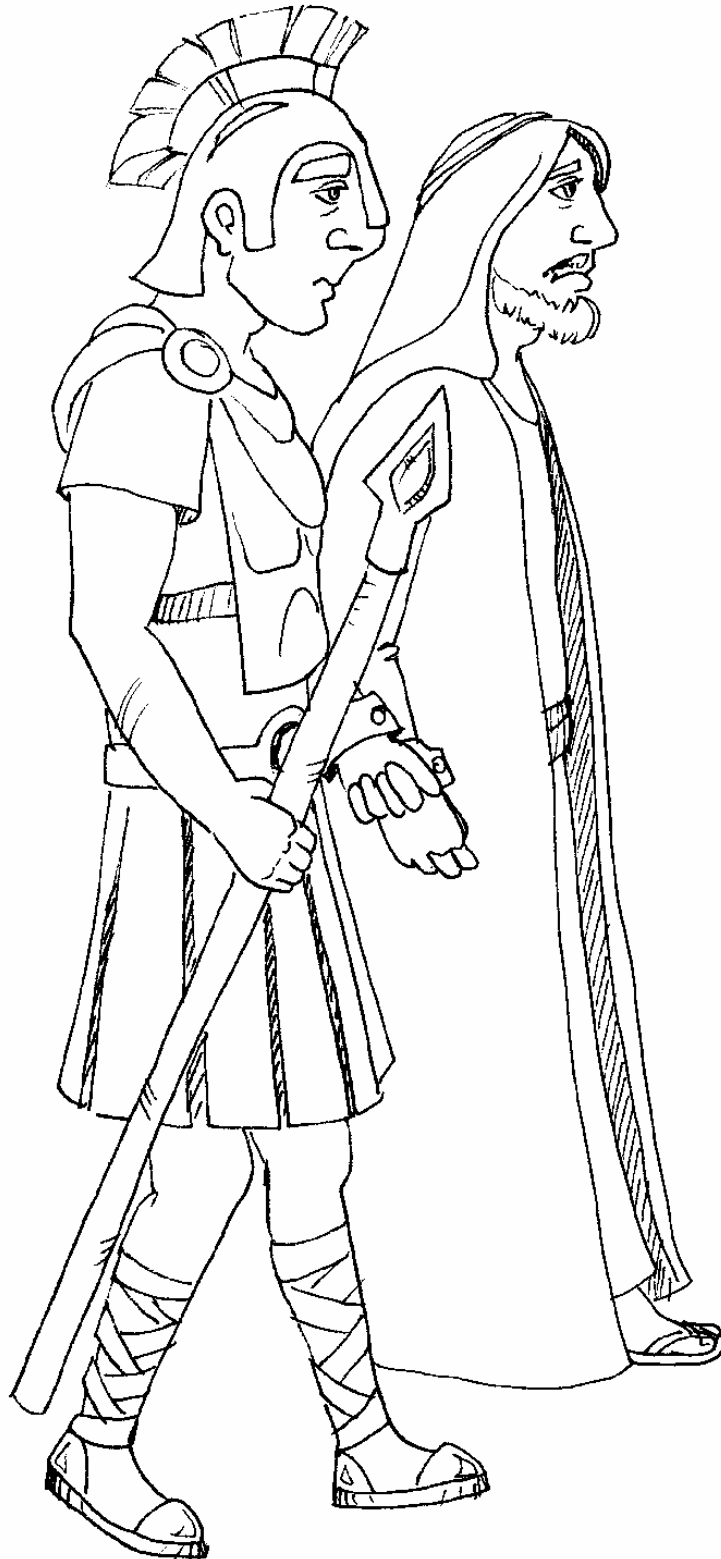
T. Plot to kill Paul.

S. The Lord said, "You will witness in Rome."

God Speaks to Paul



Paul Taken to Governor Felix



How Many What???



+ y men were waiting to ambush



but the commander ordered



hund



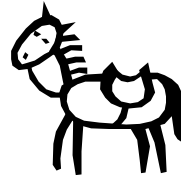
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safely away to Caesarea.

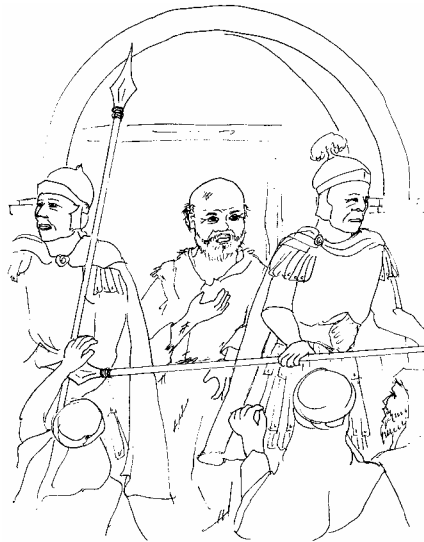
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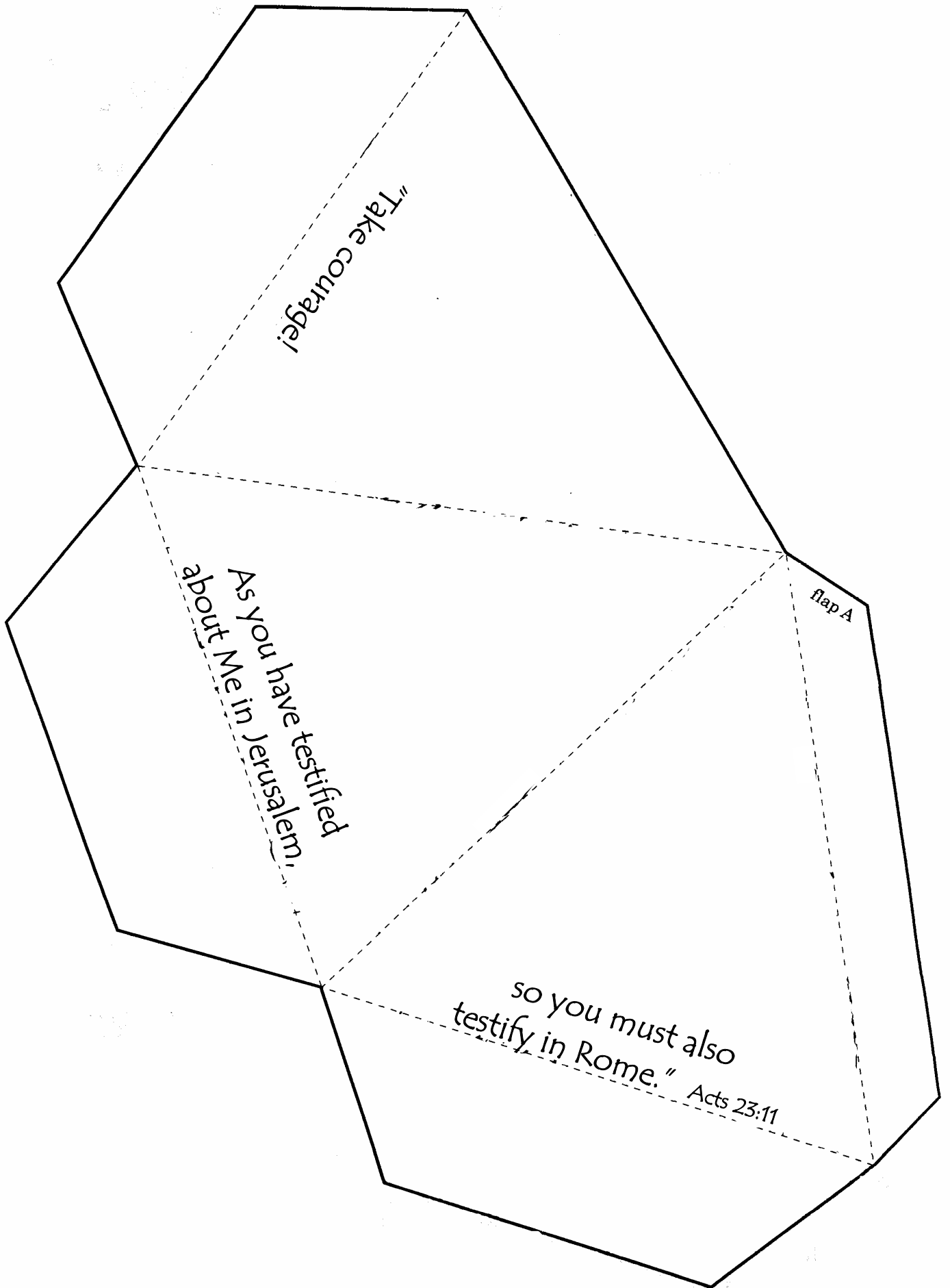


to Caesarea to see Governor Felix.

Memory Verse Triangle

Color and cut out the pictures below. Cut out the figure on **2.ACT20EL.GF4 Pg. 2** on the solid outer lines. Glue the picture of Jesus speaking to Paul on “Take courage!” section of the figure. Glue the picture of Paul preaching after being beaten in Jerusalem on the next triangle. Finally, glue the picture of Paul being taken to the Rome on the last triangle. Fold back along the dotted lines between the pictures. Fold each flap back also. Glue or tape the back of the take courage panel to flap A. Tape the other flaps to the bottom so that the triangle will stand upright.





"Take courage!"

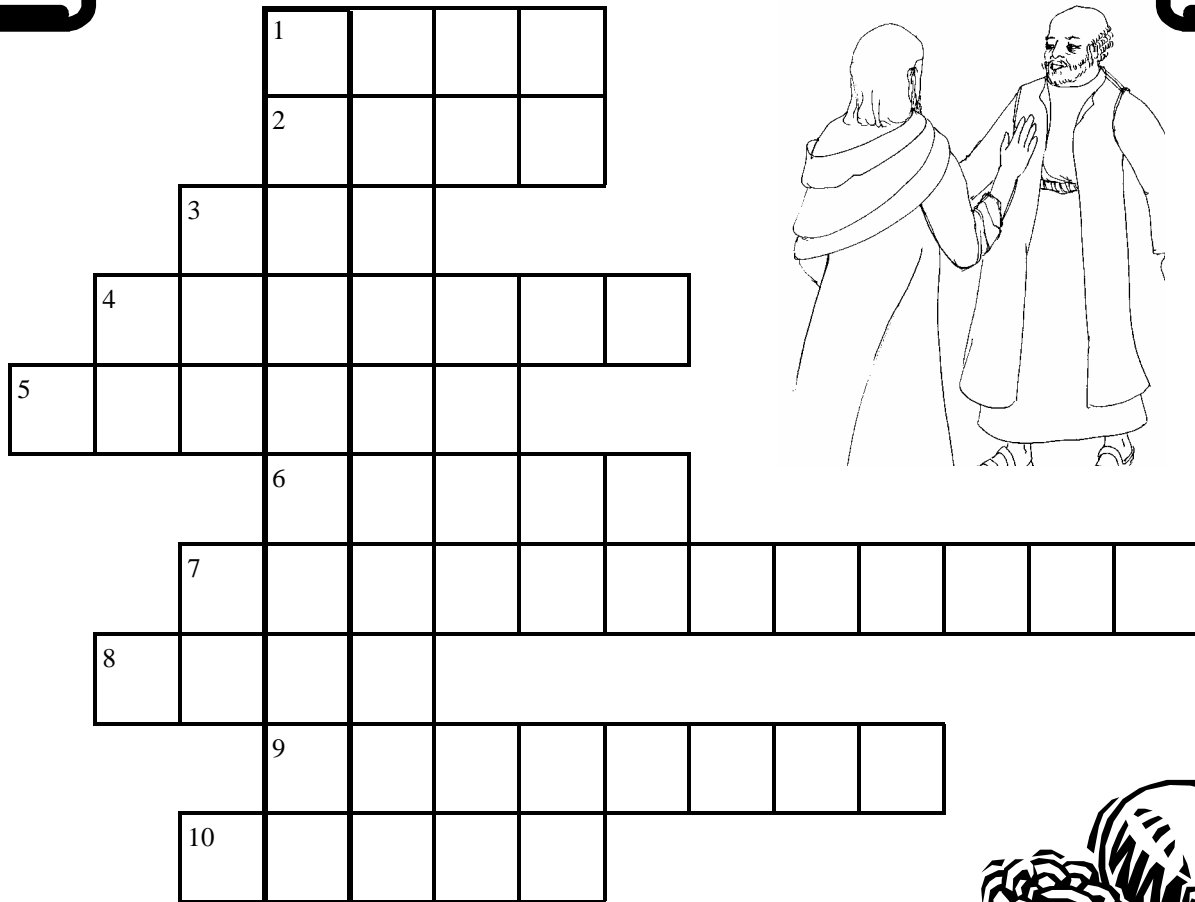
As you have testified
about Me in Jerusalem,

so you must also
testify in Rome." Acts 23:11

flap A



ESCAPE TO TRIAL



Answer the questions to complete the puzzle.

Down

1. God's faithful and effective care and guidance of everything.

Across

1. Who was accused of insulting God's high priest? Acts 23:4
2. Where did the Lord tell Paul he must testify? Acts 23:11
3. Paul told the Sanhedrin that he had fulfilled his duty to _____. Acts 23:1
4. How many horsemen were ordered to escort Paul? Acts 23:24
5. What was the last name of the commander who had Paul transferred?
Acts 23:26
6. The charges against Paul did not deserve this. Acts 23:29
7. The Sadducees said there was no _____. Acts 23:8
8. At what hour of the night was the cavalry to leave to take Paul to the
Governor? Acts 23:23
9. To what city was Paul escorted by the cavalry? Acts 23:33
10. To what Governor was Paul being safely taken? Acts 23:24

A.C.T.S.

22:30 - 23:35

Apostle – To whom did the Lord stand near and say, “Take courage! As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”?

City – The commander told two of his centurions to get a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to escort Paul to what city?

Trials/troubles – What was the oath that the Jews formed?

Spirit – After Paul had been placed in the barracks, the Lord appeared to him. What did the Lord say to Paul?

“Take courage! As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem,
so you must also testify in Rome.”

Acts 23:11

God's Sovereignty



As the plot to kill Paul was unfolding, who stood near Paul?

What did He say to Paul?

What did this mean?

Aim Questions

Answer the following questions about today's Bible Adventure.

1. Why was Paul brought before the Jewish Council? What happened there?
2. What news did Paul's nephew bring to him? What did Commander Lysias do when he heard the boy's news?
3. Through all of this, what did Jesus say to Paul? What did that mean would happen to him?
4. In this passage we see God's sovereignty. What does the word "sovereignty" mean?
5. Give examples that you know of from the Bible where God's sovereignty was shown. Give examples from people you know or have heard of, where God's sovereignty has been shown.

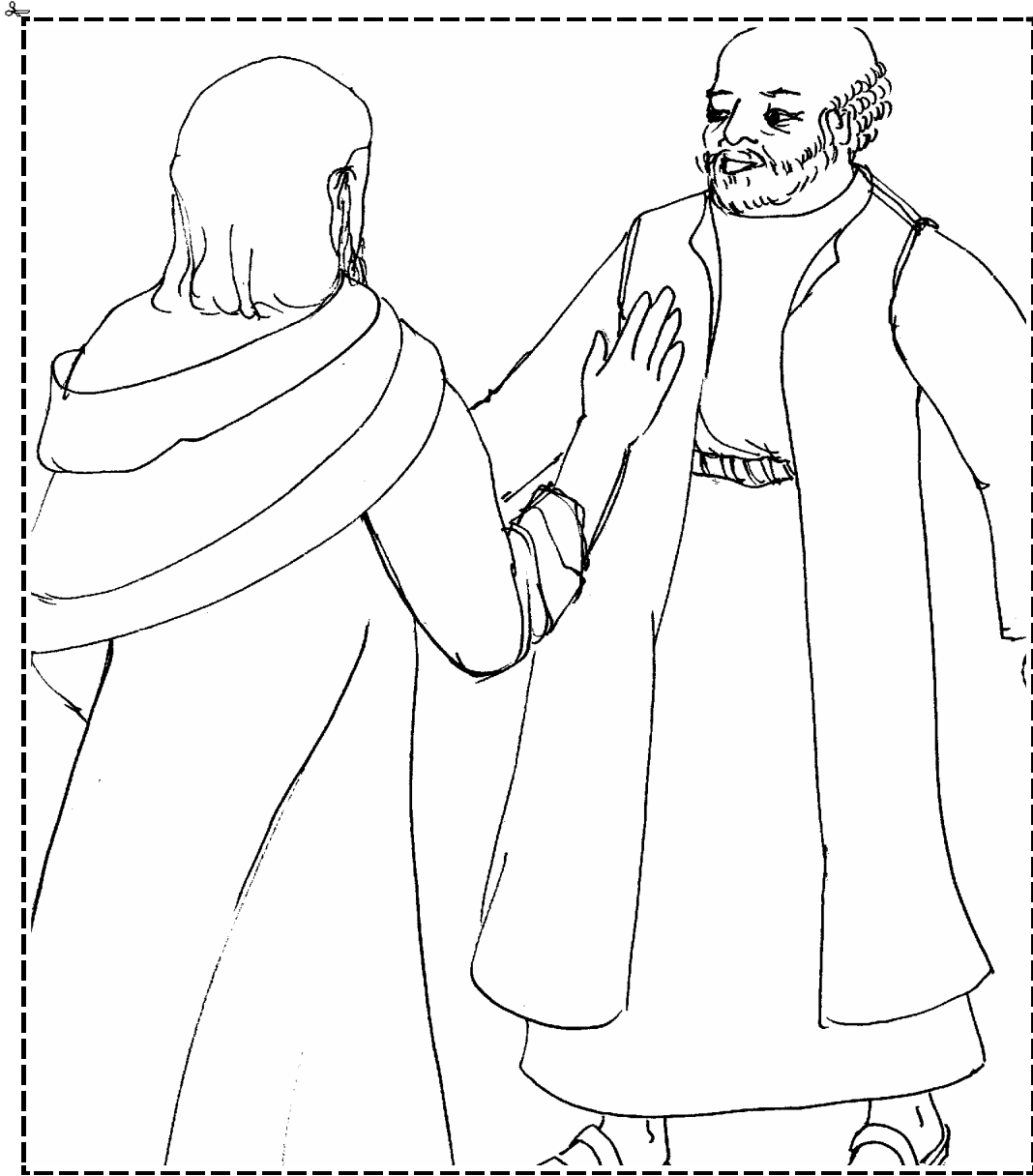
*Know that God's sovereign plan for your life
will not be thwarted by the schemes of man.*

Acts
Chapters
22:30-23:35

*"Take courage! As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem,
so you must also testify in Rome."
Acts 23:11*

Paul's Encourager

Cut out the picture and the mixed-up verse. Glue the verse in the correct order and the picture on a piece of colored construction paper. Color the page.



so you must

also testify

As you have

in Rome.”

testified about Me

Acts 23:11

“Take Courage!

in Jerusalem,

WHERE'S PAUL?

Claudius Lysias ordered 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen and 200 spearmen to take Paul to Caesarea. Paul is in the midst of this cavalry. Can you find Paul as he is on the right?



⇒ Athens
⇒ Ananias
⇒ Aquila
⇒ Apostles
⇒ arrested

⇒ basket
⇒ barracks
⇒ believers
⇒ blinded
⇒ Barnabas

⇒ courage
⇒ Cornelius
⇒ centurion
⇒ Caesarea
⇒ confessed
their evil
deeds

⇒ Damascus
⇒ Demetrius
⇒ disciples
⇒ devoted
themselves

⇒ Eutychus
⇒ earthquake
⇒ elders
⇒ Elymas
⇒ Ephesus

⇒ faith
⇒ Felix
⇒ fasting
⇒ forgiveness
⇒ favoritism
⇒ field

⇒ gate
⇒ Gamaliel
⇒ Greece
⇒ Gospel
⇒ guard
⇒ Gentiles

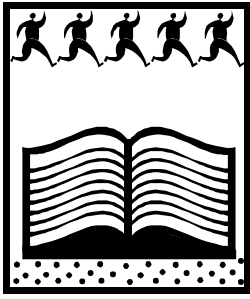
⇒ hands
⇒ healed
⇒ heaven
⇒ hardships
⇒ Holy Spirit

⇒ James
⇒ Jews
⇒ John
⇒ Jerusalem
⇒ Jesus

⇒ lame
⇒ Lystra
⇒ lie
⇒ laid hands
on

⇒ Philippi
⇒ Peter
⇒ praying
⇒ prison
⇒ Paul
⇒ Pharisees

⇒ Sapphira
⇒ Simon
⇒ Sanhedrin
⇒ Saul
⇒ Stephen



Sovereignty is defined as the divine care and guardianship of God. We have learned how God has taken care of the Apostles all the way through Acts.

Even when what some faced was death, God gave them the courage to face what was ahead. How does

God care for you? Using the word CARE, make an acrostic listing the ways or how He provides and cares for you. It may be through a friend or family member.

C

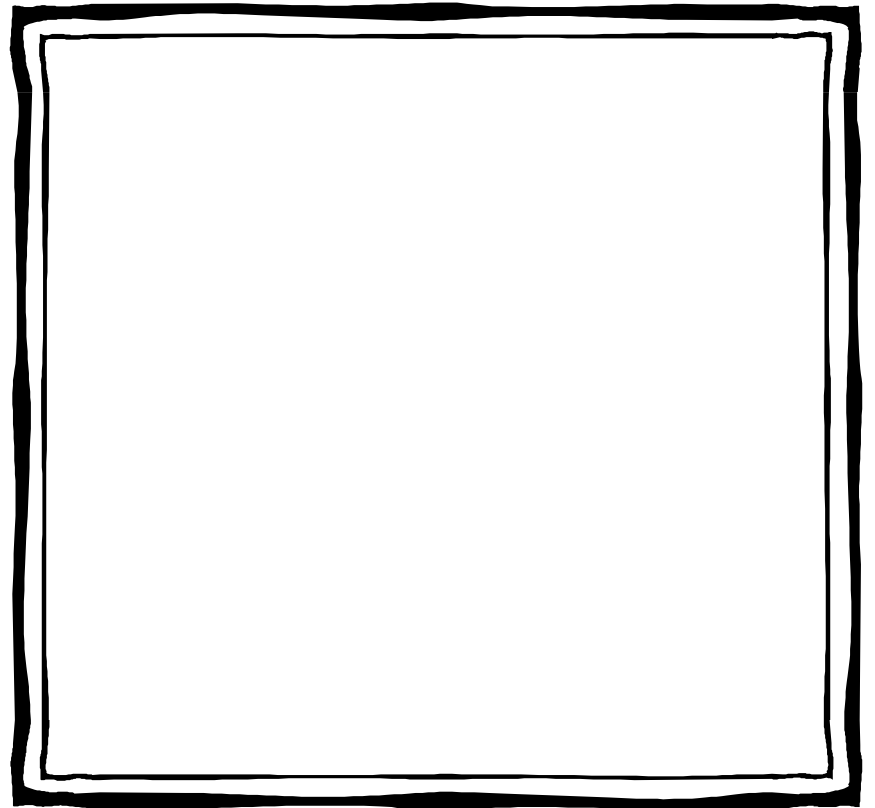
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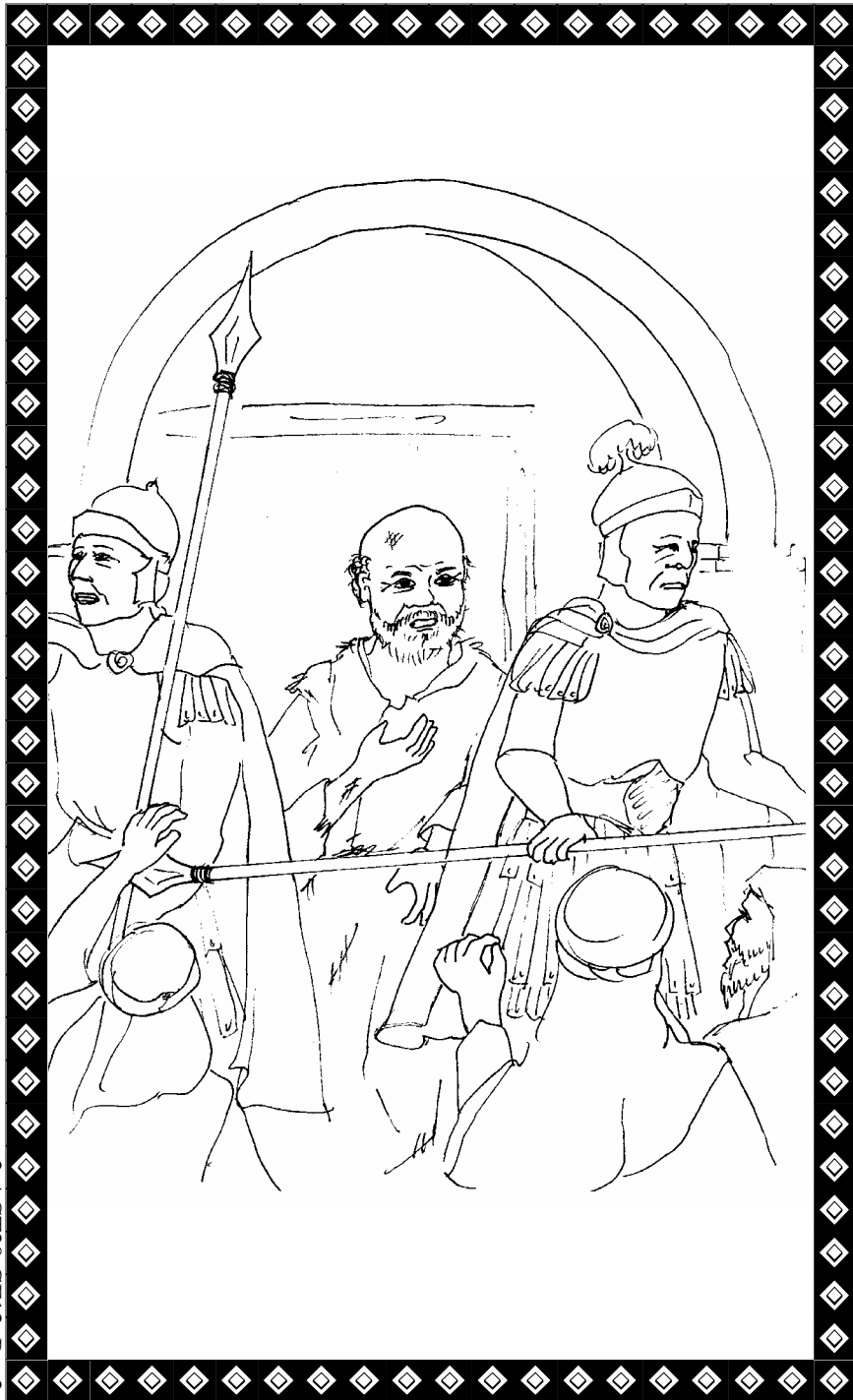
R

E

Uncle Paul and Me

Illustrated by:

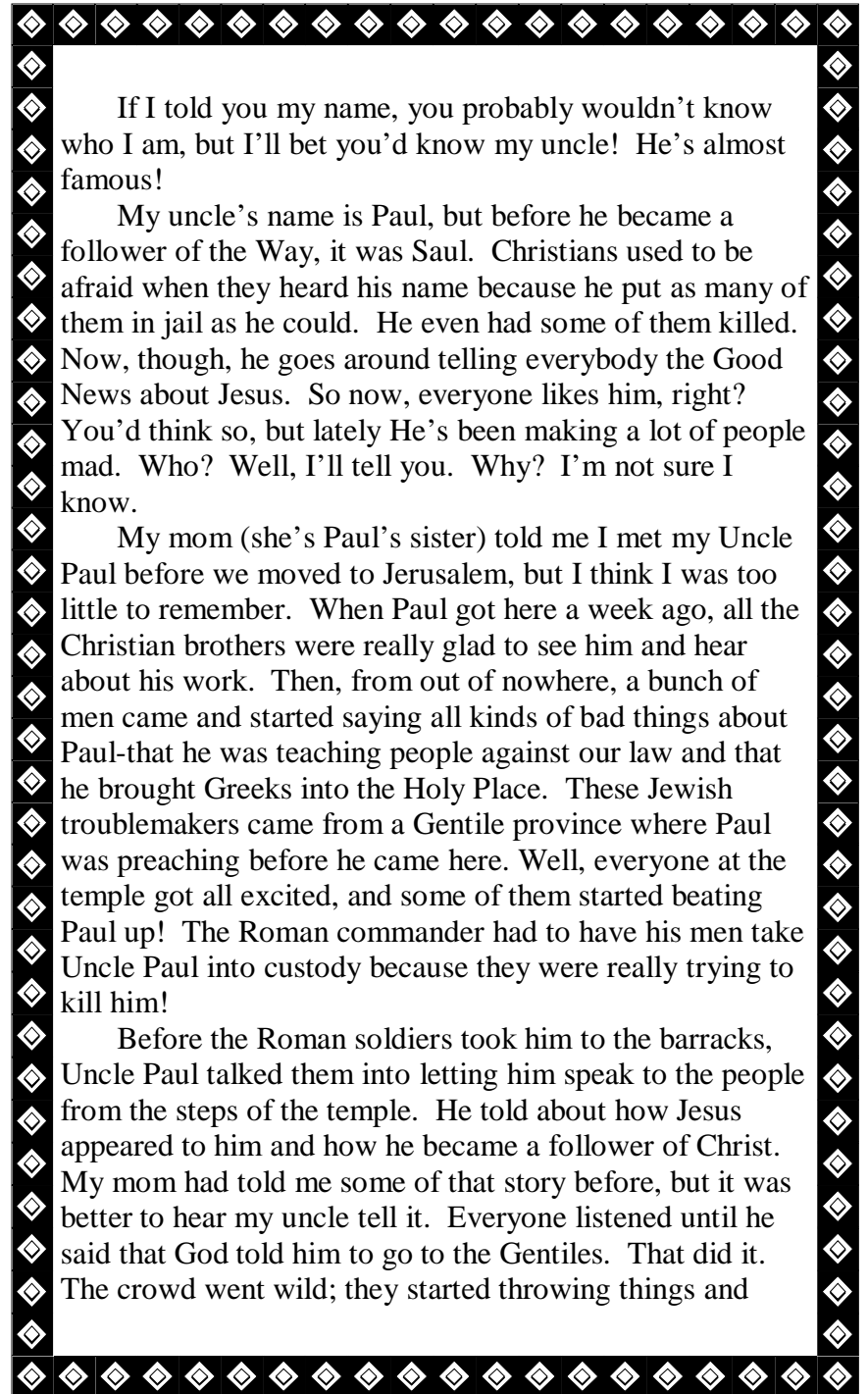
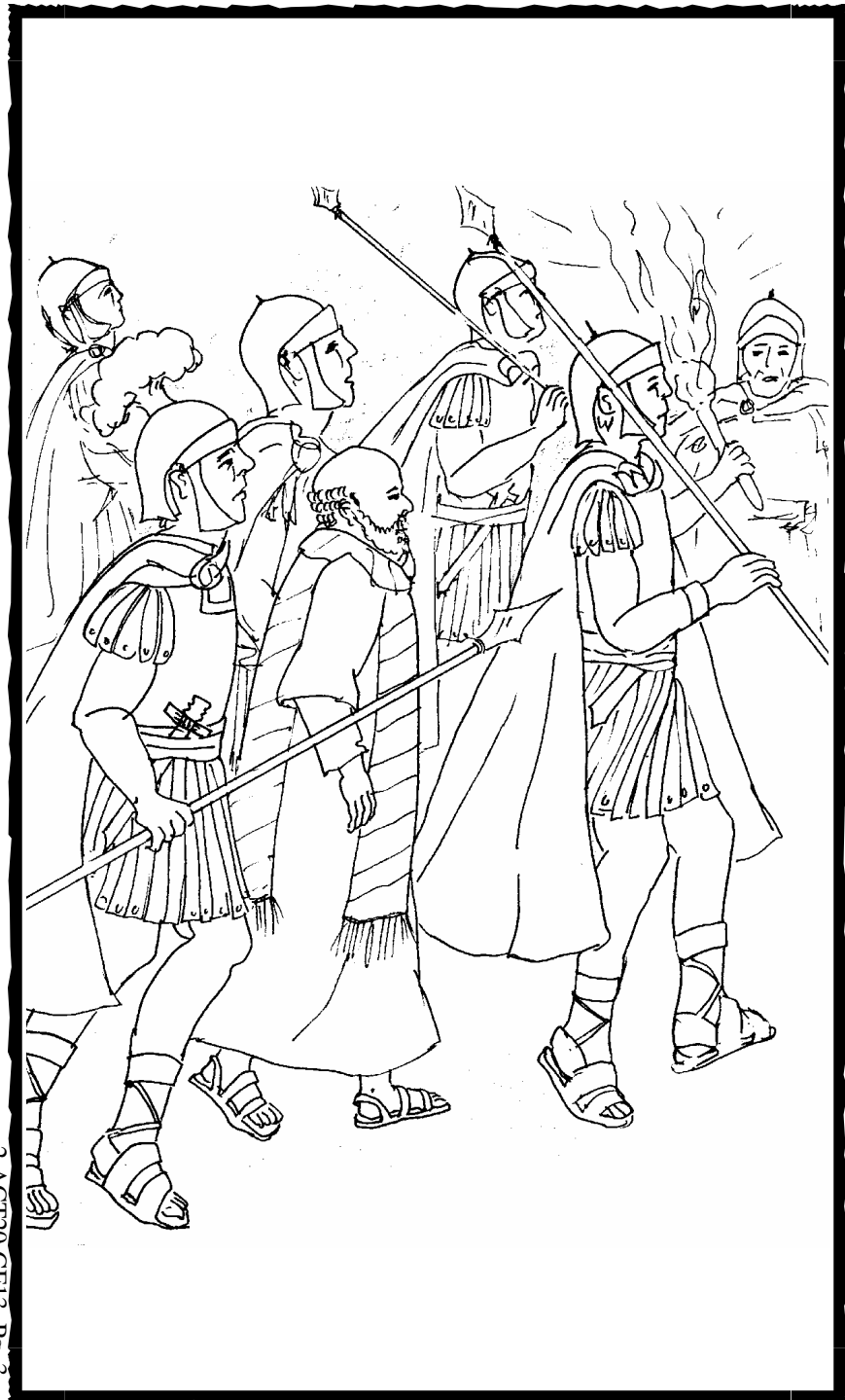




While I was talking, Commander Lysias didn't interrupt me once, and even after I finished, he just sat there thinking.

Finally he told me I could go and warned, "Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me." I began to wonder who I would tell, anyway, and the only person I could think of was my mom. But I didn't want to go home without knowing what happened to Paul, so I walked slowly back past the prison with my ears open. I heard officers giving orders to all kinds of soldiers - even horsemen and spearmen - to get themselves ready for a trip to Caesarea that night. I heard one centurion order his men to get horses for Paul to ride, so I knew they were going to take him.

I was beginning to realize that the Romans were planning a rescue for Paul and I started to feel proud that my warning had probably saved Uncle Paul's life. But as soon as I realized what I was thinking, I knew I was wrong. God had made sure I was in the right place at the right time to hear the plot. It was really God who saved my uncle's life, but He chose to use me, and I was glad for that. I wanted to run home and tell my Mom everything, but I had promised the commander I wouldn't tell anyone what I told him. Maybe it would be okay to tell her later, but today, I would make sure she came down for one last visit.



If I told you my name, you probably wouldn't know who I am, but I'll bet you'd know my uncle! He's almost famous!

My uncle's name is Paul, but before he became a follower of the Way, it was Saul. Christians used to be afraid when they heard his name because he put as many of them in jail as he could. He even had some of them killed. Now, though, he goes around telling everybody the Good News about Jesus. So now, everyone likes him, right? You'd think so, but lately He's been making a lot of people mad. Who? Well, I'll tell you. Why? I'm not sure I know.

My mom (she's Paul's sister) told me I met my Uncle Paul before we moved to Jerusalem, but I think I was too little to remember. When Paul got here a week ago, all the Christian brothers were really glad to see him and hear about his work. Then, from out of nowhere, a bunch of men came and started saying all kinds of bad things about Paul-that he was teaching people against our law and that he brought Greeks into the Holy Place. These Jewish troublemakers came from a Gentile province where Paul was preaching before he came here. Well, everyone at the temple got all excited, and some of them started beating Paul up! The Roman commander had to have his men take Uncle Paul into custody because they were really trying to kill him!

Before the Roman soldiers took him to the barracks, Uncle Paul talked them into letting him speak to the people from the steps of the temple. He told about how Jesus appeared to him and how he became a follower of Christ. My mom had told me some of that story before, but it was better to hear my uncle tell it. Everyone listened until he said that God told him to go to the Gentiles. That did it. The crowd went wild; they started throwing things and

Finally I could breathe again, and before you know It, I was running as fast as I could - straight for Paul. You don't know how glad I was to see my favorite guard. I tried real hard not to act anxious and scared, but he didn't pay much attention to me anyway. He just motioned me on in. I found Paul, and I talked so fast that in a minute he knew all about what I had heard. But he didn't get nearly as excited as I was. He just called for a centurion. A centurion is a Roman officer in charge of 100 men. I was a little surprised when the same guard who let me in, came to answer Paul's call. Uncle Paul told him to take me to the commander. "This young man has something to tell him." The centurion waited a moment, for Paul to say more, but when nothing came, he silently led me away.

When we got to the commander's quarters, the centurion waited with me for Commander Lysias to come out. I didn't know what I would say to him, but the centurion spoke first. "Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you."

The commander was interested - and surprisingly kind. He took me by the hand and led me to a more private area. Then he sat down and asked, "What is it you want to tell me?"

Trying to sound as grown up as I could, I said, "The Jews have agreed on a plan to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow. They'll pretend to want more accurate information about him, but please don't give in because more than forty of them are waiting to ambush him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed Paul. They are ready right now, waiting for you to agree to send Paul to them."

When my mom heard what happened at the temple, she was really worried, so the next day after I finished my chores, I went back up to the temple area to see if I could find out what was happening to my uncle. I'm a kid who knows how to stay out of everybody's way and keep my eyes and ears open. Usually people just ignore a kid like me, as long as I'm not bothering anybody. So I listened, and there was plenty to hear. Paul had already been back to defend himself before the Sanhedrin, and everybody was arguing about what he said. It was all about the resurrection. Sadducees don't believe in the resurrection, but Pharisees do. Was it wrong for Paul to say that Jesus was raised from the dead? The Sadducees wanted to tear him apart for saying so, but some of the Pharisees were standing up for him.

I found out that Paul was back at the barracks, so I went down to see if I could visit him. The Antonia Fortress was just outside the temple compound, so it only took me a minute to get there. I was worried that they might not let me in, so I looked for the right guard to ask. A kind face might be too much to hope for, but maybe I could find someone who was too concerned with other things to worry about me. One soldier seemed to have the face I was looking for, so I asked him if I could see my Uncle Paul. Sure enough, the guard let me pass. Paul told me not to worry, but to pray. He had known something like this might happen, and he was ready for anything. After that I hurried home, but before I left, I promised to come back and see my uncle the next day.

I woke up before it was light the next morning, so I decided to go see Uncle Paul first thing. I thought about waking Mom up, but I knew she wouldn't be able to get back to sleep if I did. I figured she would know where I went, but I still left her a note.

I was so anxious to check on my uncle that I tried to run in the darkness and stumbled a few times before I got to the barracks. I knew I didn't look very good-I hadn't even combed my hair. When I got there, I looked for the guard that let me in before. Then I realized that the night guards were still on duty, and I got a little scared. I decided to wait until the morning watch.

I'm not very good at just doing nothing, so I wandered back up to the temple; and you just won't believe what happened next. I saw a bunch of men, about 40 of them, talking to some of the chief priests and elders. I knew something strange was going on because no official temple stuff ever happens that early in the morning. I sneaked around to where I could hear what they were saying. They were kind of huddled by a gate in the outer wall to keep from being seen, so it was pretty easy to stay out of sight just around the corner. I heard one of the men say, "We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul." Before I could stop myself, I made a little noise like when somebody hits you in the stomach. They were going to kill him!

After that, I tried not to even breathe. Another man told the priests and elders to pretend they needed more information from Paul so that the Romans would bring him back to the Sanhedrin. Then, while he was on the way to the temple, they would kill him. They all quickly agreed to this plan and then hurried away looking nervously over their shoulders. They might have seen me if I had moved a muscle, but I was frozen to my spot for a long time; at least it seemed like a long time.