



# ACTS

Of All the Apostles

## **You Will Be My Witnesses:**

**Running the Race**

## **Lesson 47**



# Finally . . . Rome

## Finally . . . Home

### Acts 28:11-31

#### Supplemental Scripture

Hebrews 12:1-3  
Philippians 1:12-13, 20-23  
Philippians 3:8-21  
2 Corinthians 5:1-9  
2 Timothy

#### Memory Verse

This is the only race worth running. I've run hard right to the finish, believed all the way. All that's left now is the shouting—God's applause!  
2 Timothy 4:7 (MSG)

#### Lesson Goals

- Understand that Paul finally arrived in Rome
- Understand that Paul shared about Jesus while he was in Rome
- Understand that more than Paul wanted to visit Rome, he wanted to be in Heaven with Jesus
- Understand that at his death, Paul finally arrived in Heaven

**NOTE:** Familiarize yourself with this story. Study the supplemental Scripture and make notes on, but do NOT read from, these pages. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

Have you ever won a race? What did it feel like to reach your goal, break the tape, and cross the finish line first? If you have not, have you ever thought about what it would feel like to cross the finish line? Let's see what Paul says about finishing the race!

We last saw Paul shipwrecked on the island of Malta, to the south of Italy and Sicily. He and the other prisoners and the guards stayed on Malta for three months waiting out the stormy season. They boarded a ship that had wintered on the island with them. The ship was from Alexandria, Egypt. When they set sail, they wasted no time. They sailed straight for the island of Sicily and landed at the capital of Syracuse (Siracusa). Then they sailed on to the "tip of the boot" of Italy, to the town of Rhegium (Reggio). The next day they landed in Puteoli (Pozzuoli) on the bay of Naples. They stayed there a week and Paul was able to visit the believers there.

And then, they finally arrived in Rome! The believers there were as happy to see Paul as he was to see them. They came from miles away to greet him. This cheered Paul up and he thanked God for them. "Paul was allowed to live by himself. But a soldier guarded him." (Acts 28:16 NIV) While imprisoned in Rome, Paul wrote letters to individual believers like Philemon as well as to the churches of Colossae, Ephesus, and Philippi. These letters are included in the New Testament of the Bible. We can read what Paul wrote to these believers to instruct, warn, and encourage them.

Paul also entertained many people in the house where he lived, under guard. Paul met with the Jewish leaders there to assure them that he had done nothing against the Jews or the teachings of the Old Testament. He explained to them what had happened to him in Jerusalem. The Jews in Rome knew nothing about the events there, but they did want to hear Paul's ideas and planned to return another day. When they returned, "even more people came to the place where he was staying. From morning until evening, he told them about God's kingdom and explained it to them." (Acts 28:23 NIV) This is what God told Paul he would do while Paul was in jail

## Application

At the beginning of our study of the book of Acts, we talked about the difference between running a race or sitting in the stands. And today we looked at finishing the race, crossing the finish line.

In the race of life and faith, crossing that finish line happens at death. The Bible tells us that death is a fact of life - unless Jesus returns first, we will all die. (Hebrews 9:27) Have you begun the race? How are you running? How will you cross that finish line?

To cross the line, it helps to keep the line in sight as you run. Paul had his sights on heaven, long before his death. He knew that, for the cause of Christ, it was necessary to stay on earth and share the gospel with others—the only race in life worth running. (2 Timothy 4:7 MSG) But Paul knew it was much better to be with God, in Heaven.

“Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the author of faith. He also makes it perfect. He paid no attention to the shame of the cross. He suffered there **because of the joy he was looking forward to.**” (Hebrews 12:2 NlrV)

Is your gaze fixed? Are you running well? Are you looking forward to the finish line?

in Jerusalem! And as it usually happens when you share with a lot of people at one time, some of them believed and others didn't. Paul knew that God's word in Isaiah 6:9, 10 was being fulfilled. People saw amazing things happen and heard God's word, but their hearts were stubborn and they refused to believe. Because of that, God offered salvation to people who are not Jews!

Paul also entertained friends in the house where he was being guarded. “For two whole years Paul stayed there in a house he rented. He welcomed all who came to see him. He preached boldly about God's kingdom. No one could keep him from teaching people about the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 28:30-31 NlrV)

Paul was later released from jail and traveled a bit.\* He then wrote a letter to Timothy, his son in the faith, and to Titus. These letters are also included in the New Testament of the Bible.

Paul was then rearrested. This second imprisonment was much more difficult than the first. “He was so closely confined that Onesiphorus with difficulty found him; he was chained, and his friends had forsaken him.”\* It was during this time that Paul wrote a second letter to Timothy (2 Timothy). In it Paul encouraged Timothy in his work of sharing the gospel. Paul also warned Timothy of things to come, when people would no longer want to hear the truth of God's Word.

Then, Paul told Timothy, “keep the Message alive; do a thorough job as God's servant. You take over. I'm about to die, my life an offering on God's altar. This is the only race worth running. I've run hard right to the finish, believed all the way. All that's left now is the shouting—God's applause!” (2 Timothy 4:5-7 MSG)

We are not completely sure of all the events surrounding Paul's death, but we do know that he died for his faith.\* What we are sure of, though, is what happened to Paul after his death. Paul had written earlier to the church in Corinth explaining that while we are on this earth and in this body, we are absent from the Lord, but for the believer, to be absent from the body in death is to be at home with the Lord. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul wrestled with conflicting desires. “For me, life finds all of its meaning in Christ. Death also has its benefits. Suppose I go on living in my body. Then I will be able to carry on my work. . . . But what should I choose? I don't know. I can't decide between the two. I long to leave this world and be with Christ. That is better by far.” (Philippians 1:21-23 NlrV) And so, as much as Paul had looked forward to his trip to Rome, can you imagine his excitement when he arrived in Heaven and saw his Lord face to face? Paul was . . . finally home!

\* Jamieson, Robert; A.R. Fausset; and David Brown. "Introduction to 2 Timothy ." . Blue Letter Bible. 19 Feb 2000. 2009. 30 Oct 2009. <[http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm\\_view.cfm?AuthorID=7&contentID=3044&commInfo=6&topic=2%20Timothy&ar=2Ti\\_1\\_1](http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=7&contentID=3044&commInfo=6&topic=2%20Timothy&ar=2Ti_1_1)>

# Preschool Lesson

We last saw Paul shipwrecked on the island of Malta. He and the other prisoners and the guards stayed on there for three months to wait out the stormy season. When they set sail, they wasted no time. They sailed straight for the island of Sicily, then they sailed on to the “tip of the boot” of Italy. The next day they landed on the bay of Naples. They stayed there a week and Paul was able to visit the believers there.

And then, they finally arrived in Rome! The believers there were as happy to see Paul as he was to see them. They came from miles away to greet him. This cheered Paul up and he thanked God for them. Paul lived by himself in Rome with a soldier to guard him. Paul wrote letters to a believer named Philemon. He also wrote to churches. These letters are in the New Testament of the Bible. We can read what Paul wrote to these believers to teach, warn, and encourage them.

Paul also entertained many people in the house where he lived. He lived there for two years and “welcomed all who came to see him. He preached boldly about God’s kingdom. No one could keep him from teaching people about the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 28:31 Nlrv)

Paul was later released from jail and traveled a bit.\* He wrote letters to Timothy and to Titus. These letters are also in the New Testament of the Bible.

Paul was arrested again. This second time was much more difficult than the first. Paul wrote a second letter to Timothy (2 Timothy). In it Paul encouraged Timothy in his work of sharing the gospel. Paul also warned Timothy of things to come, when people would no longer want to hear the truth of God’s Word.

Then, Paul told Timothy, “keep the Message alive; do a thorough job as God’s servant. You take over. I’m about to die. . . . This is the only race worth running. I’ve run hard right to the finish, believed all the way. All that’s left now is the shouting—God’s applause!” (2 Timothy 4:5-7 MSG)

Sometimes, death can be scary, especially when you are young, but Paul had written earlier to the church in Corinth explaining that death, for people who follow Jesus, is just being at home with the Lord. In another letter, Paul wrote about how much he really wanted to be with God. “That is better by far,” he said. (Philippians 1:21-23 Nlrv)

And so, as much as Paul had looked forward to his trip to Rome, can you imagine his excitement when he arrived in Heaven and saw his Lord face to face? Paul was . . . finally home!

# Activities

**Memory Verse Activity** - Play baseball. Name the plates “Antioch,” “Jerusalem,” and “Rome,” Leave home plate as “Home” or “Heaven.” Practice the memory verse as each swing. When a phrase of the memory verse is said well, a player advances from base to base. Talk about what it will be like to “advance home” and hear God’s applause.

Sing “Come and Go With Me,” “Good and Faithful Servant,” “Blessed Assurance,” “Knowing You,” “I Will Run the Race,” “I Just Want to Be Where You Are,” “Better is One Day,” “I Can Only Imagine,” “Soon and Very Soon,” “When We All Get to Heaven,” “The Way of the Cross Leads Home,” “When the Morning Comes (By and By),” or “Victory in Jesus.”

Set up your Bible Study area as different events of the Olympics. Use flags from many different nations and talk about how there will be people in Heaven from every nation, tribe and language. (Revelation 7:9) Have a short closing ceremony where you award medals. Talk about how Heaven will be a “closing ceremony” that will never end!

Make Laurel wreaths out of bay leaves. Compare the perishable with the imperishable of heaven. Discuss I Corinthians 9:24-27.

Discuss the memory verse. “You take over. I’m about to die, my life an offering on God’s altar. This is the only race worth running. I’ve run hard right to the finish, believed all the way. All that’s left now is the shouting—God’s applause! Depend on it, he’s an honest judge. He’ll do right not only by me, but by everyone eager for his coming.” (2 Timothy 4:6-8 MSG) Talk about how Paul was “passing the torch.” Talk about how Timothy must have felt.

Now that you have memorized Hebrews 12:1-3, practice saying the verses together and talk about the joy Jesus was looking forward to and how we can do the same.



This is the only race worth running.  
I've run hard right to the finish,  
believed all the way.  
All that's left now is the shouting—  
God's applause!  
2 Timothy 4:7

# Racing Riddles

Fill in the blanks below by reading the message on the finish line backwards.

.gninnur htrow ecar ylno eht si sihT

.yaw eht lla deveileb ,hsinif eht ot thgir drah nur ev'I

!esualppa s'doG—gnituohs eht si won tfel s'that lla

7:4 yhtomiT 2

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Fill in the blanks below by reading the message on the finish line backwards.

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I've run hard right to the finish, believed all the way.

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2 Timothy 4:7

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2 Timothy 4:7



# Word Search

o e s s r a h p r e p h e s i  
r c o l o s i a k i l l o p r  
t s o i t e s r n n y t h r a  
h p r m r a a o n n l i t i s  
s u a s e f m m o u l m c s e  
d a u u t e p e a i m o r o a  
u h y t l r i p p n o t t n c  
a t u i o t r p r r o h o o p  
l a h t s s i m b l s y n n s  
p p w u j a a t n u d r j r e  
t r t s n a i s e h p e r e r  
e i s s n a i s s o l o c v h  
t s i l s f i o n s e e t o t  
e i e c c p h i l l i p i a n  
u n t r u l s n r r e s a e c

Philemon

Colossians

Ephesians

Philippians

Timothy

Titus

Paul

Rome

prison

# Word Search

o e s s r a h p r e p h e s i  
r c o l o s i a k i l l o p r  
t s o i t e s r n n y t h r a  
h p r m r a a o n n l i t i s  
s u a s e f m m o u l m c s e  
d a u u t e p e a i m o r o a  
u h y t l r i p p n o t t n c  
a t u i o t r p r r o h o o p  
l a h t s s i m b l s y n n s  
p p w u j a a t n u d r j r e  
t r t s n a i s e h p e r e r  
e i s s n a i s s o l o c v h  
t s i l s f i o n s e e t o t  
e i e c c p h i l l i p i a n  
u n t r u l s n r r e s a e c

Philemon

Colossians

Ephesians

Philippians

Timothy

Titus

Paul

Rome

prison