

SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES: 5 JUNE 2016

JUNIORS: David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17)

David defeated Goliath.
How did the young David defeat the giant?

Use the code to fill in the missing letters.



= D



= T



= W



= G



= I



= A



O



S



H



V



SENIORS: Paul reaches Rome –eventually (Acts 27, 28)

This is the very last story in Acts – and it is an exciting one.

Paul knew that God wanted him to go to Rome. To get there, he made use of a very special privilege given only to Roman citizens and asked that the Roman Emperor, Caesar, judge his case. This meant that, after keeping him prisoner for 2 years, the Roman government paid for his boat journey to Rome!

A centurion Julius was taking some other prisoners to Rome and he was asked to take Paul also. So Paul and his friends travelled with this group. By the time they left, however, it was the beginning of winter and the weather was turning nasty. The first part of the journey wasn't too bad as their little ship stayed near the coast, but it took longer than usual because of the winds. The problems really started when they were transferred to a bigger ship for the second and longer part of their journey.

By now it really was too late to travel! But, after some struggling, the crew managed to dock safely in a harbour on Crete. Although they were in a town called 'Fair Haven' or satisfactory harbour, the sailors didn't want to spend the winter there. Paul tried to warn them that they were being reckless to want to sail further, but the majority voted to sail a little further to a better harbour further along the coast of the island. So off they went on a lovely day, with a pleasant wind filling their sails.

But – as you have probably guessed – the weather changed! Soon the wind changed and they were blown off course. They managed to shelter along the coast for a little while to strengthen the boat and to tie down everything, but as soon as they tried to sail further, they were caught in the most dreadful storm.

For 14 days and nights they were blown along. They couldn't see the stars or even the sun so they didn't have a clue where they were. The waves crashed over the deck so much that they needed to lighten the ship - by throwing the cargo and the ropes and pulleys overboard - to make sure they stayed afloat. Nobody ate much; all everyone did was worry about whether they would survive!

Everybody except Paul and his companions, that was. Paul knew that worrying wasn't going to achieve anything and so, instead, they prayed for their safety and the safety of the others on board. Then in the middle of the storm, God sent an angel to tell Paul that he and everyone on board would get to Rome safely if they stayed together. They would run aground, but they would be saved.

Not long after Paul had told everyone this good news, the sailors realised they were getting close to land. Eventually, through the clouds and mist they could see a beach, although they still didn't know where they were! Full of hope, the crew tried to steer the boat in that direction but instead they ran aground on a hidden reef. The boat was beginning to break up, and Julius instructed everyone to swim for the shore, using planks and anything that could float.

And so, cold and dripping wet, everyone arrived safely on the island of Malta. God's promise was true! The people on the island made a huge bonfire to warm them and dry them. When Paul picked up a bundle of wood, however, he realised he had picked up a viper, which bit him. In those days, there was no antidote, so the people thought that Paul would swell up and die. But God had other

plans and healed Paul, giving him the chance to tell these people about Jesus. Later Paul healed many others on the island – and I am sure that many people there and on the boat came to know and love Jesus.

When winter was over, the prisoners and the sailors and Paul and his friends and Julius all set sail for Rome, arriving there without any further adventures. The Christians in Rome were so thrilled to know that Paul was nearly there that they walked a long way out of the city to meet him. And for the next two years, although he was under house-arrest, Paul was able to teach them and to introduce others in Rome to Jesus.

We think Paul was killed by the cruel Emperor, Nero. But the Bible doesn't tell us what happened. Many stories in the Bible leave us wanting to know more – but God told those who were writing it not to give all the details. Too many details would hide the best story of all: that God sent his only Son, Jesus, to this planet so that we could see how much we are loved. And that is the message God wants us, like Paul, to share.

Action: Three other storms

Jonah also suffered in a storm at sea. (See Jonah chapter 1)

What calmed that storm?

What was God was trying to teach Jonah in that storm?

Jesus and his disciples were also caught in a storm (Matthew chapter 8: 24-27)

Who calmed that storm?

What did the disciples learn in that storm?

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The disciples were alone in their boat once in a storm (Matthew 14: 22-33)

How did Jesus get to them?

What happened when Peter tried to do this too?

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What did he learn from this?

