

Discovery

July 2011

The Early Church

Stories • Puzzles • Jokes • Readers' Response • Serial and more...

What was it like for Christians in the Early Church?

They lived at a time unlike ours and with many different challenges. Put yourself in the shoes of some of the early Christians and imagine what it was like. One thing is for sure though – our God is the same today as yesterday and we KNOW that He is always with us no matter what we are facing.

Wendy



Making the Bible so easy to
read, even if you're a beginner!
info@biblediscovery.org.nz
www.biblediscovery.org.nz

Discovery is a publication of the PSSM Bible Discovery Trust (formerly the Postal Sunday School Movement of NZ Inc.) This is an evangelical, non-denominational, Christian trust. We depend on God to supply our financial needs through the donations of interested individuals and groups. All donations are receipted and tax-deductible.

As well as *Discovery* we produce 5 different levels of FREE Bible lessons. These are posted monthly to all who would like them. If you would like to join please ask your parent or guardian for permission, then send your name, address and age to:

PSSM Bible Discovery, 888 New North Road, Mt Albert, Auckland 1025 Ph: 09 846 1776 Issue 11 Volume 73 July 2011
CEO: Mr. C. Becker. Discovery Editor: Wendy Reid. Permission must be sought before reproducing anything.



Church Beginnings

By Julia Martin 

Are the following statements true or false??
If in doubt, check the Bible references.

True False

1. The followers of Jesus were first called 'Christians' at Antioch.

Acts 11 : 26

2. The Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost in Rome.

Acts 2 : 1 - 13

3. The first time Peter preached, 5000 people believed and were baptized.

Acts 2 : 41

4. On the day of Pentecost, everyone heard the good news in their own language.

Acts 2:5 - 13

5. The first Christian martyr was Judas.

Acts 7 : 54 - 60

6. Saul (later known as Paul) was on his way to Damascus when he was confronted by the risen Christ.

Acts 9

7. All the believers shared everything they had and no one was in need.

Acts 4 : 32 - 35

8. Ananias and Sapphira sold some land and gave all the money to God.

Acts 5 : 1 - 11

9. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people.

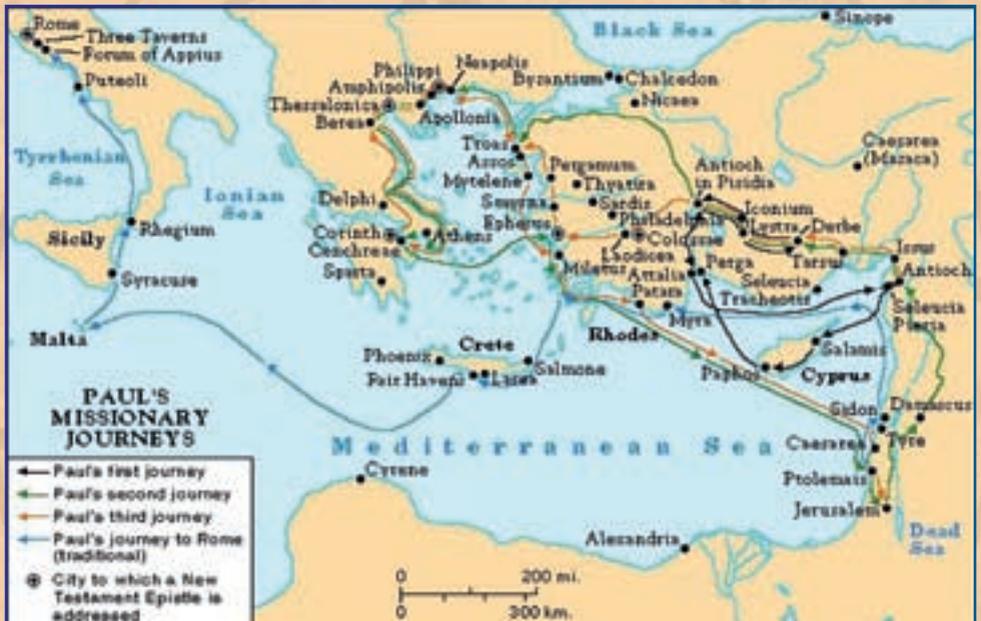
Acts 5 : 12

10. The Jewish elders and teachers of the law were pleased to join the early church.

Acts 5 : 17

Answers: 1. T, 2. F, 3. F, 4. T, 5. F, 6. T, 7. T, 8. F, 9. T, 10. F.

Paul's journeys



The Shipwreck

I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.

Acts 27:13-44

The storm raged in the sea, the ship tossed and turned,
Two weeks the wind blew, their stomachs were churned.

The sailors and soldiers, and prisoners too,
Were frightened and scared, didn't know what to do.

Paul was a prisoner and under strict guard,
Being taken to Rome, a long journey so hard.

He had to appear for a trial by the king,
But Paul knew his God, and was trusting in Him.

One night when the ship was in danger of sinking,
While Paul was awake and praying and thinking,
An angel came talking, told Paul what would happen,
He said they'd be safe, that God would protect them.

Paul told them to eat in the morning when light,
Now do as I say, and we'll all be alright.
Crash! Now the ship had got stuck on a sand-bar.
They jumped in the water with a wail and a waaaah!

Some swam to the shore; the ship broke with a screech,
Others grabbed bits of wood and washed up on the beach.
All of the people were alive and not dead;
They were kept safe by God 'cause they did what He said.

Rhoda's Surprise

By Heather Vincent 

Hi, my name is Rhoda and I'm a servant-girl for Mary and her family in Jerusalem.

Mary, her son John Mark, and I belong to a group called Christians, which means we're followers of Jesus. We believe He's God's son, the Messiah. John Mark's friend Peter was one of Jesus' disciples when He lived among us, so we know a lot about Jesus' teachings and how He was killed by the Romans and rose from the dead three days later.

Peter is now our leader and together, hundreds of us meet to learn more about Jesus, read the Scriptures and pray for each other. It's not easy though, especially since Herod and some Jews hate Christians and make it dangerous to be a follower of Jesus. Let me tell you about one incident...

The day started normal enough, but then Herod, the Roman ruler in Jerusalem, arrested Peter and put him in prison, guarded by sixteen soldiers. James, another disciple, had already been killed and we were afraid it would happen to Peter too.

We were sad and very scared, so we got together to pray at Mary's home. We prayed and prayed, asking God to protect Peter, and get him out of prison.

Suddenly I heard a loud banging on the outside door, so I went to see who was there. No-one else seemed to have heard it; they were praying so hard. It was scary because I thought it might be Roman soldiers coming to arrest someone else.

The knocking got louder, and I could hear a voice; "Let me in. Let me in."

"Who is it?" I asked fearfully.

"It's me, Peter! Please let me in, Rhoda."

"It can't be you sir," I said. "I thought you were in prison."

"It's me all right; an angel came and got me out."

I now recognized Peter's voice. Full of excitement I ran back to the others.

"Peter's here, he's at the door now," I cried.

Mary and John Mark looked at me as if I was mad.

"It must be his angel," they said.

All this time, Peter was still waiting outside, wondering why no-one had opened the door. In my excitement I'd forgotten to let him in!

At last John Mark went to investigate.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"It's me, Peter, why don't you let me in?"

Quickly John Mark unbolted the latch and opened the door. There stood Peter, alive and well. He gave John Mark a big hug and the two men shouted for joy.

Soon the others crowded round, excited that their prayers had been answered, but full of questions. Everyone was talking at once, so Peter raised his hand and announced,

"Stop, stop! I'll tell you all about it."

We sat quietly waiting for Peter to begin.

"Well, I was scared at first, you know how horrible it is in there, but then I remembered Jesus words, 'I am with you always.' Knowing He was with me even in prison, gave me a great peace and I didn't feel afraid any more. So I lay down where I was, and soon fell asleep. Suddenly I was woken by a bright light and felt someone shaking my shoulder. It was an angel of the Lord, and he said," Quick, get up! Put on your cloak and sandals, and follow me."

Before I could say anything, the chains on my feet and hands fell off. I grabbed my cloak and followed the angel past the sleeping soldiers. When we came to the prison gate it opened by itself. Then the angel disappeared. God had sent his angel and rescued me. God really does hear and answer your prayers."

We were all amazed, and immediately praised God for His answer. What a surprising night!

Taken from Acts 12: 1-17



Congratulations

for years completed...

BIBLE READINGS

July

DATE	BOOK	VERSE
1 Fri	Heb.	4:12-13
2 Sat	Psa.	19:7-11
3 Sun	Psa.	33:4-9
4 Mon	Psa.	119:1-8
5 Tue	Psa.	119:9-16
6 Wed	Psa.	119:89-96
7 Thur	John	5:19-24
8 Fri	Rom.	13:8-10
9 Sat	2 Tim.	2:8-13
10 Sun	2 Tim.	3:14-17
11 Mon	Mark	1:9-13
12 Tue	Mark	1:35-39
13 Wed	Mark	1:40-45
14 Thur	Mark	3:1-6
15 Fri	Mark	4:35-41
16 Sat	Mark	6:30-44
17 Sun	Mark	6:45-52
18 Mon	Mark	7:14-23
19 Tue	Mark	10:13-16
20 Wed	Mark	10:17-22
21 Thur	Mark	10:32-34
22 Fri	Mark	11:15-19
23 Sat	Mark	11:27-33
24 Sun	Mark	12:13-17
25 Mon	Matt.	12:28-34
26 Tue	Mark	14:1-7
27 Wed	John	14:8-14
28 Thur	John	14:15-20
29 Fri	John	14:21-24
30 Sat	John	14:25-31
31 Sun	John	15:1-10

- | | | |
|-----------|--|--|
| 1 | Friday Adah
DJ Jones
Neo Levi
Zachary Meinsma
Mikaela Mountfort
Jessie Sutton | Jessie Hince
Morpheus Levi
Morticia Levi
Bradley Meinsma
Doris Robin
Caleb Thomas |
| 2 | Aidan Dagleish
Paul Gerrard-Smithi
Sandra Mcinnes
Mikayla Russell | Temalesi Dawainakal
Mary Lauridsen
Lisa Nguyen
Etike Taukave |
| 3 | Naomi Chin
Johnathan Lauridsen
Rebekah-Rose Moodley | David Krishna
Rebekah Little
Hannah O'Connor |
| 4 | Oluwaseun Babalola
Rebecca Barnhill
Julia Koi
Virginia Mitchell | Rachel Barnhill
Grace Francis
Mark Linton |
| 5 | James Duncan
Nicole Jenkins
Katie Jenkins
Yvonne Thompson | Hazel Jenkins
Sophie Jenkins
Nathan Pook
Merewalesi Tuwawa |
| 6 | Brenda Smith | |
| 7 | Dan Hince | |
| 8 | Isaac Barkley
Esin Nkereuwem | Jope Jale |
| 9 | Lydia Ford
Sally Wahe | Rosie Voschezang |
| 11 | Joan Wichman | |
| 25 | Anita Erskine
Alewa Wahe | Kenneth Pearce |
| 56 | John Randall | |

Readers' Response



"Hey kids – this is YOUR page – so send in (original materials) your favourite joke, one of your own poems or prayers, a letter or a question about being a Christian and it might end up here!!"

Email: info@biblediscovery.org.nz

or write to us: 888 New North Road, Mt Albert, Auckland 1025

Please send your questions, poems, puzzles or whatever to us at Discovery Magazine. We'd love to hear from you!



The New Testament's Book of Acts and Epistle to the Galatians records that the first Christian community was centered in Jerusalem and its leaders included James, Peter and John

What was early Christianity like?

The three distinguishing marks of the early church were: separation from the world, unconditional love and childlike obedience to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:42-47

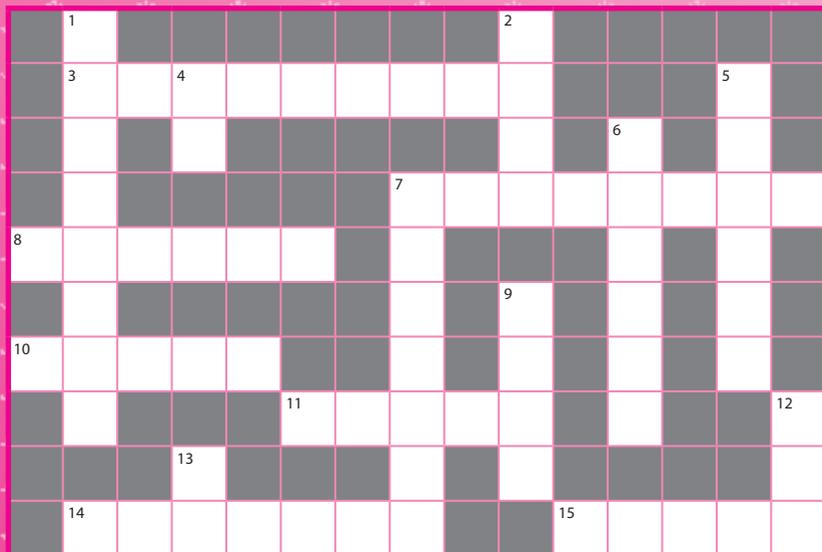
- 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
- 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.
- 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.
- 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.
- 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,
- 47 Praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.



Romans 16

By Janet Fleming 

The Early Church



Clues are all found in Romans 16 unless stated differently

Across

3. This lady risked her life for Paul (Verses 3 & 4)
7. In verse 12 the first of two women who worked hard for the Lord.
8. Also in verse 12, this woman worked very hard for the Lord.
10. Verse 13 tells us that this man was chosen in the Lord.
11. This man liked to have people visit him. (Verse 23)
14. Greet _____, tested and approved in Christ. (Verse 10)
15. This man was related to Paul. (Verse 21)

Down

1. In verse 5 this friend of Paul was the first follower of Jesus in Asia.
2. This woman in verse 6 has the same name as the mother of Jesus.
4. Urbanus was ___ Christ (Verse 9)
5. This relative of Paul was in prison with Paul (Verse 7)
6. Verses 1 & 2 mention a woman who was a great help to Paul and others.
7. This person wrote down this letter. (Verse 22)
9. In verse 19 Paul states he wants these people to be ___ about what is good.
12. We read about Timothy in verse 21. 1 Timothy 1:2 calls Timothy Paul's ___ in the faith.
13. Paul says that the mother of Rufus has been a mother to ___. (Verse 13)



The Early Church

"Hurry Ethan, or we'll be late!"

"Where are we going, James?"

"To the temple courts."

"What do we want to go there for?"

"It's where the followers of Jesus Christ meet every day."

"What for?"

"They meet to talk and to pray and to hear more about Jesus."

"I thought he was dead."

"He was, but after three days God raised him from the dead. Now he's in heaven and he wants everyone to hear the good news."

"What good news?"

"The news that he came into the world as God's Son to die for our sins. It's good news because if we believe in him, we'll have eternal life and we'll live with God forever. There's the temple up ahead."

"Wow. What a crowd! So who's the big guy up the front doing the talking?"

"That's Peter. He's one of the leaders. He used to be a fisherman and was one of the Lord's disciples. Apparently he was a bit of a loser at times, but since the Holy Spirit came, he's become an awesome preacher and leader. He's scared of no-one."

"So where did the Holy Spirit come from?"

"Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit when he returned to heaven. A few weeks ago, on the day of Pentecost, God the Holy Spirit came down from heaven, and amazing things happened in Jerusalem and are continuing to happen."

"What sort of things?"



"People speaking in languages they'd never learnt. Sick people being healed and the lives of many people being changed as they believe in Jesus and want to follow and obey him."

"Wow! That's amazing."

"It sure is Ethan, and what's more, all the believers meet together and share everything."

"What sort of things?"

"Food, clothes, furniture, skills. Some of the rich people have even sold up their land and properties and given the money to the needy. Our family has been given new sandals and warm cloaks. We get to eat in other people's homes and everyone is so loving and kind. More and more people are joining the church every day."

"So how do you join?"

"Well, it's not like joining a club. It's all about choosing to follow Jesus. We have to be sorry for the bad things we've done and ask Jesus to forgive us. Then we must believe in him and ask him to become our Lord and Saviour. When we do this, we become part of his family- the Church - and it's wonderful."

"I think I'd like to follow Jesus."

"That's great Ethan. Let's go and find someone who can help you."

When Christians Prayed

Rhoda, a servant girl, stands behind the door and peeps around the corner as John begins praying

John: "Lord, please save Peter. Please don't let King Herod kill him like he killed James."

A knock comes at the door and Rhoda runs to the door

Peter: "Please let me in."

Rhoda runs back to the room where the disciples are praying

Rhoda: "It's Peter!"

Mary: "Don't be silly, Rhoda. Peter is in prison. It cannot be him."

Rhoda: "It is Peter. I heard him speak."

John: "You are mad child."

Rhoda: "Yes, it's Peter!"

Mary: "Maybe it's his ghost."

The knocking continues until finally John and another disciple go to the door, open it, and bring Peter into the room.

Thomas: "What happened?"

Peter: "I was asleep in prison, tied to two guards, when an angel touched me on the shoulder and a light shone in the cell. The angel told me to put on my clothes and my sandals and follow him. I did what he said. We passed the first and second guards and when we came to the iron gate leading to the city it opened by itself and we passed through. When we had walked down the street the angel disappeared. I suddenly realized that God had rescued me from King Herod"

Everyone: "That's wonderful."

Peter: "Tell James and the brothers what happened. Now I must be gone before they find I am missing."

The door closes

John: "Well, I guess we didn't really believe that God would answer our prayers. We must go and thank Him and pray God keeps Peter safe."



See if you can find the words in this grid to fill the spaces below.

The first word has been entered to help you get started.

F	O	R	T	S	R	I	F	F	O	U	R	F
T	S	E	N	C	T	O	E	Y	A	D	A	I
A	C	C	O	R	D	I	N	G	D	G	I	F
H	R	E	T	I	H	E	O	X	R	N	S	T
W	I	I	H	P	H	W	K	T	I	I	E	E
T	P	V	A	T	A	A	I	H	H	D	D	E
S	T	E	T	U	A	S	S	E	T	R	N	N
I	U	D	O	R	D	N	S	R	U	O	T	T
R	R	Y	O	E	I	A	I	E	T	C	A	H
H	E	F	I	S	W	E	H	T	D	C	H	R
C	S	D	E	I	R	U	B	T	H	A	T	E
E	C	N	A	T	R	O	P	M	I	E	H	E
Z	S	N	A	I	H	T	N	I	R	O	C	C

FOR _ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _ ,

_ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _ ,

_ _ _ _ _ ,

_ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _ .

_ _ _ _ _ **chapter**

_ _ _ _ _ **verses** _ _ _ _ _ **and** _ _ _ _ _ .



I can follow

One Sabbath, while at the Synagogue with their Mum and Dad, Jude and Ruth snuck outside and sat on the steps. They knew how to do that without anyone seeing, as the Synagogue was also their school. They had found it hard to understand the teachers' readings from the Torah, so were playing 'eye spy with my little eye' instead.

A man started climbing up the steps to the Synagogue. He was old, Jude decided, about as old as his Mum and Dad. While he was not very tall, he was solid and looked really strong. His hands were big and rough. His voice was loud; louder than Jude and Ruth needed it to be.

"Well youngsters, playing hooky are we?"

"No," said Jude and Ruth together.

"Oh, I think you are," said the man, as he sat beside them. "My name is Simon but every one calls me Peter, and you are?"

"I am Jude and this is my sister Ruth," said Jude.

"What great names," Peter said. "You know Ruth, you are named after a very famous woman, and you Jude, have the same name as a very close friend of mine. Now, why are you not inside listening to the teacher?"

"It's boring," said Ruth.

"Oh dear," said Peter. "That does sometimes happen, even the most exciting things can be made boring. I'm actually here today to tell the people inside some really exciting stuff, although I don't think they will like what I have to say."

"What are you going to tell them?" asked Jude.

"Have you heard of Jesus of Nazareth?" asked Peter.

"No," said Jude and Ruth.

"Have you heard of the Messiah?" asked Peter.

"Yes," said Jude. "He is going to be sent by God to come and save us."

"You have been paying attention to your lessons," praised Peter. "Well, I am going to tell them that the Messiah has already come and that his name is Jesus."

"Really?" asked Ruth and Jude.

"Really," said Peter.

"They are not going to like you very much," said Jude.

"I know," agreed Peter. "But I can follow the Messiah, I can follow Jesus. Although I am a Jew, although I am a sinner, I can follow Jesus."

"Why do you want to follow him?" asked Ruth.

"Because he asked me. I am a fisherman. After fishing all night and having caught nothing, my brother, Andrew, and I were tired and fed up as we packed up our nets.

"Further along the shore there was a crowd of people standing around one man. As I watched, he looked at me then moved through the crowd and walked toward Andrew and I. He stepped into one of our boats and asked us to row it a little way out from the shore. Normally I would have had something to say about that, but for some reason I just felt I had to do what he asked – something inside seemed to tell me that it was the right thing to do.

"We rowed out a little way and stopped when he told us to. He then used our boat as a platform to talk to the crowd. I had never seen so many people and I noticed that they were

Jesus



really quiet as they listened. There was no shouting or pushing, no noise at all. As we had rowed him out, he had told us that his name was Jesus.

“As he spoke, I realised that he was the miracle worker we had been hearing about. – the one who had healed people, cast out evil spirits and baptised people with something called the *Holy Spirit* rather than water. He told us that it is more important to love your fellow man than blindly obey religious laws. As he spoke, something inside me seemed to move.

“When he had finished speaking, he asked Andy and I to row a bit further out and put down our nets to catch fish. I have been a fisherman all my life and I know that the best time to catch fish is at night, as the fish swim deeper during the day to stay cool. I told Jesus that I couldn’t see the use in letting down our nets, but I would do as he’d asked. Again, I had a feeling deep inside – I didn’t believe we would catch any fish, but I felt that by obeying Jesus something would happen. Andy and I dropped a net and guess what?”

“What?” asked Ruth and Jude.

“There were so many fish in the net that our mates, James and John, had to help us pull it in. I knew that was a miracle. I bowed down to Jesus and told him that I was a sinner and a bad person. Jesus just smiled, then he helped me to my feet and said, ‘Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.’”

“How can you be fishers of men?” asked Ruth.

“Jesus meant that he wanted us to act as nets for him. To bring people to him so he could show them that he was the Messiah who had come to save us all.

“So, I followed Jesus. I saw him perform miracles. I heard him preach great things about how we are to live and how he was God’s son. I even saw him crucified by the Romans, but I can still follow Jesus.”

“How can you follow him when he is dead?” asked ever-practical Ruth.

“Because he came back to life after being buried,” said Peter. “I know that is hard to believe but I have seen him alive again. I also saw him go back to God in heaven, but I can still follow Jesus. Jesus lives on inside me and guides me with his spirit. Because of that, if I can follow Jesus, so can you. Come on, say it.”

“I can follow Jesus,” chanted Ruth and Jude.

“Well done,” said Peter. “You can indeed follow Jesus and if you come inside and listen I will tell you how.”

Today we can all follow Jesus. Those who lived and followed Jesus have told their stories which you can find in the New Testament part of the Bible. Read about Peter, his brother Andrew and their friends James and John, known as the *sons of Zebedee* and the *sons of thunder*. You will also find who Jude was named after. Learn how they followed Jesus and how you can do the same, so you can say ‘I can follow Jesus’.

In the first five books of the Old Testament section of the Bible (called The Torah), you will be able to find what Jude and Ruth were taught at their school in the Synagogue. You will also be able to read in the Old Testament about the woman Ruth who was named after.



"They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

Acts 2:42