



# Bible Study

ACTS 28:17-30



Canadian Lutheran  
World Relief

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## CLWR BIBLE STUDIES

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CLWR's Bible Studies have been designed to help congregations delve deeper into the challenges leading to injustices around the world, to explore related Bible stories, to discuss how these connect and how God calls us to act together.

These studies are meant to be adapted for your congregation's needs and are free to use. Each study includes discussion questions for children to adults, as well as suggestions to connect this discussion to action.

As CLWR continues to grow our resource collection, we would love to hear suggestions and insight from you. Please feel free to contact Heidi Van Schaik, our Church Relations Manager at [heidi@clwr.org](mailto:heidi@clwr.org) with ideas and feedback.

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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- The author is long suspected to be the same person who wrote the Gospel of Luke.
- Acts is often referred to as a part 2 to the Gospel of Luke.
- Written in 85-93 CE.
- Written somewhere in the Mediterranean.
- It is not likely that the author is a companion of Paul's, but there is evidence to suggest he is an admirer of Paul.
- Is a collection of stories based on the actions and travels of some of the apostles.

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## CULTURAL CONTEXT

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- There is tension and questions about the relationships between the Christian ways and the traditions of the Jews, and the Pagans (those who did not believe in a single God, but in multiple gods – the Greeks).
- The community as a whole is waiting for something to happen.
- The writings are intended to strengthen believers, rather than to convert unbelievers.

## SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

- In 64 CE a fire broke out in Rome that lasted 6 days and destroyed a large part of the city.
- The fire was likely accidental, but rumors rose that the Emperor, Nero, had started it on purpose so that he could rebuild the city to his own design.
- While Nero tried to quash the rumors, there was no stopping them, so he sought out a scapegoat – Paul.
- Since the districts that were unharmed were predominantly Christian, the blame was successfully shifted, and Paul was arrested. [i]
- Our story picks up as Paul arrives in Rome and is placed under house arrest while he awaits his trial before Nero.

## Acts 28:17–30

**17** Three days later he called together the local leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, he said to them, “Brothers,[a] though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, yet I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. **18** When they had examined me, the Romans[b] wanted to release me because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. **19** But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to the emperor—even though I had no charge to bring against my people. **20** For this reason therefore I asked to see you and speak with you, since it is for the sake of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.” **21** They replied, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken anything evil about you. **22** But we would like to hear from you what you think, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.”

23 After they had set a day to meet with him, they came to him at his lodgings in great numbers. From morning until evening he explained the matter to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets. 24 Some were convinced by what he had said, while others refused to believe. 25 So they disagreed with each other, and as they were leaving Paul made one further statement: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah,

26 ‘Go to this people and say,  
You will indeed listen but never understand,  
and you will indeed look but never perceive.  
27 For this people’s heart has grown dull,  
and their ears are hard of hearing,  
and they have shut their eyes;  
otherwise they might look with their eyes  
and listen with their ears  
and understand with their heart and turn—  
and I would heal them.’

28 “Let it be known to you, then, that this salvation of God has been sent to the gentiles; they will listen.”[c]

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense[d] and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

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## STUDY

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Read Acts 28:17–30

*When Paul arrives in Rome, what is the first thing he does?*

- Calls together the Jews

*Why would Paul want to speak to the Jews before anyone else, or do anything else?*

- That is what he always did
- To remind them that even in his persecution his calling is to proclaim the hope of the gospel

*What do you think Paul means when he says, “since it is for the sake of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”?*

*What was the reaction of the Jews to Paul’s message?*

- We’ve heard nothing from Judea
- We haven’t heard anything negative about you from our Jewish counterparts
- We want to meet with you and hear what you think
- They demonstrate curiosity to Paul’s message

*There was a second meeting with the Jewish community. In this meeting, how did Paul try to persuade them that Jesus was the Messiah?*

Read Isaiah 6:9–10

*Why would Paul quote from Isaiah?*

- Isaiah is a respected Jewish Prophet

Some members of Paul's audience believed, others did not.

*What do you think prevented them from believing?*

- Needed to witness for themselves
- Didn't trust Paul's word
- Had to learn a new way of thinking about/understanding something

*Do you think there is a difference between knowing something in your head, and knowing something in your heart? If so, can you describe the difference?*

Many Jews in Rome had a hard time learning about and understanding that there was a different way to live as Paul was trying to teach them.

*Is it easier to learn new ideas and concepts with your head or your heart?*

*When you're learning something new, do you find it easier to learn something that you are interested in/passionate about? Why or why not?*

*How do you best learn new things? Share with your group.*

- Hands-on doing
- Reading
- Hearing
- Seeing

**Did You Know:**

- According to the OECD, most students believe that school is useful and has prepared them for adult life – 88% believe that school has not been a waste of time, and 87% believe that school has taught them things that are useful for a job. [i]
- Skills development is vital in securing livelihood opportunities for marginalized groups such as women and the differently abled.
- Student perceptions of school vary across countries. For example, in Kazakhstan, Albania, Thailand, and other countries, over 90% of students believe that school has helped them gain confidence to make decisions.[ii]
- Conflict and disasters disrupt the education of vulnerable young learners worldwide. When a child is forced to flee, they lose so much, including the ability to learn at school.

1. <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/revieweducationpolicies>

2. *ibid.*

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## WONDERINGS

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*Consider your local community, who might be challenged to attain education in your community?*

*Consider Canada, who might be challenged to attain education in this country?*

*Consider the world, what factors might contribute to challenging someone to attain education, where they are?*

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## ACTION BRAINSTORM

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*How can you/your parish support learning locally?*

*How can you/your parish support learning nationally?*

*How can you/your parish support learning globally?*

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## ACTION SUGGESTIONS

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Learn more about Nicaragua and their need for support for their students.

Here is a good website for information:

- [www.clwr.org/news-events/nicaragua-supporting-education](http://www.clwr.org/news-events/nicaragua-supporting-education)
- [www.clwr.org/lucios-story](http://www.clwr.org/lucios-story)

Learn more about the GRIT Project and how gender-responsive and inclusive technical and vocational education is helping women and people with disabilities in the West Bank achieve their learning and employment goals. Here is a good website for information:

- [www.clwr.org/grit-info](http://www.clwr.org/grit-info)

Read more about immigrant and refugee students in Canada:

- [brusheducation.ca/brush-catalogue/p/immigrant-and-refugee-students-in-canada](http://brusheducation.ca/brush-catalogue/p/immigrant-and-refugee-students-in-canada)

Have a blessing of the bags (backpacks, lunch bags, work bags) service. People of all ages need to be encouraged to learn and grow every day, including adults!

Host a food drive to supply a local school food program with necessities – be sure to be in relationship with the school to determine what they need.

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## ACTION SUGGESTIONS (CONTINUED)

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Connect with your local post secondary school and find out how you can help the international students that attend there (food drive, welcome baskets, etc.).

Connect with your local primary school and volunteer to work with students.

Volunteer at a local adult literacy centre.

Share information about a higher education scholarship opportunity for young people of refugee or migrant background:

- [ccrweb.ca/en/daniel-schickedanz-scholarship](http://ccrweb.ca/en/daniel-schickedanz-scholarship)

Host a fundraiser to support one of the many CLWR initiatives to support education (including learning kits, school meals and supplies for students in Nicaragua, agricultural training for small farmers, technical education for women and people with disabilities in the West Bank etc.):

- [www.clwr.org/products/all-gifts](http://www.clwr.org/products/all-gifts)

Consider reading *I am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai.

*Ask children: Have you ever been sick and couldn't go to school or piano lessons or hockey practice for a long time? Did you miss not being there?*

- They may say no!

*Do you miss seeing all your friends over the summer and are excited to go back to school in September?*

Talk to them about how we need to learn things so that we can continue to grow and be better people, even as adults!

Talk to them about how in some places, children who really want to go to school, because they miss their friends, or they like learning certain things, are unable to go to school or in some places it is hard to go.

Talk to them about how Jesus was a teacher and that the disciples are called that because the word Greek word in the Bible 'disciple' means student.

Talk about how much we can learn from how Jesus teaches us, and how we can be good disciples.

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## PRAYER

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Heavenly God,

Thank you for abundantly sending us Jesus  
to teach us how we are to live in your world,  
and how we can care for each other.

Help us to care for each other  
by sharing what we know  
and by supporting others in their learning journey.

We pray this in the name of your Son,  
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.