

PAUL



Read Acts 13:32-38 and complete the activities on the next page.

ACTS 13

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Events on Cyprus

⁴Barnabas and Saul were sent on their way by the Holy Spirit. They went down to Seleucia. From there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵They arrived at Salamis. There they preached God's word in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

⁶They traveled all across the island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jew named Bar-Jesus. He was an evil magician and a false prophet. ⁷He was an attendant of Sergius Paulus, the governor. Paulus was a man of understanding. He sent for Barnabas and Saul. He wanted to hear God's word. ⁸But the evil magician named Elymas opposed them. The name Elymas means Magician. He tried to keep the governor from becoming a believer. ⁹Saul was also known as Paul. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. He looked straight at Elymas. He said to him, ¹⁰"You are a child of the devil! You are an enemy of everything that is right! You cheat people. You use all kinds of tricks. Won't you ever stop twisting the right ways of the Lord? ¹¹Now the Lord's hand is against you. You are going to go blind. For a while you won't even be able to see the light of the sun."

Right away mist and darkness came over him. He tried to feel his way around. He wanted to find someone to lead him by the hand. ¹²When the governor saw what had happened, he believed. He was amazed at what Paul was teaching about the Lord.

Paul Preaches in Pisidian Antioch

¹³From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia. There John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath day they entered the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵The Law and the Prophets were read aloud. Then the leaders of the synagogue sent word to Paul and his companions. They said, "Brothers, do you have any words of instruction for the people? If you do, please speak."

¹⁶Paul stood up and motioned with his hand. Then he said, "Fellow Israelites, and you Gentiles who worship God, lis-

ten to me! ¹⁷The God of Israel chose our people who lived long ago. He blessed them greatly while they were in Egypt. With his mighty power he led them out of that country. ¹⁸He put up with their behavior for about 40 years in the desert. ¹⁹And he destroyed seven nations in Canaan. Then he gave the land to his people as their rightful share. ²⁰All this took about 450 years.

"After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. ²¹Then the people asked for a king. He gave them Saul, son of Kish. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. He ruled for 40 years. ²²God removed him and made David their king. Here is God's witness about him. 'David, son of Jesse, is a man dear to my heart,' he said. 'David will do everything I want him to do.'

²³"From this man's family line God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus. This is what he had promised. ²⁴Before Jesus came, John preached that we should turn away from our sins and be baptized. He preached this to all Israel. ²⁵John was coming to the end of his work. 'Who do you suppose I am?' he said. 'I am not the one you are looking for. But there is someone coming after me. I am not good enough to untie his sandals.'

²⁶"Listen, fellow children of Abraham! Listen, you Gentiles who worship God! This message of salvation has been sent to us. ²⁷The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus. By finding him guilty, they made the prophets' words come true. These are read every Sabbath day. ²⁸The people and their rulers had no reason at all for sentencing Jesus to death. But they asked Pilate to have him killed. ²⁹They did everything that had been written about Jesus. Then they took him down from the cross. They laid him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised him from the dead. ³¹For many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. Now they are telling our people about Jesus.

³²"We are telling you the good news. What God promised our people long ago ³³he has done for us, their children. He has raised up Jesus. This is what is written in the second Psalm. It says,

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“You are my son.
Today I have become your father.”
(Psalm 2:7)

³⁴ God raised Jesus from the dead. He will never rot in the grave. As God has said,

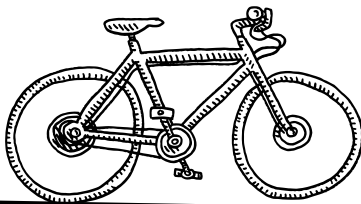
“Holy and sure blessings were
promised to David.
I will give them to you.”
(Isaiah 55:3)

³⁵ In another place it also says,

“You will not let your holy one rot
away.” *(Psalm 16:10)*

³⁶ “David carried out God’s purpose while he lived. Then he died. He was buried with his people. His body rotted away. ³⁷ But the one whom God raised from the dead did not rot away.

³⁸ “My friends, here is what I want you to know. I announce to you that your sins can be forgiven because of what Jesus has done. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin. Moses’ law could not make you right in God’s eyes. ⁴⁰ Be careful! Don’t let what the prophets spoke about happen to you. They said,



FRIDAY

“What God promised our people long ago he has done for us, their children. He has raised up Jesus” (Acts 13:32–33).

TODAY’S BIBLE READING: Acts 13:32–38

GOD’S PROMISES CAME TRUE

Paul was preaching a sermon here. He wanted people to believe in Jesus. He showed them how God’s promises came true. God had promised to send someone to save them from their sins. These promises are written in the Old Testament. Every promise God made about Jesus came true. God always keeps his promises.

God will keep his promises to you too. He loves you, and he wants you to trust him. He knows when you are hurt, and he promises to comfort you. He knows when you are scared, and he promises to protect you. He knows when you feel lonely, and he promises to be with you.

You can trust God. He kept his promise to send someone to save you from your sins when he sent Jesus. And he’ll keep all of his other promises to you too!

I have read this devotion.

For your next reading, turn to page 1359. If you want to read more, see Joshua 23:14 on page 279.

End
Reading
Here

ASK

YOURSELF

How has God kept his
promises to you?

Read Acts 23:11 and complete the activities on the next page.

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²³ They shouted and threw off their coats. They threw dust into the air. ²⁴ So the commanding officer ordered that Paul be taken into the fort. He gave orders for Paul to be whipped and questioned. He wanted to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. ²⁵ A commander was standing there as they stretched Paul out to be whipped. Paul said to him, "Does the law allow you to whip a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"

²⁶ When the commander heard this, he went to the commanding officer and reported it. "What are you going to do?" the commander asked. "This man is a Roman citizen."

²⁷ So the commanding officer went to Paul. "Tell me," he asked. "Are you a Roman citizen?"

"Yes, I am," Paul answered.

²⁸ Then the officer said, "I had to pay a lot of money to become a citizen."

"But I was born a citizen," Paul replied.

²⁹ Right away those who were about to question him left. Even the officer was alarmed. He realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.

PAUL IS TAKEN TO THE SANHEDRIN

³⁰ The commanding officer wanted to find out exactly what the Jews had against Paul. So the next day he let Paul out of prison. He ordered a meeting of the chief priests and all the members of the Sanhedrin. Then he brought Paul and had him stand in front of them.

23 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin. "My brothers," he said, "I have always done my duty to God. To this day I feel that I have done nothing wrong." ² Ananias the high priest heard this. So he ordered the men standing near Paul to hit him on the mouth. ³ Then Paul said to him, "You pretender! God will hit you! You sit there and judge me by the law. But you yourself broke the law when you commanded them to hit me!"

⁴ Those who were standing near Paul spoke to him. They said, "How dare you talk like that to God's high priest!"

⁵ Paul replied, "Brothers, I didn't realize he was the high priest. It is written, 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'" (*Exodus 22:28*)

⁶ Paul knew that some of them were Sadducees and the others were Pharisees. So he called out to the members of the Sanhedrin. "My brothers," he said, "I am a Pharisee. I come from a family of Pharisees. I believe that people will rise from the dead. That's why I am on trial."

⁷ When he said this, the Pharisees and the Sadducees started to argue. They began to take sides. ⁸ The Sadducees say that people will not rise from the dead. They don't believe there are angels or spirits either. But the Pharisees believe all these things.

⁹ People were causing trouble and making a lot of noise. Some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up. They argued strongly. "We find nothing wrong with this man," they said. "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" ¹⁰ The people arguing were getting out of control. The commanding officer was afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them. So he ordered the soldiers to go down and take him away from them by force. The officer had told them to bring Paul into the fort.

¹¹ The next night the Lord stood near Paul. He said, "Be brave! You have told people about me in Jerusalem. You must do the same in Rome."

THE PLAN TO KILL PAUL

¹² The next morning some Jews gathered secretly to make plans against Paul. They made a promise to themselves. They promised that they would not eat or drink anything until they killed him. ¹³ More than 40 men took part in this plan. ¹⁴ They went to the chief priests and the elders. They said, "We have made a special promise to God. We will not eat anything until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ Now then, you and the Sanhedrin must make an appeal to the commanding officer. Ask him to bring Paul to you. Pretend you want more facts about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here."

¹⁶ But Paul's nephew heard about this plan. So he went into the fort and told Paul.

¹⁷ Then Paul called one of the commanders. He said to him, "Take this young man to the commanding officer. He has something to tell him." ¹⁸ So the

Read
This
Verse

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commander took Paul’s nephew to the officer.

The commander said, “Paul, the prisoner, sent for me. He asked me to bring this young man to you. The young man has something to tell you.”

¹⁹The commanding officer took the young man by the hand. He spoke to him in private. “What do you want to tell me?” the officer asked.

²⁰He said, “Some Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul to the Sanhedrin tomorrow. They will pretend they want more facts about him. ²¹Don’t give in to them. More than 40 of them are waiting in hiding to attack him. They have promised that they will not eat or drink anything until they have killed him. They are ready now. All they need is for you to bring Paul to the Sanhedrin.”

²²The commanding officer let the young man go. But he gave him a warning. “Don’t tell anyone you have reported this to me,” he said.

PAUL IS TAKEN TO CAESAREA

²³Then the commanding officer called for two of his commanders. He ordered them, “Gather a company of 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen and 200 men armed with spears. Get them ready to

go to Caesarea at nine o’clock tonight.

²⁴Provide horses for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix.”

²⁵Here is the letter the officer wrote.

²⁶I, Claudius Lysias, am writing this letter.

I am sending it to His Excellency, Governor Felix.

Greetings.

²⁷The Jews grabbed Paul. They were about to kill him. But I came with my soldiers and saved him. I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. ²⁸I wanted to know why they were bringing charges against him. So I brought him to their Sanhedrin. ²⁹I found out that the charge against him was based on questions about their law. But there was no charge against him worthy of death or prison. ³⁰Then I was told about a plan against the man. So I sent him to you at once. I also ordered those bringing charges against him to present their case to you.

³¹The soldiers followed their orders. During the night they took Paul with them. They brought him as far as



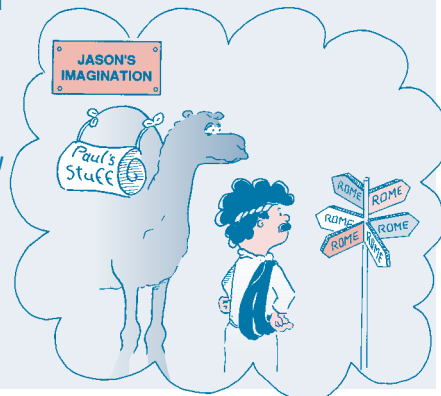
WHY DID PAUL WANT TO TELL THE ROMANS ABOUT JESUS?

Many people in Rome had become followers of Jesus after hearing the disciples’ message in Jerusalem. Some had become Christians in other cities and had then moved to Rome. Paul wanted to meet these believers and to cheer them on in their faith.

Rome was the most important city in the world at that time. Paul knew that Jesus wanted him to preach the message all over the world, including Rome. He knew that a city like Rome could help spread the message of Jesus. Paul was also a Roman citizen. He knew people would listen to him there.



CHECKOUT
Acts 23:11



Read Acts 27:13-44 and complete the activities on the next page.

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Pamphylia. Then we landed at Myra in Lycia. ⁶There the commander found a ship from Alexandria sailing for Italy. He put us on board. ⁷We moved along slowly for many days. We had trouble getting to Cnidus. The wind did not let us stay on course. So we passed the calmer side of Crete, opposite Salmone. ⁸It was not easy to sail along the coast. Then we came to a place called Fair Havens. It was near the town of Lasea.

⁹A lot of time had passed. Sailing had already become dangerous. By now it was after the Day of Atonement, a day of fasting. So Paul gave them a warning. ¹⁰“Men,” he said, “I can see that our trip is going to be dangerous. The ship and everything in it will be lost. Our own lives will be in danger also.” ¹¹But the commander didn’t listen to what Paul said. Instead, he followed the advice of the pilot and the ship’s owner. ¹²The harbor wasn’t a good place for ships to stay during winter. So most of the people decided we should sail on. They hoped we would reach Phoenix. They wanted to spend the winter there. Phoenix was a harbor in Crete. It faced both southwest and northwest.

The Storm

¹³A gentle south wind began to blow. The ship’s crew thought they saw their chance to leave safely. So they pulled up the anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. ¹⁴Before very long, a wind blew down from the island. It had the force of a hurricane. It was called the North-

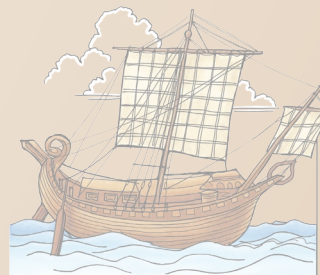
easter. ¹⁵The ship was caught by the storm. We could not keep it sailing into the wind. So we gave up and were driven along by the wind. ¹⁶We passed the calmer side of a small island called Cauda. We almost lost the lifeboat that was tied to the side of the ship. ¹⁷So the men lifted the lifeboat on board. Then they tied ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. They were afraid it would get stuck on the sandbars of Syrtis. So they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. ¹⁸We took a very bad beating from the storm. The next day the crew began to throw the ship’s contents overboard. ¹⁹On the third day, they even threw the ship’s tools and supplies overboard with their own hands. ²⁰The sun and stars didn’t appear for many days. The storm was terrible. So we gave up all hope of being saved.

²¹The men had not eaten for a long time. Paul stood up in front of them. “Men,” he said, “you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete. Then you would have avoided this harm and loss. ²²Now I beg you to be brave. Not one of you will die. Only the ship will be destroyed. ²³I belong to God and serve him. Last night his angel stood beside me. ²⁴The angel said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must go on trial in front of Caesar. God has shown his grace by sparing the lives of all those sailing with you.’ ²⁵Men, continue to be brave. I have faith in God. It will happen just as he told me. ²⁶But we must run the ship onto the beach of some island.”

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Paul was traveling on one of the large cargo ships that sailed on the Mediterranean Sea. These ships were big enough to carry up to 300 people. And they carried goods from place to place to be sold. The ships were not safe in the fierce storms of the Mediterranean Sea. People didn’t usually travel in winter, because that was the worst time for storms.

Cargo Ships and Storms

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ACTS 27—28

The Ship Is Destroyed

²⁷ On the 14th night the wind was still pushing us across the Adriatic Sea. About midnight the sailors had a feeling that they were approaching land. ²⁸ They measured how deep the water was. They found that it was 120 feet deep. A short time later they measured the water again. This time it was 90 feet deep. ²⁹ They were afraid we would crash against the rocks. So they dropped four anchors from the back of the ship. They prayed that daylight would come. ³⁰ The sailors wanted to escape from the ship. So they let the lifeboat down into the sea. They pretended they were going to lower some anchors from the front of the ship. ³¹ But Paul spoke to the commander and the soldiers. “These men must stay with the ship,” he said. “If they don’t, you can’t be saved.” ³² So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat. They let it drift away.

³³ Just before dawn Paul tried to get them all to eat. “For the last 14 days,” he said, “you have wondered what would happen. You have gone without food. You haven’t eaten anything. ³⁴ Now I am asking you to eat some food. You need it to live. Not one of you will lose a single hair from your head.” ³⁵ After Paul said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God. He did this where they all could see him. Then he broke it and began to eat. ³⁶ All of them were filled with hope. So they ate some food. ³⁷ There were 276 of us on board. ³⁸ They ate as much as they wanted. They needed to make the

ship lighter. So they threw the rest of the grain into the sea.

³⁹ When daylight came, they saw a bay with a sandy beach. They didn’t recognize the place. But they decided to run the ship onto the beach if they could. ⁴⁰ So they cut the anchors loose and left them in the sea. At the same time, they untied the ropes that held the rudders. They lifted the sail at the front of the ship to the wind. Then they headed for the beach. ⁴¹ But the ship hit a sandbar. So the front of it got stuck and wouldn’t move. The back of the ship was broken to pieces by the pounding of the waves.

⁴² The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners. They wanted to keep them from swimming away and escaping. ⁴³ But the commander wanted to save Paul’s life. So he kept the soldiers from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and swim to land. ⁴⁴ The rest were supposed to get there on boards or other pieces of the ship. That is how everyone reached land safely.

On Shore at Malta

28 When we were safe on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. ² The people of the island were unusually kind. It was raining and cold. So they built a fire and welcomed all of us. ³ Paul gathered some sticks and put them on the fire. A poisonous snake was driven out by the heat. It fastened itself on Paul’s hand. ⁴ The people of the island saw the snake hanging from his hand. They said to one another, “This

End Reading Here

The Power of Trusting in God

Read the exciting story about a storm and shipwreck in Acts 27:13–44. All the men on the ship were afraid they would drown. But Paul trusted God. He stayed calm even when everyone else was afraid.

He told the men to be brave and to obey God. Then no one would die. Because the men did what Paul said, no one died.

Draw a picture of your favorite part of this story. When you are in danger, think of your picture. Remember to stay calm and trust in God. You can help others be calm too.

Live It!

ACTS 27:13–44



Read Romans 4:21-25 and complete the activities below.

⁷ “Blessed are those
whose lawless acts are forgiven.

Blessed are those
whose sins are taken away.

⁸ Blessed is the person
whose sin the Lord never counts against them.”

⁹ Is that blessing only for those who are circumcised? Or is it also for those who are not circumcised? We have been saying that God accepted Abraham’s faith. So his faith made him right with God. ¹⁰ When did it happen? Was it after Abraham was circumcised, or before? It was before he was circumcised, not after! ¹¹ He was circumcised as a sign of the covenant God had made with him. It showed that his faith had made him right with God before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the father of all believers who have not been circumcised. God accepts their faith. So their faith makes them right with him. ¹² And Abraham is also the father of those who are circumcised and believe. So just being circumcised is not enough. Those who are circumcised must also follow the steps of our father Abraham. He had faith before he was circumcised.

¹³ Abraham and his family received a promise. God promised that Abraham would receive the world. It would not come to him because he obeyed the law. It would come because of his faith, which made him right with God. ¹⁴ Do those who depend on the law receive the promise? If they do, faith would mean nothing. God’s promise would be worthless. ¹⁵ The law brings God’s anger. Where there is no law, the law can’t be broken.

¹⁶ The promise is based on God’s grace. The promise comes by faith. All of Abraham’s children will certainly receive the promise. And it is not only for those who are ruled by the law. Those who have the same faith that Abraham had are also included. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ It is written, “I have made you a father of many nations.” God considers Abraham to be our father. The God that Abraham believed in gives life to the dead. Abraham’s God also creates things that did not exist before.

¹⁸ When there was no reason for hope, Abraham believed because he had hope. He became the father of many nations, exactly as God had promised. God said, “That is how many children you will have.” ¹⁹ Abraham did not become weak in his faith. He accepted the fact that he was past the time when he could have children. At that time Abraham was about 100 years old. He also realized that Sarah was too old to have children. ²⁰ But Abraham kept believing in God’s promise. He became strong in his faith. He gave glory to God.

²¹ He was absolutely sure that God had the power to do what he had promised. ²² That’s why “God accepted Abraham because he believed. So his faith made him right with God.”

²³ The words “God accepted Abraham’s faith” were written not only for Abraham. ²⁴ They were written also for us. We believe in the God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. So God will accept our faith and make us right with himself. ²⁵ Jesus was handed over to die for our sins. He was raised to life in order to make us right with God.

Start
Reading
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End
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Romans 4:21–25



Paul says that God accepted Abraham because he believed God’s promises. Because of his faith, God pardoned him. He was made right with God. God accepts us when we believe in Jesus.

Read verse 25 a few times. **Crafty** has an idea to help you to remember this verse. Write the verse on a card. Under that, write the verse in your own words. Then write, **This is the best news ever!** Use this card as a bookmark. It will be a great reminder!

1586 | ROMANS 4:7