

# PAUL'S PRISON PROTECTION

The Plot  
to Kill Paul  
Acts 23:12–24  
AD 55

## OVERVIEW

### BIBLE TRUTH

God protects us from our enemies.

### BIBLE VERSE

Deliver me from my enemies, O my God. Psalm 59:1

### LEARNER GOAL

I can relate God's protection of Paul in the text to His protection of His people today.

### LAW & GOSPEL

The world hates Jesus and those like me who follow Him.

**Christ has overcome the world and is with me to the end of the age.**

### SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

When Paul's nephew overhears a plot by the Jews to assassinate Paul, he tells Paul, who tells his prison guards. They take the young man to the Roman tribune, who takes action to protect Paul from the plot. Now guarded by at least 470 soldiers, spearmen, and horsemen, Paul is safely moved to Caesarea to await a hearing before Governor Felix.

## LESSON PREP

**BASIC** Read Acts 23:12–24 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

**MORE TIME** Read “Apologetics Helps” on the back page in preparation for the “Live” section.

**IN DEPTH** Read Acts 21–22 with study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible* for more context.

## SUPPLIES

### FOR THIS LESSON

- Sheets of paper wadded into balls
- Whiteboard or large sheet of paper
- Dry-erase marker or marker

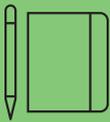
### FOR EVERY LESSON

- Student copies of *Defend Journal*
- Bibles
- Pens
- Shareable images from digital resource center
- Supplies for bonus activities
- [cph.org/digitalcontent](http://cph.org/digitalcontent)



### LEADER NOTE

Make this more challenging by having teams sit in chairs around their target to protect him or her while tossing paper balls at the other team's target.



### DEFEND JOURNAL

Hand out journals and turn to Lesson 11.



### BONUS ACTIVITY

Help youth step into this narrative with "Act It Out."



### LEADER NOTE

We don't always recognize God's protection. Help youth think of times that they were healed, shielded from danger, or kept from sinning. Sharing your own stories will help youth open up and share theirs.

# LAUNCH

## WALK-IN QUESTION

Who looks out for you?

## PROTECT ME!

Have youth divide into two teams. Choose one person on each team to be the target. The others are both protectors and tossers. Tossers throw wadded paper balls at the opposite team's target while also protecting their own target from paper balls. The team whose target takes the fewest hits is the winner.

**SAY** We all need someone to look out for us and protect us. Today, we'll read how God used Paul's nephew and some Roman soldiers to protect Paul.

**PRAY** Dear God, thank You for your daily protection. We especially thank You for protecting us from the attacks of the devil. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

# LEARN

## READ "THE BIG PICTURE" AND TALK IT OUT

▷ Would you have gone to Jerusalem if you knew you'd face danger there? Why do you think Paul went?

## DISCUSSION POINTS

- Let youth share their thoughts.

## LEARN ABOUT "PAUL'S PRISON PROTECTION"

In order to find out how Paul got into prison, ask volunteers to read **Acts 21:27-36**.

▷ What did the Jews from Asia accuse Paul of doing?

- They accused him of speaking against the Jewish people, against the law of the Old Testament, and against the temple. They said he had brought Gentiles into the temple (which was forbidden), but Paul had not done any of these things.

Read **Acts 23:12-15** or ask a volunteer to read as others follow along.

▷ How do you see Satan at work in these verses?

- Satan filled the Jews with so much hatred toward Paul that they conspired to kill him, enlisting the help of the Jewish religious leaders.

Read **Acts 23:16-24** or ask volunteers to read.

▷ How do you see God at work in these verses?

- God put Paul's nephew in the right place at the right time to hear about the plot.
- God moved the Roman officer to listen to Paul's nephew and then make a plan to move Paul to safety.
- Satan and God are not equals. God is infinitely more wise and powerful. God was, is, and always will be in control.

▷ Share a time when God has protected you or your family.

- Allow youth time to share their stories. Share yours as well.

# LIVE

## DISCUSS “PROTECT US”

Begin by talking about who and what we consider enemies. Without naming names, ask youth to describe someone or something that they would consider an enemy (e.g., a classmate that always makes fun of me in public; someone who has hurt me; sickness; hunger; the devil). What kinds of things does an enemy do against you? Write these things on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper. Then discuss the question below, using the discussion points and “Apologetics Helps” on the back page to help guide discussion.

► **How does God protect me from my enemies?**

### DISCUSSION POINTS

- If youth have not yet listed them as enemies, add sin, death, and the devil to the list of enemies. These are our greatest enemies. The devil doesn’t want us to be saved. Sin pulls us and others away from God. Death separates us from those we love.
- God cares for us. He sends His angels to protect us. He sends others to help us. Share the Bible verses below that talk about God’s protection.
- **Psalm 138:7:** Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You preserve my life; You stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand delivers me.
- **Isaiah 41:10:** Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.
- **2 Samuel 22:3–4:** My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; You save me from violence. I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.
- The ultimate way that God protects us from our enemies is by Jesus’ victory over sin, death, and the devil by His work on the cross. Sin and death no longer have power over us. We are no longer condemned. We have the promise of eternal life with God.
- **John 10:28–30:** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.
- **1 Corinthians 15:56–57:** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## CONSIDER “HELPING OTHERS”

God moved Paul’s nephew to help and protect Paul in a time of trouble.

► **Think of one way that you could help and protect someone this week.**

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Check for understanding by asking youth to share how God protects His people today.

# LEAVE

Read the Bible Verse, written in the *Defend Journal*:

**Deliver me from my enemies, O my God. Psalm 59:1**

Ask for prayer requests. Offer to pray, or invite a student to pray for everyone.



### CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus Christ protects us, His people, from our ancient enemies of sin, death, and the devil.



### LEADER NOTE

Be sensitive to the fact that some youth have been treated very poorly or even bullied by classmates, teammates, or even church or family members. If you notice a teen is strongly affected by the discussion, you could take this opportunity to check in with after class and offer to listen or direct him or her to your pastor or a Christian counselor.



### BONUS ACTIVITY

Let youth reach out in thanks to your community with “To Serve and Protect.”



### SHAREABLE DOWNLOAD

Connect with youth before and after the lesson by using the shareable images from the digital resource center.

# APOLOGETICS HELPS

## DEFEND THE FAITH

Paul was under house arrest during much of the time he was awaiting trial before Caesar. Roman prisoners were typically subject to house arrest—they could remain in their own home with their family and servants. They were allowed to have friends and visitors come over. Non-Roman prisoners spent the time awaiting trial in dungeon-like prison cells. Other apostles and missionaries came to visit Paul while he was under house arrest. During this time, Paul wrote several epistles (letters) to the Christian churches he had helped start. God allowed Paul’s time of imprisonment to further spread the Gospel.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ► Why do some people hate Christianity?

While many nonbelievers simply choose to ignore Christianity, there are others who actively hate Christianity and want to get rid of it. Why? Because the devil hates God and doesn’t want anyone to be saved. Just as there were people who persecuted Christians in the days of the Early Church, there will continue to be people who persecute Christians until the day when Jesus comes again. But as we saw in today’s lesson, the devil will not win. God is in control, and He has already won the victory over our enemies.

### ► What is God doing about the suffering and death in this world?

The devil and evil will not have the final word. Jesus Christ took all our suffering onto Himself. Through His death and resurrection, we have the promise of eternal life. God works in and through the suffering and sin in this world to achieve His purposes. We may not always be able to see this, but “for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).



## CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

### IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God uses authorities to protect and keep me safe from harm and danger.

### CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can support and encourage those who work to keep me safe.

## GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

*See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.*

### ADULT

I can consider different ways in the text and in my life that God protects His people from enemies.

### YOUTH

I can relate God’s protection of Paul in the text to His protection of His people today.

### ELEMENTARY

I understand God protects us from our enemies.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God protects me and helps me do His work.

## ★ BONUS ACTIVITIES

### ACT IT OUT

5–10 minutes

Choose people to be Paul, Paul’s nephew, the Jews, the Roman officer (tribune), and Roman soldiers. Use costumes and props, if desired. Read the narrative a second time while youth act it out.

### TO SERVE AND PROTECT

10–15 minutes

Bring in thank-you notes and ask youth to write “Thank you” and “God bless you” to people in your community who work to protect you. They might write to firefighters, the police, health care workers, construction workers, etc. Deliver or mail the notes sometime this week.

### BECOMING A CITIZEN

15–20 minutes

Paul received special treatment as a prisoner because he was a Roman citizen. What does it take to become a citizen of your country? Look online to find out. Pray for those people who are working toward becoming citizens. Our true citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20)!