



## GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL PROTECTION

Open it

1. Describe a time that things just worked out perfectly—perhaps you describe it as a “God thing.”

## Daily devotions

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Acts 23:12–35

2. How would you summarize this passage?
3. What would you say are a couple of the key ideas in this passage?
4. How do you think Paul was feeling as this story unfolded?
5. How do you see God working in these events?

## Day 2

### TODAY'S THEME: EMPTY ZEAL

Read Acts 23:12–15

These Jews were probably the ones who were known as the “hardcore” guys of the bunch. They were ambitious and passionate about their faith in Judaism and they did not want to see that threatened. What was their response to this Paul character? “We’ll kill him. And to make sure we take it seriously, we won’t eat or drink until it’s been done!” These men were likely part of a group of Jews from the day called “dagger men” who acted as Jewish assassins of the day. They earned their title because they would often conceal daggers which they would use to kill unsuspecting Roman soldiers as they passed by.

The sad part of hearing about these Jews who were ready and willing to take things to the extreme is that it was all in vain. They had so much zeal (great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or an objective) but in the end it wouldn’t bring them any good because they were living lives in active rebellion to Christ and the Kingdom of God.

6. **On a scale of eating peas as a kid to getting to eat a nice juicy steak, how zealous would you say you are for your faith? Why did you give that answer?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. **In what ways do you think the devil may try to use zeal for different “causes” to combat our faith? How can we still fight for these causes without losing zeal for our faith?**

**I HAVE A QUESTION!** ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

**PRAYER GUIDE** ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- Pray that God would kindle a passion and energy in you to live out the Christian life and reach lost people for the sake of Christ.

### Day 3

#### TODAY'S THEME: GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL PROTECTION

Read Acts 23:16–33

Did you see it? Did you notice how God was protecting Paul?

What does “providential protection” even mean? Great question! It means God’s divine intervention into a situation. Did you see God’s providential protection in these events?

Do you think it was coincidence that when these Jews made up this assassination plan against Paul’s life that Paul’s nephew happened to overhear it so he could take action to protect Paul? Do you think it was coincidence that news made it to the Roman tribune? I doubt it!!

God was working through the natural events of human history to protect Paul from his would-be assassins. Isn’t it cool to see how God does that?

**8. As you look back, are there any ways that you can clearly see God working through the events that you’ve experienced?**

**9. How can looking back and seeing how God has worked in the past help us understand better how God might be working in our lives today?**

**I HAVE A QUESTION!** ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

**PRAYER GUIDE** ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- Praise God for the different ways you have seen Him work in your life in the past.
- Pray that God would help make it clearer how He is at work in your life today!

## Day 4

### TODAY'S THEME: THE WAITING GAME

#### Read Acts 23:34–35

I want you to think about this for a second. Where was Paul when this passage ends? In Roman captivity. And he has already been in custody for a while at this point! Where this passage ends would make for a really great commercial break if you were watching this unfold as a TV series or a movie. The governor has told him basically that he's going to leave him in prison until he has a hearing when his accusers arrive. Who knows how long that will take! So Paul gets to hurry up and wait, all the while staying under Roman custody.

When we read Scripture, we can very easily make all the events take much less time in our minds than what really happened because we read them in sentences that are right next to each other on a page. Paul has been in Roman custody for a couple days now before he was sent off to Caesarea. The journey there would likely have been a couple days' journey. Now Paul is left waiting in Roman custody for five more days before he even will get to have a hearing! There's no doubt God is working all this out to protect Paul and put him where he is needed. I'm sure that Paul would have wished for God to make things happen just a little faster, but that's not always how God works. Sometimes God makes us sit and wait for the next step.

**10. How can God use waiting to cause us to grow spiritually in our faith?**

**11. When have you had to wait for something to happen but weren't sure if or when it ever would take place?**

**I HAVE A QUESTION!** ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

**PRAYER GUIDE** ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- For patience in the waiting that God sometimes calls us to!

## Day 5

### TODAY'S THEME: SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

Re-read Acts 23:11

Last week we read about Paul causing an uproar with the Sanhedrin by bringing up the resurrection from the dead. At the end of our passage, after Paul had been carried away by the Romans, the Lord speaks to him and tells him that his mission is not yet over. Just as Paul has now testified to the resurrection and the kingdom of God in Jerusalem, he will do the same in Rome itself.

It's kind of like watching a superhero movie. You know they are supposed to win, so despite any opposition and no matter how beat up they get, you know they are going to pull through in the end. I think if God Himself is telling Paul that he is going to testify in Rome, it's going to happen. The only question is, how is he going to get there?

**12. How do you think this week's passage is playing into the big picture of God's getting Paul to Rome so he can testify there?**

**I HAVE A QUESTION!** ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

**PRAYER GUIDE** ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- That God would help you to see the big picture of what He is up to as you read through Scripture