

INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

This book of the New Testament begins where the first four come to a close. Luke, our historian, begins with the Lord being taken up into heaven, and shows us the apostles and the nucleus that would begin the church of Christ on this earth. We see them waiting in Jerusalem (*Acts 1:15*). The promised *signal* to begin would be the "baptism with the Holy Spirit" (*Acts 1:5*). [Note how Jesus applies what John the Baptist had said.] Luke shows us the day called Pentecost, and we see the Holy Spirit come down and fill the waiting disciples with spiritual power.

Over nineteen centuries ago, Joel's prophecy CAME TRUE, and the Holy Spirit came. Jesus called Him "ANOTHER Helper." Jesus would not leave his people to be ORPHANS when he went back to the Father! He sent *another* Helper to be with them forever!!! The world can never be the same! The world cannot go back to where it was before the Spirit came! Ground has been captured that can never be lost [since the facts of the past cannot change]! The existence of Christ's church is its own *credential!* This is *The Last Days*: they are swiftly running to their completion, and the saved in Eternity will be a "great crowd," so many that no one can count them (*Rev. 7:9*). The real power of Pentecost is not the miraculous gifts from the Spirit. The real power is in TRANSFORMED LIVES!!!

This book shows us the first time that God's terms for saving man are announced (*Acts 2:38*). It shows the spread of Christianity into Palestine, and then throughout the civilized Roman world. It was Peter who preached that Pentecost. But Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, soon is the chief actor in the drama that unfolds.

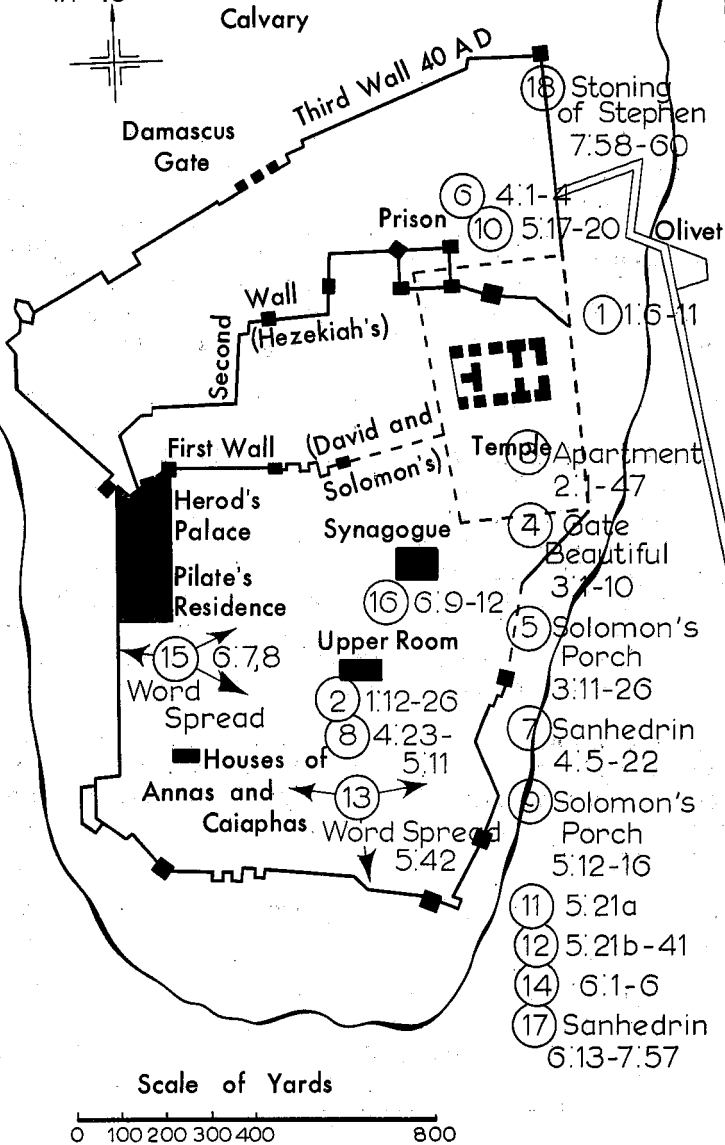
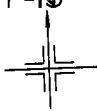
This book could not have been completed before Paul's release from prison in 62 A.D., nor can it be dated past 67 A.D., since it does not mention Paul's death. Luke probably wrote it during the two years at Rome with Paul (*Col. 4:14*), completing it as Paul is released. Traditional history says Paul did go to Spain after his release, and also preached in the East before he was recaptured in 66 A.D. at Nicopolis (Epirus) on the west coast of Greece. He was decapitated at Rome in 67 A.D., shortly after he completed the letter of 2 Timothy.

THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

Acts 1:1—7:60

Introduction

1:1 - 5



THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

1:1—7:60

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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

1 Dear Theophilus:
1 In my first book I wrote about all the things that Jesus did and taught, from the time he began his work ²until the day he was taken up to heaven. Before he was taken up he gave instructions by the power of the Holy Spirit to the men he had chosen as his apostles. ³For forty days after his death he showed himself to them many times, in ways that proved beyond doubt that he was alive; he was seen by them, and talked with them about the Kingdom of God. ⁴And when they came together, he gave them this order, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, that I told you about. ⁵John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus Taken up into Heaven

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ²"Do not leave Jerusalem, but for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, ³but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."
2
3
4
5

1. In my first book. That is, in the Gospel of Luke. The name "Theophilus" means *one who loves God*. No record of him exists other than Luke's mention of his name.

2. He gave instructions. The Great Commission (*Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47-49*). **By the power of the Holy Spirit.** Jesus was given the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit (*John 3:34*). The Spirit was "ANOTHER Helper" (*John 14:16*), and Jesus gave them a *pledge* of the Spirit (*John 20:22*), with the promise they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (see *verse 5*).

3. He showed himself to them. Jesus is LIVING SAVIOR! If his body "still slept on a Judean hill," he would be no different from Socrates, Buddha, Muhammad, or any other sage. **He was seen by them.** See note on *Matt. 28:9* Scripture records eleven times that he was seen after raising from death, but the language implies more times. [The event of *Matt. 27:52-53* can be taken to imply that he was also seen by the people and the Jewish leaders during the forty days time.] **About the Kingdom of God.** The church (messianic community) which would be officially set up on Pentecost.

4. Do not leave Jerusalem. It was "poetic justice" that the church of Christ would begin right in the same city where the enemies of Christ lived. A false religion would have begun hundreds of years later and thousands of miles distant. See note on *Acts 2:36-37*. But also, Isaiah had prophesied that Jerusalem would be the place where the Good News was first preached (*Isa. 2:3*). **But wait for the gift.** Note it is the Father who promised the gift. The terms of citizenship in the Kingdom must be spoken by the Spirit. [Note the command to "wait" applied only to *this* time of setting up of Christ's church.]

5. John baptized with water. Water was the only element in the baptism of John. They had received John's baptism [some think *John 4:1-2* implies that they (and John's disciples) had been re-baptized as Christ's disciples], and now they are going to receive "baptism with the Holy Spirit." This took place just ten days after Jesus told them this. [For a more complete discussion of John's baptism and "Christian baptism," see notes on *Acts 19:1-7*.

Jesus Is Taken up to Heaven

6 When the apostles met together with Jesus they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time give the Kingdom back to Israel?"

7 Jesus said to them, "The times and occasions are set by my Father's own authority, and it is not for you to know when they will be. 8 But you will be filled with power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." 9 After saying this, he was taken up to heaven as they watched him; and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They still had their eyes fixed on the sky as he went away, when two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand there looking up at the sky? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw him go to heaven."

So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

6. **Lord, will you at this time?** They still held to their former ideas about a "golden age of Israel," with a political Messiah. Their only question was: "Will you give it *now*?" Not until the Holy Spirit was given, and they understood "all the truth" (*John 16:12-15*), would they give up this delusion and see that Christ's Kingdom is not "of this world."

7. **And it is not for you to know.** That is, "it's none of your business!" The "times and occasions" are not revealed (see *Rev. 10:3-4*).

8. **But you will be filled with power.** Not the political power they dreamed of having, but spiritual power! **And you will be witnesses for me.** A "witness" is one who *gives evidence or testimony, based upon personal knowledge or belief*. The apostles are "prime witnesses" about things in which they participated themselves (*1 John 1:1-4*). Every Christian can be a "witness" in a *secondary sense*, based upon the facts which he accepts as being true. **In Jerusalem.** Beginning in the religious capital of Judaism, and spreading out over the whole world (see note on *Col. 1:23*).

9. **He was taken up to heaven.** See *Luke 24:51-53* and notes there.

10. **They still had their eyes fixed on the sky.** In surprise at what has just happened! As they stand there, two men dressed in white (angels) suddenly are standing beside them.

11. **This Jesus . . . will come back in the same way.** A cloud hid him from their sight as he was taken up. He will come back with clouds (*Rev. 1:7; Dan. 7:13; Matt. 24:30*). [The nucleus of disciples were Galileans, *Acts 2:7*]

Judas' Successor

¹²Then the apostles went back to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is about half a mile away from the city. ¹³They entered Jerusalem and went up to the room where they were staying: Peter, John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Patriot, and Judas, the son of James. ¹⁴They gathered frequently to pray as a group, together with the women, and with Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹⁵A few days later there was a meeting of the believers, about one hundred and twenty in all, and Peter stood up to speak. ¹⁶"My brothers," he said, "the scripture had to come true in which the Holy Spirit, speaking through David, predicted about Judas, who was the guide of those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷Judas was a member of our group, because he had been chosen to have a part in our work."

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about one hundred and twenty) and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—he was one of our number and shared in this ministry."

12. **Then the apostles went back.** Jesus was taken up from the Mount of Olives. [A shrine is built on the supposed spot.] Now they return to the city to wait.

13. **And went up to the room.** A room on the second floor. They both lived there, and used it for a meeting place. All the apostles are named except Judas Iscariot (see notes on *Matt. 10:1-4*).

14. **To pray as a group.** They were waiting for the Father's gift. Ten days time passed between Jesus being taken up, and the events of Pentecost. They spent much of this time in prayer. **With the women.** Especially those who had been with Jesus on his teaching tour (*Luke 8:1-3*) **Mary.** This is the last time Scripture speaks of her. Traditional history says she lived almost to the time Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. **And his brothers.** These are the natural sons of Mary and Joseph. Just six months before this, they had been unbelievers (*John 7:5*), but now they were among the nucleus of disciples. One of them was the James of Jerusalem (*Acts 15:13; 1 Cor. 15:7*), the writer of the Letter from James. [Brothers: see note on *John 2:12*.]

15. **About one hundred and twenty in all.** This is how many were at Jerusalem, but there were other disciples (*1 Cor. 15:6*). With the attitude of the apostles themselves (*verse 6*), it could be that many of the disciples of Jesus were indifferent until after the events of Pentecost.

16. **The scripture had to come true.** The scripture recorded David's prediction about what Judas would do of his own free will. (see *verse 20*.)

17. **A member of our group.** It was a paradox that one who shared in the work of Christ would be the one to betray him.

¹⁸(With the money that Judas got for his evil act he bought a field, where he fell to his death; he burst open and all his insides spilled out.

¹⁹All the people living in Jerusalem heard about it, and so in their own language they call that field Akeldama, which means "Field of Blood.")

²⁰"For it is written in the book of Psalms,

'May his house become empty;
let no one live in it.'

It is also written,

'May someone else take his place of
service.'

²¹⁻²²"So then, someone must join us as a witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He must be one of those who were in our group during the whole time that the Lord Jesus traveled about with us, beginning from the time John preached his baptism until the day Jesus was taken up from us to heaven."

²³So they proposed two men: Joseph, who was called Barsabbas (he was also called Justus), and Matthias. ²⁴Then they prayed, "Lord, you know the hearts of all men. And so, Lord, show us which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take this place of service as an apostle which Judas left to go to the place where he belongs."

(With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

"For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms,

'May his place be deserted;
let there be no one to
dwell in it,'

and,

'May another take his
place of leadership.'

Therefore it is necessary ²¹to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas, also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they ²⁴prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this ²⁵apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he be-

18. **He bought a field.** The priests bought it in his name. Everyone here would understand that. See note on *Matt. 27:7*. **Where he fell to his death.** We are to "lump together" Matthew's account and this. Traditional history says Judas hanged himself on a tree overhanging the cliffs of the Valley of Hinnom, and either the rope or the tree limb breaking, fell with such force that his body burst open on the jagged rocks below.

19. **Field of Blood.** Both because of his bloody death, and being paid for the "blood money."

20. **In the book of Psalms.** The spirit, rather than the exact words, is quoted. The first quotation is from *Psalms 69:25*; the second from *Psalms 109:8*.

21-22. **Someone must join us.** A twelfth apostle must be chosen. He must be one who had been a disciple of John, left him to follow Jesus, had stayed with Jesus all during his teaching ministry, and had seen Jesus after he was raised from death. He must be an "eye witness" of all this, so he can join his voice to their's as they declare the Good News.

23. **So they proposed two men.** The whole group did this. The two men are mentioned only here.

24. **Then they prayed.** Likely one of the apostles led in prayer. They were asking God to show them the right thing to do. This is a good example.

done!" ¹²Amazed and confused they all kept asking each other, "What does this mean?"

¹³But others made fun of the believers, saying, "These men are drunk!"

Peter's Message

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles, and in a loud voice began to speak to the crowd, "Fellow Jews, and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me and let me tell you what this means. ¹⁵These men are not drunk, as you suppose, it is only nine o'clock in the morning. ¹⁶Rather, this is what the prophet Joel spoke about,

¹⁷"This is what I will do in the last days, God says:

I will pour out my Spirit upon all men.
Your sons and your daughters will prophesy;
your young men will see visions,
and your old men will dream dreams.

Amazed and perplexed, ¹²they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Some, however, made fun ¹³of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Peter Addresses the Crowd

Then Peter stood up with ¹⁴the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

"Fellow Jews and all of you who are in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is ¹⁶what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷In the last days, God says,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.

12. **Amazed and confused.** They could not account for the cause of this they were hearing.

13. **These men are drunk.** In their attempt to "make fun" of what is happening, they accuse them of being drunk - as if that could account for it. [A very potent sweet wine was made by soaking raisins and fermenting the juice.]

14. **Then Peter stood up.** He speaks for the Twelve. He is about to use the "keys" (*Matt. 16:19*) to open the "door of grace." [He also used these "keys" at the house of Cornelius (*Acts 10*), and with Simon the magician (*Acts 8*).] **With the other eleven.** They now begin their *witness* to Christ.

15. **It is only nine o'clock in the morning.** This was the normal time for breakfast, and much too early to be drunk! [Breakfast was normally at this time during feast days.]

16. **This is what the prophet Joel spoke about.** Peter turns to Joel, who lived about 800 B.C., for an explanation of these things (*see Joel 2:28-32*).

17. **This is what I will do in the last days.** The Jews called the last age of time which would begin at the coming of the Messiah, the *last days* (*see Isa. 2:2*). Note that Peter clearly identifies the *last days* as **HAVING BEGUN!** **I will pour out my Spirit.** Symbolic of anointing. *See verse 4.* **Upon all men.** On all the races of men, not just Jews only. **Your sons and your daughters.** "To prophesy" in the New Testament means to speak God's truth through special power from God. It includes the idea of predicting the future, but this is only a part of it. Both the men and women in verse 4 were filled with the Spirit, also Philip's four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy (*Acts 21:9*). **Visions . . . dreams.** Such as Peter had at Joppa (*Acts 10:9-17*) Paul had a dream of special message (*Acts 16:9-10*).

<p>¹⁸Yes, even on my slaves, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.</p> <p>¹⁹I will perform miracles in the sky above, and marvels on the earth below. There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke;</p> <p>²⁰the sun will become dark, and the moon red as blood, before the great and glorious Day of the Lord arrives.</p> <p>²¹And then, whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'</p> <p>²²"Listen to these words, men of Israel! Jesus of Nazareth was a man whose divine mission was clearly shown to you by the miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through him; you yourselves know this, for it took place here among you. ²³God, in his own will and knowledge, had already decided that Jesus would be handed over to you; and you killed him, by letting sinful men nail him to the cross. ²⁴But God raised him from the dead; he set him free from the pains of death, because it was impossible that death should hold him prisoner.</p>	<p>Even on my servants, 18 both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy, And I will show wonders 19 in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to 20 darkness and the moon become as blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls 21 on the name of the Lord will be saved.' "Men of Israel, listen to 22 this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did a- mong you through him, as you yourselves know. This 23 man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God 24 raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was im- possible for death to keep its</p>
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18. **Even on my slaves.** God does not place "class limitations" on his Good News (See *Gal. 3:28*).

19-20. **I will perform miracles.** *Johnson* understands this to refer to the coming destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.). "Day of the Lord" is used by *Joel* to mean a *great disaster* (see *Joel 2*). Compare notes on *Matt. 24:29-31*. See also *1 Thess. 2:16; Col. 1:23*.

21. **Whoever calls on the name of the Lord.** Faith is more than knowledge (*James 2:19*). To "call on the name of the Lord" is to do more than say, "Lord, Lord, open to us." Faith is action (*Matt. 7:21*). See notes on *Acts 22:16*.

22. **Listen to these words!** He boldly declares Christ to them. They had been here long enough to have seen at least the events of Christ's final week, plus his crucifixion. They were "eye witnesses" to the miracles, wonders, and signs which proved his Messiahship. The Resurrection is proved by: (1) the prophecy of *David*; (2) the testimony of the apostles; (3) the earthquake, the darkness, and the raising of some dead (*Matt. 27:52-53*). They had first hand knowledge of all this.

23. **Had already decided.** God knew before Creation that man would sin, and he decreed that Jesus come and die as our "sin offering" (*Eph. 3:9-11; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 1:20*). **And you killed him.** The fact that God knew what they would do, does not take away their guilt. They acted of their own free will. These people had been part of the crowd who shouted: "nail him to the cross" (*Matt. 27:23*). [At least some of them had been.]

24. **It was impossible that death should hold him prisoner.** Because he was *life* (*John 1:4*); and because it was the Father's will that he should rise from death. This verse sums up the four Gospels.

²⁵For David said about him,
 'I saw the Lord before me at all times;
 he is by my right side, so that I will not
 be troubled.

²⁶Because of this my heart is glad
 and my words are full of joy;
 and I, mortal though I am,
 will rest assured in hope,

²⁷because you will not abandon my soul in
 the world of the dead;
 you will not allow your devoted servant
 to suffer decay.

²⁸You have shown me the paths that lead to
 life,
 any by your presence you will fill me
 with joy.'

²⁹"Brothers: I must speak to you quite plainly
 about our patriarch David. He died and was
 buried, and his grave is here with us to this
 very day. ³⁰He was a prophet, and he knew God's
 promise to him: God made a vow that he would
 make one of David's descendants a king, just
 as David was. ³¹David saw what God was going
 to do, and so he spoke about the resurrection of
 the Messiah when he said,
 'He was not abandoned in the world of the
 dead;
 his flesh did not decay.'

³²God has raised this very Jesus from the dead,

hold on him. David said 25
 about him:

'I saw the Lord always
 before me.

Because he is at my
 right hand, I will not
 be shaken.

Therefore my heart is 26
 glad and my tongue re-
 joices;

my body also will live in
 hope,

because you will not 27
 abandon me to the

grave,
 nor will you let your
 Holy One undergo
 decay.

You have made known 28
 to me the paths of life;
 you will fill me with joy
 in your presence.'

"Brothers, I can tell you 29
 confidently that the patri-
 arch David died and was

buried, and his tomb is here
 to this day. But he was a proph- 30

et and knew that God had
 promised with an oath that

he would place one of his
 descendants on his throne.

Seeing what was ahead, he 31
 spoke of the resurrection of

the Christ, that he was not
 abandoned to the grave, nor

did his body undergo decay.

God has raised this Jesus to 32
 life, and we are all witnesses

25-28. For David said about him. Psalm 16:8-11. The spirit, not the exact words, is quoted. In the world of the dead. He would not remain in the grasp of death. David did not say this about himself, but spoke of a descendant (verses 29-30). Devoted servant. The Lord Jesus.

29. He died and was buried. David's grave was inside the city walls, and they had all seen it.

30. God made a vow. Note Peter's reasoning. God had promised David that Christ would sit on his throne. [2 Sam. 7:11-16; Psalm 89:3-4, 35-37; 132:11.] Note what James says in Acts 15:15-18.

31. So he spoke about . . . the Messiah. Peter again emphasizes that David spoke of the Lord Jesus.

32. God has raised this very Jesus. "David prophesied it; we have all seen it." This is their testimony.

and we are all witnesses to this fact. ³³He has been raised to the right side of God and received from him the Holy Spirit, as his Father had promised; and what you now see and hear is his gift that he has poured out on us. ³⁴For David himself did not go up into heaven; rather he said,

‘The Lord said to my Lord:
Sit here at my right side,

³⁵until I put your enemies as a footstool
under your feet.’

³⁶“All the people of Israel, then, are to know for sure that it is this Jesus, whom you nailed to the cross, that God has made Lord and Messiah!”

³⁷When the people heard this, they were deeply troubled, and said to Peter and the other apostles, “What shall we do, brothers?”

³⁸Peter said to them, “Turn away from your sins, each one of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God’s gift, the

of the fact. Exalted to the ³³ right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David ³⁴ did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

‘The Lord said to my Lord:

Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’ ³⁵

“Therefore, let all Israel ³⁶ be assured of this: God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.”

When the people heard ³⁷ this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Peter replied: “Repent ³⁸ and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy

33. He has been raised to the right side of God. See Phil. 2:6-11. He sits on a heavenly throne. What you now see and hear. These supernatural events are proof that Jesus is not king (verse 30). He has “poured out” this gift.

34. For David himself. On “where are the dead?” see notes on Luke 16:19-31. Rather he said. Psalm 110:1. (Jesus also quotes this and applies it to himself, Matt. 22:43-46) The Lord. God the Father. My Lord. Christ. Sit here at my right side. (See verse 33.) The “right side” is the place of honor, and implies being part of the Supreme Government. (See also Rev. 5:6-10.)

35. Until I put. Christ must rule until God defeats all enemies, and then give up the Kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

36. All the people of Israel. He has been building up to this. This is the climax! He has proved Jesus to be the Messiah!

37. They were deeply troubled. Peter has explained the meaning of the signs and wonders they have seen! Now it is clear to them that they are guilty of rejecting God’s Messiah and nailing him to the cross! What shall we do, brothers? This is both a cry of anguish over their guilt, and a confession of faith in Jesus! Will there be any forgiveness for such as they???

38. Peter said to them. They have already declared their faith in Christ (verse 37). Now, for the very first time, the terms of pardon under the New Covenant will be announced. Peter will tell them how to reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make themselves part of it. Turn away from your sins. That is, repudiate what you have done. Turn away from sin, and turn to God. [The technical term is; repent.] And be baptized. This act is a visible demonstration of both faith and turning from sin. [Repentance is a change of mind; baptism is a change of state.] In the name of Jesus Christ. By his authority. Without his authority, it would be only “water baptism.” With his authority, it becomes the new birth of John 3:5. So that your sins will be forgiven. This is the promise. When their faith became

Holy Spirit. ³⁹For God's promise was made to you and your children, and to all who are far away—all whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

⁴⁰Peter made his appeal to them and with many other words he urged them, saying, "Save yourselves from the punishment coming to this wicked people!" ⁴¹Many of them believed his message and were baptized; about three thousand people were added to the group that day. ⁴²They spent their time in learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship, and sharing in the fellowship meals and the prayers.

Spirit. The promise is for ³⁹ you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

With many other words ⁴⁰ he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who ⁴¹ accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

The Fellowship of the Believers

They devoted themselves ⁴² to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to

real through turning from sin and being baptized in the name of Jesus, they would be forgiven for their sins, including the sin of killing Jesus. The promise of forgiveness is to all who comply with these terms of salvation. **And you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit.** McGarvey says the meaning here is *the Holy Spirit as a gift*. The world cannot receive this Helper. [Note that here, the gift of the Spirit comes in connection with baptism. That is, forgiveness of sins and the Spirit as a gift, are two results of turning from sin and being baptized. See notes on *Matt. 28:19-20*; *Rom. 6:1-11*; *John 7:38-39*.]

39. For God's promise. The promise of pardon and the Spirit as a gift. **Was made to you and your children.** To these Jews who had rejected Christ, and to their descendants. **And to all who are far away.** To everybody in the whole world (the Gentiles). **All whom the Lord our God calls to himself.** "All men will be taught by God." See *John 6:44-45*. **EVERYONE MAY COME!**

40. Save yourselves. This was why he urged them with many other words. True, they could not EARN their salvation [only Jesus could do that for them], but their faith was to *reach out* through turning from sin and being baptized. This was an act of their FREE WILL (compare the "looking" of *John 3:14*). **This wicked people.** Those of the Jewish nation who had rejected Christ [and would continue to reject him (*Matt. 23:36, 24:21; Deut. 28:52-57*)].

41. Many of them believed. Those who believed, were baptized immediately! [Those who did not believe had no reason to be baptized.] **About three thousand people.** The Twelve could have done the baptizing themselves. Chrysostom, assisted by the church elders, immersed 3,000 in one day in 404 A. D. There were plenty of deep pools in Jerusalem. Certainly the Seventy-two would be there, and perhaps others of the disciples. **Group.** Messianic community. **The one church exists in a locality as a group.**

42. They spent their time. A *group* implies *companionship, solidarity*. In contrast to "saving souls," the Good News makes disciples to Christ! A disciple wants to learn and live the message, and to be part of the COMMUNITY. The very worst calamity for a Christian, was to be excluded from the life of the COMMUNITY (*1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 2:5-11*). **Taking part in the fellowship.** Johnson sees in this the pooling of their money and resources to take care of the needy among their group. It may include the complete life of the community. **Fellowship meals.** For some centuries, the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) was eaten in the setting of a fellowship meal. See note on *Acts 20:7*. **Prayers.** In the Jewish religion, the priests did the praying. In Christ, every believer is a priest (*Rev. 1:6*)! Johnson thinks this entire verse speaks of their public worship. But there was not the sharp line at this time between public worship and everyday life.

Life among the Believers

⁴³Many miracles and wonders were done through the apostles, and this caused everyone to be filled with awe. ⁴⁴All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another. ⁴⁵They would sell their property and possessions and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet as a group in the temple, and they had their meals together in their homes, eating the food with glad and humble hearts, ⁴⁷praising God, and enjoying the good will of all the people. And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

The Lame Man Healed

3 One day Peter and John went to the temple at three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour for

prayer. Everyone was filled ⁴³with awe, and many wonders and miracles were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day ⁴⁶they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying ⁴⁷the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Peter Heals the Crippled Beggar

3 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the after-

43. **To be filled with awe.** Especially the unbelievers. Compare verse 22.

44-45. **And shared their belongings.** Remember that many of the group did not live here, but had come to Jerusalem for Passover and Pentecost. Alford (Greek Testament) points out that this situation was unique to the "Church at Jerusalem." It was not done with the idea of bringing all to the same economic level, but to meet the need of the poor among their group. Both Jew and Gentile ignored their own poor. What we see here was something NEW! See notes on Acts 4:32; 6:1-4.

46. **Every day.** They met in the temple to be instructed by the apostles. Probably there were "outsiders" there as well. **They had their meals together.** Compare verse 44. Lipscomb says: "It is probable that they met at their homes in companies [small groups] and each company engaged in worship." This would not be as a substitute for public worship, but the same principle as the "Ladies' class." Most Christians today are weak in regular devotion and natural witness to those outside. In the Jerusalem church, we see a spirit of ENTHUSIASM - so full of their new found love for Jesus Christ that they cannot get enough of him!!!

47. **The Lord added to their group.** We commonly use "church" in a specialized sense [Methodist church; Catholic church, etc.]. The ONE CHURCH which Jesus built on the rock foundation of his DIVINITY exists in a locality as a group. It is correct to say that the same reaching out through faith that make you part of Christ, also makes you part of Christ's church (see verse 38). In other words, you do not JOIN the church, salvation makes you a member. Pentecost was the birth-day of the Lord's church (Acts 1:8; Col. 1:13; Eph. 2:19-22).

1. **One day Peter and John.** These two worked together. The Jewish Christians naturally made the temple the center of their worship, and continued to keep many of the rituals (Acts 21:20-21). They also made new disciples among the crowds in the temple court.

prayers. ²There, at the "Beautiful Gate," as it was called, was a man who had been lame all his life. Every day he was carried to this gate to beg for money from the people who were going into the temple. ³When he saw Peter and John going in, he begged them to give him something. ⁴They looked straight at him and Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵So he looked at them, expecting to get something from them. ⁶Peter said to him, "I have no money at all, but I will give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth I order you to walk!" ⁷Then he took him by his right hand and helped him up. At once the man's feet and ankles became strong; ⁸he jumped up, stood on his feet, and started walking around. Then he went into the temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God. ⁹The whole crowd saw him walking and praising God; ¹⁰and when they recognized him as the beggar who sat at the temple's "Beautiful Gate," they were all filled with surprise and amazement at what had happened to him.

Peter's Message in the Temple

¹¹As the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were amazed and ran to them in

noon. Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

Then Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Peter Speaks to the Onlookers

While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's

2. **There at the "Beautiful Gate."** Thought to be the gate which opens toward the Mount of Olives. Charity was nonexistent, and the man was forced to beg. Beggars had their best prospects at the temple.

6. **I have no money at all.** Peter had not made himself rich. [Compare *1 Tim. 6:3-5.*] **In the name of Jesus Christ.** The miracles were done in the name of Christ. Note the incident in *Acts 19:14-17.*

7. **And helped him up.** Faith is action! Note *when* the man's feet and ankles became strong.

8. **He jumped up.** This shows his happiness!

9-10. **They were all filled with surprise and amazement.** The beggar was well known by the people, and they saw him "walking and jumping and praising God."

11. **And ran to them.** The healing draws a crowd!

“Solomon’s Porch,” as it was called. ¹²When Peter saw the people, he said to them, “Men of Israel, why are you surprised at this, and why do you stare at us? Do you think that it was by means of our own power or godliness that we made this man walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has given divine glory to his Servant Jesus. You handed him over to the authorities, and you rejected him in Pilate’s presence, even after Pilate had decided to set him free. ¹⁴He was holy and good, but you rejected him and instead you asked Pilate to do you the favor of turning loose a murderer. ¹⁵And so you killed the one who leads men to life. But God raised him from the dead—and we are witnesses to this. ¹⁶It was the power of his name that gave strength to this lame man. What you see and know was done by faith in his name; it was faith in Jesus that made him well like this before you all.

¹⁷“And now, my brothers, I know that what you and your leaders did to Jesus was done because of your ignorance. ¹⁸God long ago announced by means of all the prophets that his Messiah had to suffer; and he made it come true

Colonnade. When Peter saw ¹² this, he said to them:

“Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the ¹⁴ Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You ¹⁵ killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. By faith in the name of ¹⁶ Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

“Now, brothers, I know ¹⁷ that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this ¹⁸ is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his

12. When Peter saw the people. Here was an opportunity to proclaim the Good News of God’s act in Christ.

13. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God whom they and their ancestors worshiped. To his Servant Jesus. Peter sees in Jesus, the fulfilled promise of God to Abraham. God has given glory to Jesus. But these people had killed him (verse 15).

15. But God raised him from the dead. Peter and the others were chosen witnesses of this fact. See Acts 10:41; 1 Cor. 15:6.

16. It was the power of his name. On the basis of faith in his name. His name is not a charm for driving out evil spirits (Acts 19:13). When nine of his apostles could not drive out a demon, Jesus said: “It was because you do not have enough faith” (Matt. 17:19-20).

17. Because of your ignorance. “Forgive them, Father! They don’t know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

18. God long ago announced. It is a paradox that God knows before it happens and announces through the prophets, yet gives every man free will and allows him to choose.

in this way. ¹⁹Repent, then, and turn to God, so that he will wipe away your sins, ²⁰so that times of spiritual strength may come from the Lord's presence, and that he may send Jesus, who is the Messiah he has already chosen for you. ²¹He must remain in heaven until the time comes for all things to be made new, as God announced by means of his holy prophets of long ago. ²²For Moses said, "The Lord your God will send you a prophet, just as he sent me, who will be of your own people. You must listen to everything that he tells you. ²³Anyone who does not listen to what that prophet says will be separated from God's people and destroyed." ²⁴And the prophets, including Samuel and those who came after him, all of them who had a message, also announced these present days. ²⁵The promises of God through his prophets are for you, and you share in the covenant which God made with your ancestors. As he said to Abraham, "Through your descendants I will bless all the people on earth." ²⁶And so God chose and sent his Servant to you first, to bless you by making all of you turn away from your wicked ways."

Christ would suffer. Repent; ¹⁹ then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing ²⁰ may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. He must remain in heaven ²¹ until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. For ²² Moses said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not ²³ listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people."

"Indeed, all the prophets ²⁴ from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs ²⁵ of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, "Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed." When God ²⁶ raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from his wicked ways."

19-20. **Repent, then, and turn to God.** Both verbs are *active* [not passive] and are to be understood as requiring action on their part. Compare *James 4:8*; *John 3:14-15*. This verse is the counterpart of *Acts 2:38*. *Repent* is an act of the mind [heart] in which you turn *from* sin to God. **Turn to God.** This is the act of baptism (compare *Acts 22:16*) where the sinner seizes the sacrifice of Christ and makes himself part of it! [Baptism does not stand alone, but is part of faith. Compare *Titus 3:5*; *Acts 19:3-5* and notes.] **So that times of spiritual strength.** In *Acts 2:38*, the order is: (1) Turn away from sin; (2) be baptized; (3) so that your sins will be forgiven; (4) God's gift, the Holy Spirit. Here it is: (1) Repent; (2) turn to God; (3) so that he will wipe away your sins; (4) times of spiritual strength may come. **That he may send Jesus.** Many see the Second Coming in this and cite *Matt. 24:14* to show that the spread of the gospel will bring the return of Christ. But notice that *Matt 24:14* has already been fulfilled in *Col. 1:23*. This must be understood, then, as the Promise fulfilled in Christ (*verse 13*), and *1 Pet. 1:20* seems to prove this. Christ "comes" to those who accept him (*Rom. 8:10*).

21. **Until the time comes.** Christ must reign (*1 Cor. 15:25*) during the Gospel Age, until the time for the New Heavens and New Earth (*2 Pet. 3:12-13*; *Rev. 21:1-4*).

22-23. **And destroyed.** *Deut. 18:15-19*. The Jews could be saved only through Christ.

24. **Also announced these present days.** The promise of the Old Testament was fulfilled in Christ, and Peter identifies this fulfillment with the time they were right then living in! Compare *Acts 2:16-17*.

25-26. **The promises . . . are for you.** Compare *Gal. 3:8,16*; *Rom. 3*. The Good News of God's act in Christ was first presented to the Jews. Notice God's Servant [Jesus Christ] would bless them by making them turn away from their wicked ways. He blesses us all in the same way!

Peter and John before the Council

4 Peter and John were still speaking to the people when the priests, the officer in charge of the temple guards, and the Sadducees came to them. ²They were annoyed because the two apostles were teaching the people that Jesus had risen from death, which proved that the dead will rise to life. ³So they arrested them and put them in jail until the next day, since it was already late. ⁴But many who heard the message believed; and the number of men came to about five thousand.

⁵The next day the Jewish leaders, the elders, and the teachers of the Law gathered in Jerusalem. ⁶They met with the High Priest Annas, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and the others who belonged to the High Priest's family. ⁷They made the apostles stand before them and asked them, "How did you do this? What power do you have, or whose name did you use?"

⁸Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, answered them,

4 The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the

1. **Peter and John were still speaking.** Probably both are speaking to separate groups of people, as the priests on duty, the officer of the temple police, and the Sadducees [perhaps the High Priest and his associates] come to them to stop what they are doing.

2. **They were annoyed.** While Jesus lived, the Pharisees were his worst enemies. But after his resurrection, the Sadducees became the stronger source of opposition to the messianic community, because they did not believe man survives death! "Christ on the cross" was offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles (1 Cor. 1:23). But first century preaching *strongly emphasized* the Risen Jesus and the resurrection of all the dead.

3-4. **But many who heard the message believed.** Jailing Peter and John did not change the minds of those who believed what they had said. **To about five thousand.** This must include those men who were "buried with Christ" on Pentecost (Acts 2:41). Women were not usually counted (compare Matt. 14:21). [J.G. Malphurs thinks Timothy's mother and grandmother were both "baptized into Christ" on Pentecost, along with his father (who was a Gentile converted to Judaism). He cites the fact that a religious Jewish mother and grandmother did not circumcise Timothy, as evidence pointing toward this.]

5-6. **The next day.** This is a meeting of the Jewish Council [the Sanhedrim]. The Jews still considered Annas the High Priest, even though the Romans had put Caiaphas in his place ten years before.

7. **What power do you have?** They knew the miracles and wonders were real! But they think it comes through some rite of magic.

8. **Peter, full of the Holy Spirit.** See Matt. 10:16-20 and notes.

"Leaders of the people and elders: ⁹if we are being questioned today about the good deed done to the lame man and how he was made well, ¹⁰then you should all know, and all the people of Israel should know, that this man stands here before you completely well by the power of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth—whom you crucified and God raised from death. ¹¹Jesus is the one of whom the scripture says,

"The stone that you the builders despised turned out to be the most important stone."

¹²Salvation is to be found through him alone; for there is no one else in all the world, whose name God has given to men, by whom we can be saved."

¹³The members of the Council were amazed to see how bold Peter and John were, and to learn that they were ordinary men of no education. They realized then that they had companions of Jesus. ¹⁴But there was nothing that they could say, because they saw the man who had been made well standing there with Peter and John. ¹⁵So they told them to leave the Council room, and started discussing among

people! If we are being called ⁹ to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, then know this, you ¹⁰ and everyone else in Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you, completely healed. He is ¹¹

"the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone."

Salvation is found in no one ¹² else; for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

When they saw the ¹³ courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. And since they could see the ¹⁴ man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to ¹⁵ withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred

9. **About the good deed done.** They are prisoners on trial for a good deed. Peter uses this to prove the power of the name of Jesus, and to present the Truth of God to them.

10. **Jesus Christ of Nazareth.** The very One whom the Council had condemned, is the source of power! **Whom you crucified.** Now Peter is the "judge," and they are on trial.

11. **The stone.** Jesus quotes this same scripture in *Matt. 21:42-46*. See notes there.

12. **Through him alone.** No other name in all Creation is a SAVING NAME, because God has acted through Jesus Christ. Whoever rejects the Son, has rejected the Father also (*1 John 2:22-23*). It is not possible, then, to follow God, while rejecting Jesus. [Since Jesus Christ is THE NAME, we do not need the name of angel, Virgin, or saint.]

13-14. **Ordinary men of no education.** As all Jews, they had been educated in the synagogue schools, but had not attended the "theological schools" of the teachers of the Law. **Companions of Jesus.** They had three years of intensive training from Jesus. Plus, they had *total recall* through the Holy Spirit (*John 14:26*). **Because they saw the man.** "Facts are stubborn things."

15. **And started discussing.** After they send them out, the Council uses all their wisdom to find a solution.

themselves. ¹⁶“What shall we do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows that this extraordinary miracle has been performed by them, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷But to keep this matter from spreading any further among the people, let us warn these men never again to speak to anyone in the name of Jesus.”

¹⁸So they called them back in and told them that under no condition were they to speak or to teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, “You yourselves judge which is right in God’s sight, to obey you or to obey God. ²⁰For we cannot stop speaking of what we ourselves have seen and heard.” ²¹The Council warned them even more strongly, and then set them free. They could find no reason for punishing them, because the people were all praising God for what had happened. ²²The man on whom this miracle of healing had been performed was over forty years old.

The Believers Pray for Boldness

²³As soon as they were set free, Peter and John returned to their group and told them what the chief priests and the elders had said. ²⁴When they heard it, they all joined together in prayer to God: “Master and Creator of heaven, earth,

together. “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

The Believers’ Prayer

On their release, Peter ²³ and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they ²⁴ raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and

16-18. **And told them.** They threaten them, expecting to put a stop to their preaching.

19. **Or to obey God.** This is the “higher law,” which supersedes all other!

20. **For we cannot stop speaking.** They are under an *obligation*! They are men with a mission to perform.

21-22. **Because the people.** Note the power of public opinion! **The man.** The man who had been healed was over forty years old, therefore known as a life-long cripple.

23. **Returned to their group.** The Christians met together daily (*Acts 2:46*). Peter and John give their report of all that has happened.

24. **They all joined together.** Someone would lead the prayer. They had been ordered to stop their activities, so they go to God in prayer.

and sea, and all that is in them! ²⁵By means of the Holy Spirit you spoke through our ancestor David, your servant, when he said,

‘Why were the Gentiles furious;
why did the people plot in vain?’

²⁶The kings of the earth prepared themselves,
and the rulers met together
against the Lord and his Messiah.’

²⁷For indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together in this city with the Gentiles and the people of Israel against Jesus, your holy Servant, whom you made Messiah. ²⁸They gathered to do everything that you, by your power and will, had already decided would take place. ²⁹And now, Lord, take notice of the threats they made and allow us, your servants, to speak your message with all boldness. ³⁰Stretch out your hand to heal, and grant that wonders and miracles may be performed through the name of your holy Servant Jesus.”

³¹When they finished praying, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak God’s message with boldness.

everything in them. You ²⁵spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

‘Why do the nations
rage,
and the people plot in
vain?’

The kings of the earth ²⁶take their stand,
and the rulers gather
together
against the Lord
and against his Anointed One.’

Indeed Herod and Pon- ²⁷tius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what ²⁸your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand ³⁰to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

After they prayed, the ³¹place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

25-26. **Why were the Gentiles furious?** This is quoted from *Psalms 2: Verse 27* shows how it came true.

27-28. **They gathered to do everything.** God had already decided what would be done, but this does not say that God decreed that Herod, Pilate, etc., would be the ones who would do this. They “volunteered” [unknowingly] to carry out God’s decree.

29-30. **And now, Lord.** They do not ask to be saved from pain, persecution, or death. They ask for: (1) boldness in speaking; (2) proof of the power of **THE NAME**. Their prayer is directed toward the mission Christ has given them.

31. **Was shaken.** Evidence that God heard them. **They were all filled.** *Lipscomb* thinks only the apostles were filled. *Johnson* thinks the whole group were filled in a conscious renewal of the miraculous power, just like Pentecost. Compare *Acts 10:44*, where the Spirit came down on all who were listening.

All Things Together

³²The group of believers was one in mind and heart. No one said that any of his belongings was his own, but they all shared with one another everything they had. ³³With great power the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God poured rich blessings on them all. ³⁴There was no one in the group who was in need. Those who owned fields or houses would sell them, bring the money received from the sale ³⁵and turn it over to the apostles; and the money was distributed to each one according to his need.

³⁶And so it was that Joseph, a Levite born in Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "One who Encourages"), ³⁷sold a field he owned, brought the money, and turned it over to the apostles.

Ananias and Sapphira

5 But there was a man named Ananias, whose wife was named Sapphira. He sold some property that belonged to them, ²but kept part of the money for himself, as his wife knew, and

The Believers Share Their Possessions

All the believers were one ³² in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the ³³ apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was with them all. There ³⁴ were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the ³⁵ sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Joseph, a Levite from ³⁶ Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means, Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned ³⁷ and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Ananias and Sapphira

5 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his ² wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, and brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

32-35. **Was one in mind and heart.** They formed one community in Christ, with one doctrine, served one Lord, and had one hope of eternal life! **Was his own.** See note on Acts 2:44-45. It was an emergency, but the group met the need. The language does not imply that everyone sold everything he had.

36-37. **Joseph, a Levite born in Cyprus.** He is "Barnabas" from this time on. **Sold a field he owned.** He did this out of love, of his own free will, and brought the *entire* sum of money, and turned it over to the apostles. This is important, because it "sets the stage" for the event in the next chapter.

1. But there was a man named Ananias. Side by side with the picture of love and fellowship in the 4th chapter, comes the selfishness and hypocrisy of this couple.

2. But kept part of the money. It is important to see where the sin was. No one forced them to sell the property; and once sold, no one forced them to give the money; and in giving the money, no one required them to give all of it. Their sin was in lying about it to get the glory for something they had not done. (1) They gave from the wrong motives; (2) They lied about it.

turned the rest over to the apostles. ³Peter said to him, "Ananias, why did you let Satan take control of your heart and make you lie to the Holy Spirit by keeping part of the money you received for the property? ⁴Before you sold the property it belonged to you, and after you sold it the money was yours. Why, then, did you decide in your heart that you would do such a thing? You have not lied to men—you have lied to God!" ⁵As soon as Ananias heard this he fell down dead; and all who heard about it were filled with fear. ⁶The young men came in, wrapped up his body, took him out, and buried him.

⁷About three hours later his wife came in, but she did not know what had happened. ⁸Peter said to her, "Tell me, was this the full amount you and your husband received for your property?"

"Yes," she answered, "the full amount."

⁹So Peter said to her, "Why did you and your husband decide to put the Lord's Spirit to the test? The men who buried your husband are at the door right now, and they will carry you out too!" ¹⁰At once she fell down at his feet and died. The young men came in and saw that she was dead, so they carried her out and buried

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"

"Yes," she said "that is the price."

Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."

At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

3-4. **And make you lie to the Holy Spirit.** Peter points out the money had been his to do with as he pleased. Ananias wanted to receive the same honor Barnabas had, for giving the entire sum of money. But Ananias lied about how much it was, so he could keep part of it and still get honor for giving it all.

5. **He fell down dead.** It was not Peter, but the Holy Spirit who struck this man dead. The punishment seems more drastic than necessary, yet Satan was striking at the messianic community through this lie, and it was a much more serious incident than it seems to be! Compare Uzzah's death for touching the Box of the Covenant (2 Sam. 6:6-8).

6. **And buried him.** No weeping, no funeral! The body cannot remain inside the temple walls. Examples of such a quick burial are found in Lev. 10:1-7; Joshua 7:16-26.

7. **His wife came in.** It was strange, but not impossible, that his wife did not know what had happened.

8-9. **Was this the full amount?** Here was her chance to tell the truth that would have saved her, but she tells the lie which she and her husband had agreed to tell.

10. **The young men came in.** It had taken three hours to carry Ananias out of the city, bury him, and come back. This incident teaches, that while you can lie to men, you cannot fool God!

her beside her husband. ¹¹The whole church and all the others who heard of this were filled with great fear.

Miracles and Wonders

¹²Many miracles and wonders were being performed among the people by the apostles. All the believers met together in a group in Solomon's Porch. ¹³Nobody outside the group dared join them, even though the people spoke highly of them. ¹⁴But more and more people were added to the group—a crowd of men and women who believed in the Lord. ¹⁵As a result of what the apostles were doing, the sick people were carried out in the streets and placed on beds and mats so that, when Peter walked by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them. ¹⁶And crowds of people came in from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those who had evil spirits in them; and they were all healed.

The Apostles Persecuted

¹⁷Then the High Priest and all his companions, members of the local party of the Sadducees, became extremely jealous of the apostles; so they decided to take action. ¹⁸They arrested the apostles and placed them in the public jail.

Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events. 11

The Apostles Heal Many

The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed. 12

The Apostles Persecuted

Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the 17

¹¹ **Were filled with great fear.** This incident showed the reality of sin! Neither sin nor salvation are "make-believe!" What these two did was blasphemy! [Not fear, but love, is the ULTIMATE MOTIVATION. See 1 John 4:18]

^{12-14.} **Many miracles and wonders.** Note it is the apostles who are said to have this power. Not everyone was given the gift of miracles. **Met together in a group.** See Acts 2:46; Heb. 10:25. **Nobody outside the group.** This must speak of their enemies. See the next verse. **Were added to the group.** A continuous growth. **Men and women.** Women are specifically mentioned here. There were already women among the group (Acts 1:14; see note on Acts 4:3-4). They are again mentioned in chapter 6.

^{15-16.} **The sick people were carried out.** We are not told that any were healed by Peter's shadow. The point is the fame and popularity these things brought to the apostles. [Compare Acts 19:11-12.]

^{17.} **Then the High Priest.** This would be Annas. See note on Acts 4:6. He was a Sadducee, and therefore strongly opposed to any thought of the dead being raised. See note on Acts 4:2.

^{18.} **And placed them in the public jail.** That is, they treated them like common criminals. [A small basement room, with a dirt floor and no sanitary facilities.]

¹⁹But that night an angel of the Lord opened the prison gates, led the apostles out, and said to them, ²⁰“Go and stand in the temple, and tell the people all about this new life.” ²¹The apostles obeyed, and at dawn they entered the temple and started teaching.

The High Priest and his companions called together all the Jewish elders for a full meeting of the Council; then they sent orders to the prison to have the apostles brought before them. ²²But when the officials arrived, they did not find the apostles in prison; so they returned to the Council and reported, ²³“When we arrived at the jail we found it locked up tight and all the guards on watch at the gates; but when we opened the gates we did not find anyone inside!” ²⁴When the officer in charge of the temple guards and the chief priests heard this, they wondered what had happened to the apostles. ²⁵Then a man came in who said to them, “Listen! The men you put in prison are standing in the temple teaching the people!” ²⁶So the officer went off with his men and brought the apostles back. They did not use force, however, because they were afraid that the people might stone them.

public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. “Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people the full message of this new life.”

At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled wondering what would come of this.

Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.” At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

19. **An angel of the Lord.** God works through angels (*Heb. 1:14*).

20. **Go and stand in the temple.** They are instructed by the angel to go back to the temple and continue preaching the resurrection of the dead.

21. **For a full meeting of the Council.** Notice this was called for the trial of the apostles, and the Council sends to the prison to have the prisoners brought before them.

22-23. **We found it locked up tight.** They cannot explain why the apostles were not in the prison.

24-25. **Are standing in the temple teaching.** This miracle was a source of fresh strength and faith to all the disciples. Those who knew of the arrest [i.e., all Jerusalem] would be curious. Also, this should have proved to the Sadducees that they could not hold back this Good News! Compare *verse 39*.

26. **They did not use force.** The power of public opinion!

²⁷They brought the apostles in and made them stand before the Council, and the High Priest questioned them. ²⁸"We gave you strict orders not to teach in the name of this man," he said; "but see what you have done! You have spread your teaching all over Jerusalem, and you want to make us responsible for his death!"

²⁹Peter and the other apostles answered back, "We must obey God, not men. ³⁰The God of our fathers raised Jesus from death, after you had killed him by nailing him to a cross. ³¹God raised him to his right side as Leader and Savior, to give to the people of Israel the opportunity to repent and have their sins forgiven. ³²We are witnesses to these things—we and the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to those who obey him."

³³When the members of the Council heard this they were so furious that they decided to have the apostles put to death. ³⁴But one of them, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law who was highly respected by all the people, stood up in the Council. He ordered the apostles to be taken out, ³⁵and then said to the Council, "Men of Israel, be careful what

Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

They were furious when they heard this and wanted to put them to death. But a Pharisee named Gamallel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. Then he addressed them:

"Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to

27-28. **The High Priest questioned them.** He charges they have: (1) defied the Council; (2) spread their teaching all over Jerusalem. **You want to make us responsible.** Read what they had said before (*Matt.* 27:25). They are not so eager to accept their guilt now! The people might rebel against them because they had killed Christ.

29-32. **We must obey God, not men.** What other reason is needed??? Peter says: (1) God raised Jesus from death; (2) to his right side as Leader and Savior; (3) to give Israel the opportunity to repent; (4) "We are witnesses." **Who is God's gift to those who obey him.** The obedience of faith (*Rom. 1:5; Acts 2:38*) was the *requisite* for receiving God's gift. "Obey" implies continuous action. One of the special blessings of being in Christ is the *stream of living water* which the Scripture itself identifies as the Holy Spirit (*John 7:38-39; 1 Cor. 6:19-20*).

33. **They were so furious.** Their response to the Good News is to try to kill those who bring it!

34. **A Pharisee named Gamallel.** [Pharisees believed man survives death.] Gamaliel was the most revered teacher of the Law. The Talmud speaks of him, and he was a grandson of Hillel [the most revered teacher of all]. Paul was his pupil (*Acts 22:3*).

35-39. **Be careful what you are about to do.** Good advice! (1) Think! (2) Impostors will fail. (3) You cannot defeat God! [Theudas and Judas were well known to the Council, but we cannot accurately

you are about to do to these men. ³⁶Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming that he was somebody great; and about four hundred men joined him. But he was killed, all his followers were scattered, and his movement died out. ³⁷After this, Judas the Galilean appeared during the time of the census; he also drew a crowd after him, but he also was killed and all his followers were scattered. ³⁸And so in this case now, I tell you, do not take any action against these men. Leave them alone, because if this plan and work of theirs is a man-made thing, it will disappear; ³⁹but if it comes from God you cannot possibly defeat them. You could find yourselves fighting against God!"

The Council followed Gamaliel's advice. ⁴⁰They called the apostles in, had them whipped, and ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus; and then they set them free. ⁴¹The apostles left the Council, full of joy that God had considered them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus. ⁴²And every day in the temple and in people's homes they continued to teach and preach the Good News about Jesus the Messiah.

do to these men. Some time ³⁶ ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. After him, Judas ³⁷ the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. Therefore, in the present ³⁸ case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from ³⁹ God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

His speech persuaded ⁴⁰ them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

The apostles left the San- ⁴¹ hedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in ⁴² the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

identify them. See notes on this in the Expositors Greek Testament.] **But if it comes from God.** *Lipscomb* says: "So while Gamaliel was not a believer, he was so impressed with the possibility that they might be sent by God that he was unwilling for the Sanhedrin to try to destroy them." [Those who oppose translations and movements ought to think about what Gamaliel said.]

40. They called the apostles in. The fact that most of the Council are Pharisees may have helped them decide to do what Gamaliel says. **Had them whipped.** The whip had bits of bone or stone tied in the end of the strands, and would tear the flesh. This was a common form of punishment.

41. Full of joy. *James 1:2-4.*

42. And every day. This shows how hard they work to spread the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free!

The Seven Helpers

6 Some time later, as the number of disciples kept growing, there was a quarrel between the Greek-speaking Jews and the native Jews. The Greek-speaking Jews said that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of funds. ²So the twelve apostles called the whole group of disciples together and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the preaching of God's word in order to handle finances. ³So then, brothers, choose seven men among you who are known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, and we will put them in charge of this matter. "We ourselves, then, will give our full time to prayers and the work of preaching."

⁵The whole group was pleased with the apostles' proposal; so they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a Gentile from Antioch who had been converted to Judaism. ⁶The group presented them to the apostles, who prayed and placed their hands on them.

The Choosing of the Seven

6 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against those of the Aramaic-speaking community because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ²So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said: "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, ³choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention ⁴to prayer and the ministry of the word."

⁵This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

1. **Some time later.** Both *Lipscomb* and *McGarvey* think this is still during the first year of the Gospel Age, either 30, or early 31 A.D. [by the corrected calendar]. **There was a quarrel.** Notice that somebody was already doing the work of a "church helper" [deacon] (*1 Tim. 3:8*). But the Greek-speaking Jews were being discriminated against. [Many Jews outside of Palestine adopted the Greek language and some customs.] **Their widows were being neglected.** The *pride* of the Palestinian Jews made them neglect the needs of these widows.

2. **So the twelve apostles.** This proves that Matthias was counted (*Acts 1:26*), since Paul had not yet converted to Christ. **It is not right for us.** Their mission did not allow them time to do this.

3. **So then, brothers, choose.** Note the apostles did not do the choosing! **Seven men.** This many could handle the assistance to the Greek-speaking widows. **Who are known to be.** Men whom the congregation could respect, and who could be trusted. **And we will put them in charge.** Compare *Titus 1:5*. Both church leaders [elders] and church helpers [deacons] are *horizontal extensions* of the group [local church], appointed to do a job. [Clerks watching the store, while the Boss is away.]

4. **To prayer and the work of preaching.** Note the apostles give prayer and preaching *equal* priority.

5. **So they chose Stephen.** He would be the first martyr. **Phillip.** He would later do the work of an evangelist. **Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas.** Their names do not appear again. **Nicolaus.** Some try to connect him with the "Nicolaitans in Revelation, but there is no evidence to do this.

6. **And placed their hands on them.** *McGarvey* says: "But all the apostles did was to pray and lay on their hands; hence, this was the ceremony of their appointment."

⁷And so the word of God continued to spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem grew larger and larger, and a great number of priests accepted the faith.

So the word of God spread. ⁷
The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

The Arrest of Stephen

Stephen Seized

⁸Stephen, a man richly blessed by God and full of power, performed great miracles and wonders among the people. ⁹But some men opposed him; they were members of the synagogue of the Free Men (as it was called), which had Jews from Cyrenia and Alexandria. They and other Jews from Cilicia and Asia started arguing with Stephen. ¹⁰But the Spirit gave Stephen such wisdom that when he spoke they could not resist him. ¹¹So they bribed some men to say, "We heard him speaking against Moses and against God!" ¹²In this way they stirred up the people, the elders, and the teachers of the Law. They came to Stephen, seized him, and took him before the Council. ¹³Then they brought in some men to tell lies about him. "This man," they said, "is always talking against our sacred temple

Now Stephen, a man full ⁸
of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. Opposition arose, ⁹
however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up ¹⁰
against his wisdom or the Spirit by which he spoke.

Then they secretly ¹¹
persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God."

So they stirred up ¹²
the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. They produced ¹³
false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against the holy place and a-

7. **And a great number of priests.** The unity of the group was preserved, and even priests were becoming "fulfilled Jews" in Christ! [Ezra 2:36-39 speaks of 4,289 priests coming back from Babylon. There would be more at this time.]

8. **Stephen.** His name is Greek. He is the first one *not an apostle* who is said to do miracles and wonders. Philip also had this power (Acts 8:6-7). [Only the apostles and those whom the apostles had "placed their hands on" had this power, as far as the Scripture tells us.] Compare Acts 8:15-19.

9. **Of the synagogue of the Free Men.** The Talmud says there were 480 synagogues in Jerusalem. This one was made up of men who had been taken to Rome as slaves, and later set free, who held Roman citizenship. Those who made up this synagogue were "Greek-speaking Jews." Stephen's name is Greek, and he probably would begin working with those of his own group.

10. **They could not resist him.** They could not refute his arguments. His message was very convincing.

11. **So they bribed some men.** They intend to stop what Stephen is doing. **Speaking against.** They cannot refute his arguments, so they accuse him of blasphemy.

12. **They stirred up the people.** By their slander. Up till now, the Christians had been popular for the most part (see verse 7). These "Free Men" try to turn public opinion against Stephen and the Christians. Compare note on Acts 4:2.

13-14. **This man.** Instead of attacking all Christians, they direct their slander against Stephen only. By doing this, they hope to be able to prejudice the people and turn them away from Christ. Compare

and the Law of Moses. ¹⁴We heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will tear down the temple and change all the customs which have come down to us from Moses!" ¹⁵All those sitting in the Council fixed their eyes on Stephen and saw that his face looked like the face of an angel.

Stephen's Speech

7 The High Priest asked Stephen, "Is this really so?" ²Stephen answered, "Brothers and fathers! Listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham while he was living in Mesopotamia, before he had gone to live in Haran, ³and said to him, 'Leave your family and country and go to the land that I will show you.' ⁴And so he left the land of Chaldea and went to live in Haran. After Abraham's father died, God made him move to this country, where you now live. ⁵God did not then give Abraham any part of it as his own, not even a square foot of ground; but God promised that he would give it to him, and that it would belong to him and his descendants after him. At the time God made

against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."

All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin

7 Then the high priest asked him, "Are these charges true?"

To this he replied: 2

"Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. 'Leave your country and your people,' 3 God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.'

"So he left Chaldea and settled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. He gave him 4 no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time 5

note on Rev. 12:17. Stephen likely did preach "the close of the Jewish Age and Christ as King." However, he did not blaspheme either God or Moses.

15. Fixed their eyes on Stephen. To see how he is reacting to these charges. **Like the face of an angel.** If his face had been shining with a supernatural light, the Council would have dismissed in awe! It must have been peace and joy which flashed from his eyes! [*Lipscomb* thinks it was the supernatural light that lit up the face of Moses. (*Exod. 35:30-35*).]

1. Is this really so? That is, "What do you have to say in your own defence?"

2-4. Stephen answered. His answer is to give an outline of Jewish history, from Abraham to Christ. This is to show that the "spiritual temple" which is the church of Christ [the messianic community] is the fulfillment of the Jewish Age. A true child of Abraham will listen to the prophecies of Moses and the others, and will accept Christ as the Messiah. (1) Abraham was uncircumcised when God called him and gave him the promise. (2) Joseph [a symbol of Christ] was rejected by his brothers, but later saved them (3) Moses was rejected by his people, but God used him to save Israel. (4) Israel went chasing after false gods, and the Lord sent them into captivity. (5) God had the Tent and the Temple built, but told them he does not live in houses built by men. (6) Moses predicted a prophet like himself, God's Servant. (7) In rejecting Christ and murdering him, they showed themselves true sons of their ancestors. The whole speech is logical, bringing these people face to face with their own sins. **The God of glory.** Abraham's home was in Ur, in the land of Chaldea in Mesopotamia. Abraham stopped five years at Haran, until his father died (*Gen. 11:31-32*). God gave a second call to him there (*Gen. 12:1*).

5. God did not then give. Abraham had only the promise by faith.

this promise Abraham had no children. ⁶This is what God said to him, 'Your descendants will live in a foreign country, where they will be slaves and will be badly treated for four hundred years. ⁷But I will pass judgment on the people that they will serve,' God said, 'and afterward they will come out of that country and will worship me in this place.' ⁸Then God gave to Abraham the ceremony of circumcision as a sign of the covenant. So Abraham circumcised Isaac a week after he was born; Isaac circumcised Jacob, and Jacob circumcised the twelve patriarchs.

⁹"The patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, and sold him to be a slave in Egypt. But God was with him, ¹⁰and brought him safely through all his troubles. When Joseph appeared before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, God gave him a pleasing manner and wisdom. Pharaoh made Joseph governor over the country and the royal household. ¹¹Then there was a famine in all of Egypt and Canaan, which caused much suffering. Our ancestors could not find any food. ¹²So when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent his sons, our ancestors, on their first visit there. ¹³On the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Pharaoh came to know about Joseph's family. ¹⁴So Joseph sent a message to his father Jacob, telling him and the whole family to come to Egypt; there were

Abraham had no child. God spoke to him in this way: 'Your descendants will be strangers in a foreign country, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. I will punish the nation that makes them slaves,' God said, 'and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.' Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

⁹"Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the good will of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; so he made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.

¹¹"Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our fathers could not find food. When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers on their first visit. On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all.

6. Will live in a foreign country. Egypt. See *Gen. 15:13-16*. Four hundred years. From the birth of Isaac to the Exodus. It was four hundred and thirty years from the calling of Abraham (*Gal. 3:16-17; Exod. 12:40*).

8. As a sign of the covenant. *Gen. 17*. All Jewish male babies received this sign. See notes on *Col. 2:11-12* for a contrast between this and spiritual circumcision.

9. The patriarchs were jealous. Joseph's brothers. As they rejected Joseph, their descendants rejected Christ. But God was with him. God raised him to an honored position in Egypt.

11. Then there was a famine. *Genesis chapters 39-50* tell about Joseph.

14. So Joseph sent a message. Joseph, the rejected brother, becomes the savior of his kinfolk! There were seventy-five people in all. Stephen quotes from the Septuagint [Greek translation of the Old Testament], as did Christ and the apostles who used this version almost exclusively. *Gen. 46:27* in that version says Joseph had nine sons, which would make the seventy-five.

seventy-five people in all. ¹⁵Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our ancestors died. ¹⁶Their bodies were moved to Shechem, where they were buried in the grave which Abraham had brought from the tribe of Hamor for a sum of money.

¹⁷When the time drew near for God to keep the promise he had made to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt had grown much larger. ¹⁸At last a different king, who had not known Joseph, began to rule in Egypt. ¹⁹He tricked our people and was cruel to our ancestors, forcing them to put their babies out of their homes, so that they would die. ²⁰It was at this time that Moses was born, a very beautiful child. He was brought up at home for three months, ²¹and when he was put out of his home the daughter of Pharaoh adopted him and brought him up as her own son. ²²He was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and became a great man in words and deeds.

²³When Moses was forty years old he decided to visit his fellow Israelites. ²⁴He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian; so he went to his help and took revenge on the Egyptian by killing him. ²⁵(He thought that his own people would understand that God was going to use him to set them free; but they did not under-

Then Jacob went down to 15
Egypt, where he and our
fathers died. Their bodies 16
were brought back to She-
chem and placed in the tomb
that Abraham had bought
from the sons of Hamor at
Shechem for a certain sum
of money.

¹⁷As the time drew near
for God to fulfill his promise
to Abraham, the number of
our people in Egypt greatly
increased. Then another 18
king, who knew nothing a-
bout Joseph, became ruler
of Egypt. He dealt treacher-
ously with our people and 19
oppressed our ancestors by
forcing them to throw out
their newborn babies so that
they would die.

²⁰At that time Moses was
born, and he was no ordi-
nary child. For three months
he was cared for in his
father's house. When he was 21
placed outside, Pharaoh's
daughter took him and
raised him as her own son.
Moses was educated in all 22
the wisdom of the Egyptians
and was powerful in speech
and action.

²³When Moses was forty
years old, he decided to visit
his fellow Israelites. He saw 24
one of them being mis-
treated by an Egyptian, so
he went to his defense and
avenged him by killing the 25
Egyptian. Moses thought
that his own people would
realize that God was using
him to rescue them, but they

16. **Their bodies were moved to Shechem.** The bodies of Joseph and his brothers (*Joshua 24:32*). Jewish tradition says the brothers were buried there also. Jerome, in the fourth century, said their graves could still be seen. **Which Abraham had bought.** Abraham built an altar to God at Shechem (*Gen. 12:6-7*). Yet Jacob is the one who bought the grave-site (*Gen. 33:18-20*). *McGarvey* thought this was a copyist's error, but the very oldest manuscripts have *Abraham*. Stephen evidently had some information which we do not have.

17. **When the time drew near.** For the people of Israel to come out of Egypt. (*verse 7*).

18-21. **It was at this time that Moses was born.** *Exodus chapters 1-2* tells about this.

22. **He was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians.** He was raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter (*Heb. 11:24*).

23-29. **When Moses was forty years old.** *Exod. 2:11-15*. The point Stephen brings out, is that Israel rejected Moses, just as they did Joseph and Jesus. Yet they knew how God had chosen both Joseph and Moses to be their leaders and saviors. This implies God had chosen Jesus also.

stand.) ²⁶The next day he saw two Israelites fighting, and he tried to make peace between them. 'Listen, men,' he said, 'you are brothers; why do you mistreat each other?' ²⁷But the one who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside. 'Who made you ruler and judge over us?' he asked. ²⁸'Do you want to kill me, just as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹When Moses heard this he fled from Egypt and started living in the land of Midian. There he had two sons.

³⁰'After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. ³¹Moses was amazed by what he saw, and went near the bush to look at it closely. But he heard the Lord's voice: ³²'I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and dared not look. ³³The Lord said to him, 'Take your sandals off, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. ³⁴I have looked and seen the cruel suffering of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groans, and I have come down to save them. Come now, I will send you to Egypt.'

³⁵'Moses is the one who was rejected by the people of Israel. 'Who made you ruler and judge over us?' they asked. He is the one whom God sent as ruler and savior, with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the burning bush. ³⁶He led the people out of Egypt, performing miracles and wonders in Egypt and the Red Sea,

did not. The next day Moses ²⁶ came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?'

"But the man who was ²⁷ mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? Do you ²⁸ want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' When Moses heard this, he ²⁹ fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

"After forty years had ³⁰ passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. When he ³¹ saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord's voice: 'I am the ³² God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to ³³ look.

"Then the Lord said to ³⁴ him, 'Take off your sandals; the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will ³⁵ send you back to Egypt.'

"This is the same Moses ³⁶ whom they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. He led them out of ³⁶ Egypt and did wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty

30-34. After forty years had passed. God's choosing and sending Moses is told in *Exod. 3:1-10*.

35-36. Moses is the one who was rejected. He comes down hard on this fact! He does this to reach the climax of verse 37.

and in the desert for forty years. ³⁷Moses is the one who said to the people of Israel, 'God will send you a prophet, just as he sent me, who will be of your own people.' ³⁸He is the one who was with the people of Israel assembled in the desert; he was there with our ancestors and with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai; he received God's living messages to pass on to us.

³⁹"But our ancestors refused to obey him; they pushed him aside and wished that they could go back to Egypt. ⁴⁰So they said to Aaron, 'Make us some gods who will go in front of us. We do not know what has happened to the Moses who brought us out of Egypt.' ⁴¹It was then that they made an idol in the shape of a calf, offered sacrifice to it, and had a feast to celebrate what they themselves had made. ⁴²But God turned away from them, and gave them over to worship the stars of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets,

'People of Israel! It was not to me
that you slaughtered and sacrificed
animals
for forty years in the desert.

⁴³It was the tend of God Moloch that
you carried,
and the image of the star of your god
Rephan;

years in the desert. This is ³⁷ that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.' He was in the ³⁸ congregation in the desert, with our fathers and with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai; and he received living words to pass on to us.

"But our fathers refused ³⁹ to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. They told Aaron, 'Make ⁴⁰ some gods who will lead the way for us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don't know what has happened to him!' That ⁴¹ was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and held a celebration in honor of what their hands had made. But God turned ⁴² away and gave them over to the worship of the heavenly bodies. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets:

'Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings
forty years in the desert,
O Israel?

No, you have lifted up the ⁴³ shrine of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan,

37. God will send you a prophet. This prophecy destroys the charge against Philip, which accused him of blaspheming Moses. Since Moses spoke about a prophet who would supersede himself, the one who truly gives honor to Moses honors the One whom Moses spoke about.

38. He is the one. That is, Moses. Stephen still shows them their ancestors did not honor Moses. The angel who spoke to him. Compare *verse 53; Gal. 3:19. God's living message.* The Law. Compare *Rom. 7:12-14.*

39-43. But our ancestors refused to obey him. These verses sum up the disobedience of Israel. Stephen shows that the rejection of Jesus has roots deep in their own past. Compare *Exod. 16:3; 17:4; 32:1-14. But God turned away from them.* Stephen condenses many centuries into this record of rejection which led to their captivity in Babylon. The stars of heaven. Compare *Deut. 17:3. People of Israel!* The quotation in *verses 42-43* is from *Amos 5:25-27.* The animal sacrifices were offered to God, yet the people really intended them for their "star gods." *Moloch. Sakkuth.* Babies were burned as human sacrifices to this god (*Lev. 18:21*). *Rephan. Kaiwan* [= Saturn?]. Perhaps the *Ashtoreth* of the O.T.,

they were idols that you had made to worship.

And so I will send you away beyond Babylon.'

⁴⁴"Our ancestors had the tent of God's presence with them in the desert. It had been made as God had told Moses to make it, according to the pattern that Moses had been shown.

⁴⁵Later on, our ancestors who received the tent from their fathers carried it with them when they went with Joshua and took over the land from the nations that God drove out before them. And it stayed there until the time of David. ⁴⁶He won God's favor, and asked God to allow him to provide a house for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷But it was Solomon who built him a house.

⁴⁸"But the Most High God does not live in houses built by men; as the prophet says,

⁴⁹"Heaven is my throne, says the Lord, and earth is my footstool.

What kind of house would you build for me?

Where is the place for me to rest?

⁵⁰Did not I myself make all these things?'

the idols you made to worship.

Therefore, I will send you into exile' beyond Babylon.

"Our ancestors had the ⁴⁴tabernacle of the testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. Having received the ⁴⁵tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, who enjoyed ⁴⁶God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who ⁴⁷built the house for him.

"However, the Most High ⁴⁸does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says:

'Heaven is my throne, ⁴⁹and the earth is my footstool.

What kind of house will you make for me? says the Lord.

Or where will my resting place be?

Has not my hand made all ⁵⁰these things?'

who would be worshiped in immoral ways. [The quotation follows the Septuagint.] **And so I will send you away.** Stephen shows that Israel has always been *rebellious*, and God has punished them for it. [Probably two million Jews came out of Egypt (*compare Numbers 1:45-46*), yet during the forty years in the desert, all perished except Joshua and Caleb.]

45-50. Our ancestors had the tent of God's presence. [*Tabernacle* is an old word for *tent*.] This tent was a "portable temple," and served to focus the worship of God and act as a witness to the Covenant. Compare *Heb. 9:1-10*. Stephen contrasts God's tent with the "tent of Moloch" (*verse 43*) which must have been a small "model" which they carried with them. **When they went in with Joshua.** [Joshua and Jesus are the same name in Hebrew.] They took God's tent with them into Canaan. **To provide a house for the God of Jacob.** David wanted to build a temple to replace the tent, but God would not allow him to do it See *2 Sam. 7:1-17; 1 Chron. 22:7-8; 2 Chron. 6:1-11*. **But the Most High God.** The tent was superseded by the temple, as God commanded. But God does not confine himself to any human construction (*2 Chron. 6:18*); therefore the temple itself would be superseded. [This would make them insane with anger!] But Jesus had predicted this (*John 4:21-24; Matt. 23:38-39*); and the Christians preached it (*compare Acts 17:24-25*). **Verses 49-50** quote *Isaiah 66:1-2* from the Septuagint.

⁵¹“How stubborn you are! How heathen your hearts, how deaf you are to God’s message! You are just like your ancestors: you too have always resisted the Holy Spirit! ⁵²Was there any prophet that your ancestors did not persecute? They killed God’s messengers, who long ago announced the coming of his righteous Servant. And now you have betrayed and murdered him. ⁵³You are the ones who received God’s law, that was handed down by angels—yet you have not obeyed it!”

The Stoning of Stephen

⁵⁴As the members of the Council listened to Stephen they became furious and ground their teeth at him in anger. ⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw God’s glory, and Jesus standing at the right side of God. ⁵⁶“Look!” he said, “I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing at the right side of God!”

⁵⁷With a loud cry they covered their ears with their hands. Then they all rushed together at

“You stubborn people, 51 with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was 52 there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have 53 received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.”

The Stoning of Stephen

When they heard this, 54 they were furious and ground their teeth at him. But Stephen, filled with the 55 Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see 56 heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

At this they covered their 57 ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all

51. **How stubborn you are!** Stephen now makes the application of all he has said. [Remember: the Holy Spirit is directing him.] They are *stubborn* like the ox that has to be *driven* to pull his load. Their hearts are *heathen* [alien and cut off from God]. They are *deaf* to God’s message. They are just like their ancestors, whom Stephen has just described as rebels. They *resist* the Holy Spirit. Compare *Rom. 2:25-29*.

52-53. **Was there any prophet?** Compare *Matt. 23:29-36*. **That was handed down by angels.** Compare *Heb. 2:1-5*. The Jews had an unhealthy interest in angels. [Compare note on *Col. 2:18-19*.]

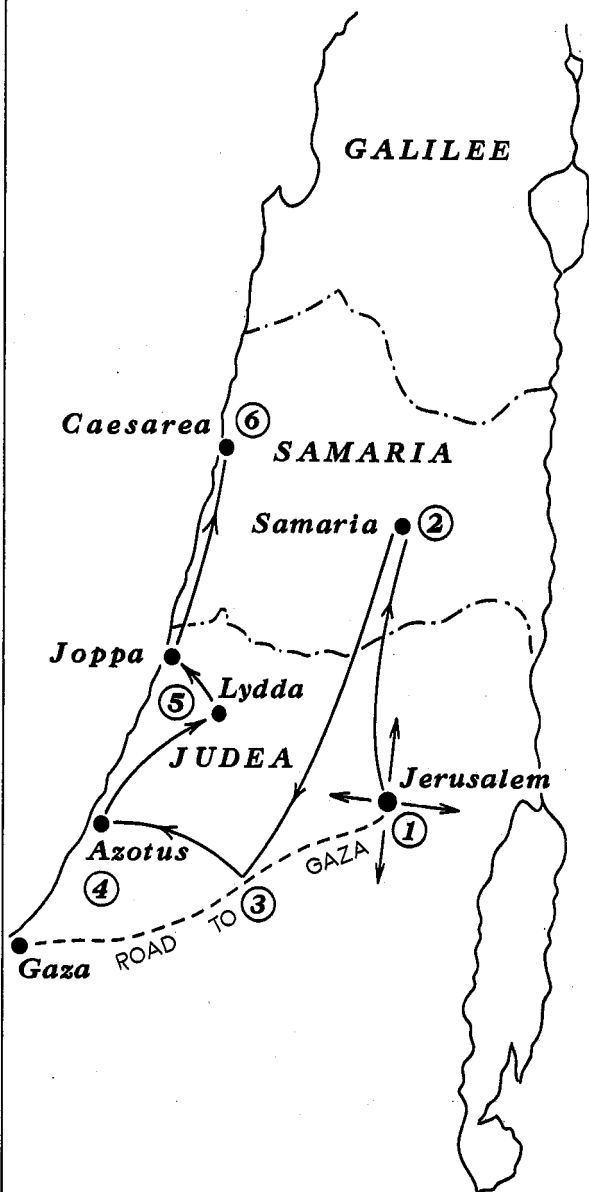
54. **They became furious.** Satan uses their own sense of guilt to drive them insane with anger! Compare notes on *Rev. 9*.

55. **Looked up to heaven.** “Happy are the dead who from now on die in the service of the Lord!” (*Rev. 14:13*). For the Christian, death is *graduation* from the school of life.

56. **The Son of Man standing.** Compare notes on *Matt. 26:64-65*.

57. **With a loud cry.** Some seventy-two solemn councilmen, who are official guardians of the Law, become a “howling mob.” *McGarvey* says: “But the maddest pranks ever played upon this mad earth are witnessed when wicked men set themselves in uncompromising opposition to God and his holy truth.”

THE DISPERSION 8:1-4
THE WORK OF PHILIP 8:5-13; 26-40



**THE DISPERSION THE WORK OF PHILIP
THE WORK OF PETER AND JOHN**

8:1-40

THE DISPERSION, 8:1-4

- a. The persecution against the church, *1a*
- b. The dispersion, *1b*
- c. The burial of Stephen, *2*
- d. The persecution by Saul, *3*
- e. The preaching of all who were scattered, *4*

THE FIRST WORK OF PHILIP, 8:5-13

- a. Leaving Jerusalem at the dispersion, *5a*
- b. The signs and preaching at Samaria resulting in the conversion of the Samaritans and Simon the sorcerer, *5b-13*

THE LATER WORK OF PHILIP, 26-40

1. On the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, *26-39*
 - a. The directions of the angel, *26*
 - b. The meeting of the eunuch and Philip, *27-30*
 - c. Philip's sermon, *31-35*
 - d. The baptism of the eunuch, *36-39*
2. At Azotus, *40a*
Directed here by the Holy Spirit, *40a*
3. At Lydda. (one of the villages on the plain of Philistia.) *40 b*
4. At Joppa, *40c* (where Philip probably preached.)
5. In Caesarea, *40d*
The final place in Philip's tour, *40d Cf. Acts 21:8.*

him at once, ⁵⁸threw him out of the city and stoned him. The witnesses left their cloaks in charge of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹They kept on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" ⁶⁰He knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord! Do not remember this sin against them!" He said this and died.

8 And Saul approved of his murder.

Saul Persecutes the Church

That very day the church in Jerusalem began to suffer cruel persecution. All the believers, except the apostles, were scattered throughout the provinces of Judea and Samaria. ²Some devout men buried Stephen, mourning for him with loud cries.

³But Saul tried to destroy the church; going from house to house he dragged out the believers, both men and women, and threw them into jail.

rushed at him, dragged him 58 out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

While they were stoning 59 him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees 60 and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

8 And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.

The Church Persecuted and Scattered

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men 2 buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. 3 Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

58. **Threw him out of the city.** Even though they are committing murder, they are very careful to do it outside the "holy city" (*Lev. 24:14*). **And stoned him.** The Romans crucified; the Jews stoned. **The witnesses.** They had to throw the first stones (*Deut. 17:7*). **A young man named Saul.** This is the first mention of this militant Jewish missionary, who will later become The Apostle to the Gentiles. See note on *Acts 9:1*.

59-60. **Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!** This shows his confident faith! **He knelt down.** The point is, that like Jesus, he prayed for his enemies. **And died.** Stephen's death was murder because: (1) no vote was taken in the Council; (2) The Roman governor's consent was not obtained (see note on *John 18:31*).

1. **And Saul approved of his murder.** He did not throw a stone, but he agreed in spirit with what they did. See the description of Saul in notes on *Acts 9:1*. **That very day.** Murdering Stephen was not enough! These men, including Saul, wanted "blood" of the entire messianic community. **All the believers.** The group had become very large, some think as large as one hundred thousand members. Persecution caused an *explosion* as it forced the disciples to *run for their lives!* Verse 4 tells the results. **Except the apostles.** An old tradition says Christ ordered the apostles to stay in Jerusalem for twelve years, so that no one there could say he had not heard the Good News. The apostles were shielded in some way.

2. **Some devout men buried Stephen.** This implies they were not Christians, but devout Jews, favorable toward the Gospel, yet not willing to obey it. **Mourning for him.** They showed their protest against Stephen's murder by a public funeral, with the usual screaming and crying.

3. **But Saul tried to destroy the church.** He did this because he BELIEVED they were God's enemies. Saul always did what he thought God wanted him to do. Compare *Acts 23:1*. [The Jews of the first century believed they could bring the promised Messiah, by converting the world to Judaism. Saul certainly must have been a "militant Jewish missionary."]

The Gospel Preached in Samaria

⁴The believers who were scattered went everywhere, preaching the message. ⁵Philip went to the city of Samaria and preached the Messiah to the people there. ⁶The crowds paid close attention to what Philip said. They all listened to him and saw the miracles that he performed. ⁷Evil spirits came out with a loud cry from many people; many paralyzed and lame people were also healed. ⁸So there was great joy in Samaria.

⁹In that city lived a man named Simon, who for some time had astounded the Samaritans with his magic. He claimed that he was someone great, ¹⁰and everyone in the city, from all classes of society, paid close attention to him. "He is that power of God known as 'The Great Power,'" ¹¹he said. He had astounded them with his magic for such a long time that they paid close attention to him. ¹²But when they believed Philip's message about the Good News of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Philip in Samaria

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralyzed and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

Simon the Sorcerer

Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is the divine power known as the Great Power." They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic. But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself

4. **Preaching the message.** The group was scattered, but the church of Christ was not destroyed! They had been schooled by the apostles, and everywhere one of these believers found himself, a new community of believers grew up.

5. **Philip went to the city of Samaria.** This is not Philip the apostle, but rather Philip the "church helper" (Acts 6:5). The city of Samaria was some ten miles northwest of Sychar. Herod the Great rebuilt it and renamed it Sebaste.

6-8. **The crowds paid close attention.** The miracles got their attention. Compare Acts 19:10-12. Philip, one of the seven (Acts 6:5), had the gift of miracles. This is the second recorded example of one, who was not an apostle, having this gift. The miracles were similar to those which Jesus did. Compare notes on Matt. 4:24-25.

9. **A man named Simon.** A magician, who had built fame for himself through his use of the magic arts. He claimed to be more than human, with supernatural powers.

10. **He is that power of God.** They believed God worked through him to do these things.

12. **But when they believed Philip's message.** Note that: (1) Philip preached to them; (2) the Good News of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ; (3) faith came from hearing the message (Rom 10:17); (4) when they believed, they were baptized. This is the pattern found throughout Acts, including the special case of Cornelius. **Both men and women.** There is no mention of children.

¹³Simon himself also believed; and after being baptized he stayed close to Philip, and was astounded when he saw the great wonders and miracles that were being performed.

¹⁴The apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had received the word of God; so they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵When they arrived, they prayed for the believers that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶For the Holy Spirit had not yet come down on any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸Simon saw that the Spirit had been given to them when the apostles placed their hands on them. So he offered money to Peter and John, ¹⁹and said, "Give this power to me too, so that anyone I place my hands on will receive the Holy Spirit."

believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

13. **Simon himself also believed.** Many have argued that Simon believed in the miracles, not in Christ. But we are not told this, and the Scripture makes no separation between he and the others. It is hard to believe a man with the fame Simon had, would yield himself to the Good News, unless he was sincere at the time. He was like the seed that fell among thorns, which grew up and choked out his spiritual life.

14. **The apostles in Jerusalem heard.** Philip was not an apostle. He had the gift of miracles, but could not pass it on to others. (1) On Pentecost, the Spirit came down on the first Jewish Christians. (2) The Samaritan Christians received the gifts of the Spirit from the apostle. (3) When the first Gentiles were converted, an apostle was present as the Spirit came down. There is no record of the gifts of the Spirit being given other than through or in the presence of an apostle. See *Rom. 1:11*. So they sent Peter and John. The entire group of apostles chooses Peter and John for this mission. This is the last time John is mentioned in the book of Acts.

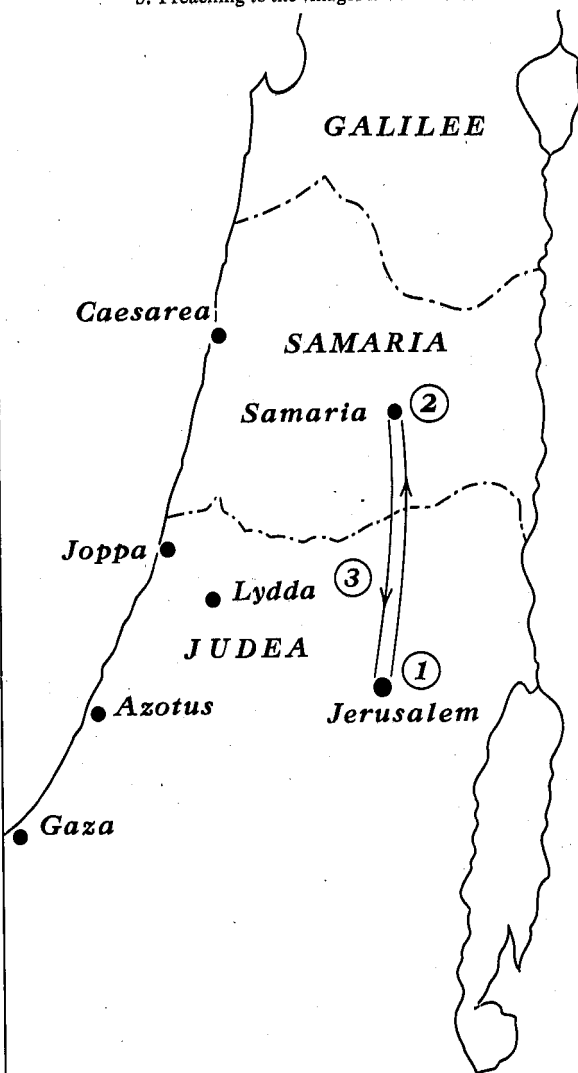
15-17. **They prayed for the believers.** That the Spirit might come down on them. The "gifts of the Spirit" are not the same as the "Spirit as a gift." These had already been born of water and the Spirit (*John 3:5*), but had not yet been given the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. See notes on *Acts 19:1-7*. Calvin wrote: "Luke speaks not of the common grace of the Holy Spirit, but of those singular gifts with which God would have certainly endowed at the beginning of the gospel." Placed their hands on them. Only the apostles had the authority and the ability to pass on the gifts of the Spirit.

18-19. **So he offered money to Peter and John.** This implies he was not one whom the apostles gave the gifts of the Spirit. His sin is not that he wanted this power, but that he tried to buy it! [*1 Tim. 6:5* may apply here.]

THE WORK OF PETER AND JOHN

8:14-25

1. At Jerusalem, 14
 - a. News of Philip's work reaches Jerusalem, 14a
 - b. Peter and John sent, 14b
2. At Samaria, 15-25a
 - a. The imparting of spiritual gifts, 15-17
 - b. The sin of Simon and the rebuke of Peter, 18-24
 - c. Preaching and testifying in Samaria, 25a
3. Preaching to the villages in Samaria, 25b



²⁰But Peter answered him, "May you and your money go to hell, for thinking that you can buy God's gift with money! ²¹You have no part or share in our work, because your heart is not right in God's sight. ²²Repent, then, from this evil plan of yours, and pray to the Lord that he will forgive you for thinking such a thing as this. ²³For I see that you are full of bitter envy, and are a prisoner of sin."

²⁴Simon said to Peter and John, "Please pray to the Lord for me, so that none of these things you said will happen to me."

²⁵After they had given their testimony and spoken the Lord's message, Peter and John went back to Jerusalem. On their way they preached the Good News in many villages of Samaria.

Philip and the Ethiopian Official

²⁶An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, "Get yourself ready and go south to the road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This road is

Peter answered: "May 20
your money perish with you,
because you thought to buy
the gift of God with money!
You have no part or share in
this ministry, because your
heart is not right before
God. Repent of this wicked-
ness and pray to the Lord.
Perhaps he will forgive you
for having such a thought in
your heart. For I see that
you are full of bitterness and
captive to sin."

Then Simon answered, 24
"Pray to the Lord for me so
that nothing you have said
may happen to me."

When they had testified 25
and proclaimed the word of
the Lord, Peter and John re-
turned to Jerusalem, preach-
ing the gospel in many Sa-
maritan villages.

Phillip and the Ethiopian

Now an angel of the Lord 26
said to Philip, "Go south to
the road—the desert road—
that goes down from Jerusa-

20-24. *May you and your money go to hell.* This is a *literal* translation. *Johnson* thinks this is not an *anathema* [God's curse], but the word is *APOLEIAN*, which is translated "destined to hell" in *2 Thess. 2:3*. However, Simon is not completely beyond hope, as Peter shows. **For thinking that you can buy.** Simon's *conversion* is not called into question but the *sin* he has done. **You have no part or share in our work.** In these gifts of the Spirit. **Repent, then.** He does not repeat the words of *Acts 2:38*, because this man is not an alien from the Kingdom. His past sins have already been forgiven. It is this present sin that threatens to drag him down to hell. If there is any *doubt* about forgiveness, it is not about God's willingness to forgive, but about Simon's willingness to repent. Compare *Heb. 6:4-6* **And pray to the Lord.** The erring child of God, caught with sin on his hands, has the *right* to pray to the Lord for forgiveness. The alien from the Kingdom must: (1) believe; (2) repent; (3) be baptized (*Acts 2:37-38* and *notes*). Peter shows us that the sinning Christian must (1) repent; (2) pray (*see also 1 John 1:8-10*). Scripture tells us nothing more of this Simon the magician.

25. **After they had given.** Peter and John did not rush back to Jerusalem, but used every opportunity to spread the Good News of Jesus.

26. **An angel of the Lord.** Gaza was on the south-west seacoast of Judea. The road went through the hill-country of Judea. Note the angel speaks to the *preacher* and sends him to preach Jesus.

no longer used.) ²⁷⁻²⁸So Philip got ready and went. Now an Ethiopian eunuch was on his way home. This man was an important official in charge of the treasury of the Queen, or Candace, of Ethiopia. He had been to Jerusalem to worship God, and was going back in his carriage. As he rode along he was reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and stay close to that carriage." ³⁰Philip ran over and heard him reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah; so he asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

³¹"How can I understand," the official replied, "unless someone explains it to me?" And he invited Philip to climb up and sit in the carriage with him. ³²The passage of scripture which he was reading was this,

"He was like a sheep that is taken to be slaughtered;
he was like a lamb that makes no sound when its wool is cut off;
he did not say a word.

³³He was humiliated, and justice was denied him.

No one will be able to tell about his descendants,

lem to Gaza." So he started 27 out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and 28 on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go 29 to that chariot and stay near it."

Then Philip ran up to the 30 chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

"How can I," he said, 31 unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

The eunuch was reading 32 this passage of Scripture:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

In his humiliation he was 33 deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants? For his

27-28. **Now an Ethiopian eunuch.** Ethiopia was the part of Africa south of Egypt. It was common in the East to "desex" strong, intelligent young men, and train them for positions of leadership. This "mutilated" man was probably a Gentile converted to Judaism, although he could never be a "full Jew" because he was a eunuch (*Deut. 23:1*). **In charge of the treasury.** This shows his importance. [*"Candace"* is not a personal name, but a title.] Her court was on an island in the Nile river, about a thousand miles from the Mediterranean Sea. **To worship God.** Traveling this long distance, his Bible study, etc., shows him to be a devout man. [He would be allowed only in the Court of the Gentiles, because of his mutilation (*Deut. 23:1*).

29-30. **The Holy Spirit said to Philip.** Notice the Spirit sends Philip to this man.

31. **How can I understand?** He needed help to understand the prophecies. Compare *1 Cor. 2:13-14*.

32-33. **The passage of scripture.** *Isa. 53:7-8* from the Septuagint. This quotation from Isaiah shows the voluntary sacrifice which Christ would make; the wickedness and guilt of the people who killed him; and also the "spiritual children" [followers] he would have.

because his life on earth has come to an end."

³⁴The official said to Philip, "Tell me, of whom is the prophet saying this? Of himself or of someone else?" ³⁵Philip began to speak; starting from this very passage of scripture, he told him the Good News about Jesus. ³⁶As they traveled down the road they came to a place where there was some water, and the official said, "Here is some water. What is to keep me from being baptized?"

[³⁷Philip said to him, "You may be baptized if you believe with all your heart."

"I do," he answered; "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]

³⁸The official ordered the carriage to stop; and both of them, Philip and the official, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

³⁹When they came up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away. The official did not see him again, but continued on his way, full

life was taken from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, ³⁴ "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then ³⁵ Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

As they traveled along the ³⁶ road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he ordered the chariot ³⁸ to stop. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they ³⁹ came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way

34-35. **Of whom is the prophet saying this?** Philip used this opportunity to show how the prophets predicted God's act in Christ to set men free. He showed the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. He told how they had been ordered to preach this Good News and baptize believers by the authority of Christ into the "Three Names of God" (see notes on Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:38). We know this, because of the question the official asks in verse 36.

36. **They came to a place.** The exact spot where this baptism took place is unknown. Jerome and Eusebius place it at Bethsura [Bethzur, *Joshua 15:58*], about twenty miles from Jerusalem, in a deep pool at the foot of a hill. Others think *verse 40* implies it was near Ashdod. **Here is some water.** Note it is the official who asks this! This implies Philip had taught him this. The Greek implies *happiness* that he could obey his Lord in the liquid grave (*Col. 2:12*). See note on *verse 39*.

37. **If you believe.** Philip asks for a formal declaration of faith. **I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.** This is the "Ultimate declaration!" See *Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21*.

38. **And both of them . . . went down into the water.** *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΗΥΔΟΡ: even if the words are rendered 'unto the water' (Plumptre), the context ΑΝΕΒΕΣΑΝ ΕΚ indicates that the baptism was by immersion, and there can be no doubt that this was the custom in the early Church."

39-40. **Up out of the water.** "Christian baptism" involves both *water* and *Spirit*. See note on *John 3:5*. **Full of Joy.** This man had been unable to find full acceptance in Judaism because of his mutilation (*Deut. 23:1*). Try to picture his great happiness in discovering that none of that was important any more! He, a eunuch, had direct access to Jesus Christ the Son of God!!! **Philip found himself in Ashdod.** Also called Azotus. This was an old Philistine city on the seacoast. He probably planted churches along

of joy. ⁴⁰Philip found himself in Ashdod; and he went through all the towns preaching the Good News, until he arrived at Caesarea.

The Conversion of Saul

(Also Acts 22.6-16; 26.12-18)

9 In the meantime Saul kept up his violent threats of murder against the disciples of the Lord. He went to the High Priest ²and asked for letters of introduction to the Jewish synagogues in Damascus, so that if he should find any followers of the Way of the Lord there, he would be able to arrest them, both men and women, and take them back to Jerusalem.

³On his way to Damascus, as he came near the city, suddenly a light from the sky flashed

rejoicing. Philip, however, ⁴⁰ appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Saul's Conversion

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around

the coastal area (compare Acts 9:32,36). Until he arrived at Caesarea. He may have taken months or years to do this. Peter probably did his work of missions at Caesarea before Philip arrived. We find Philip living there in Acts 21:8.

1. **Saul kept up his violent threats.** See Acts 8:3. The life of this man is about to undergo a radical transformation as he comes face to face with the Risen Lord! Saul tried to live as he understood the Law of God. It was because of ignorance that he tried to destroy the church (1 Tim. 1:13). [One year or more has passed since the death of Stephen.] Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5); his Jewish father was a Roman citizen, so Saul was born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28). He was born in Tarsus, a Greek city, capital of Cilicia. He grew up with the Greek language and customs, as well as being raised a strict Pharisee (Phil. 3:5-6). While still young, he went to Jerusalem to study the Law at the theological schools, and was taught by one of the greatest teachers of the Law, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). He was one of the militant Pharisees (Acts 26:5), and probably had been trained as a missionary for Judaism. It is thought that he had been away from Jerusalem during the time of Christ's public ministry and the events of the Cross. As we first meet him, he is a young man [between 30 and 35 years old], outstanding and with great influence, active in his attempt to destroy what he believes to be a heresy, and a trusted leader of those who are enemies of Christianity.

2. **And asked for letters.** If Saul's conversion was in 33 A.D. [by the corrected calendar], the High Priest must have been Joseph Calaphas, a Sadducee, who held office until 36 A.D. The High Priest was a "pope" over the Jews, and authority from him would allow Saul to demand help from any synagogue. **Damascus.** About 140 miles northeast of Jerusalem, east of Mt. Hermon, in Syria. Watered by mountain streams, this beautiful city was a fertile spot in the desert. It is one of the oldest cities in the world, dating from before Abraham. Saul's activity had the backing of the Council, of which he himself may have been a member (see note on Acts 26:10). **The Way of the Lord.** Christianity; the Christian System.

3. **On his way.** Six or seven days were needed to go that far. **Suddenly a light from the sky.** Much brighter than the sun (Acts 26:13). The same as that seen at the Transfiguration, and by John on Patmos. Paul tells more details in chapters 22 & 26.

around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me?"

⁵"Who are you, Lord?" he asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you persecute," the voice said, ⁶"But get up and go into the city, where you will be told what you must do."

⁷The men who were traveling with Saul had stopped, not saying a word; they heard the voice but could not see anyone. ⁸Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes, but could not see a thing. So they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was not able to see, and during that time he did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰There was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. He had a vision, in which the Lord said to him, "Ananias!"

"Here I am, Lord," he answered.

him. He fell to the ground ⁴ and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

"Who are you, Lord?" ⁵ Saul asked.

"I am Jesus whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up ⁸ from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

In Damascus there was a ¹⁰ disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

4. **And heard a voice.** The voice spoke to him in Hebrew (*Acts 26:14*), the language he spoke at his mother's knee, which was also the theological language. This strikes Saul at the very depths of his personality. **Why do you persecute me?** The blow that strikes against the messianic community also strikes Jesus himself! This shows how closely united Christ is with his church.

5. **Who are you, Lord?** He recognized this as a supernormal communication, but would not know that it was Christ who spoke. Saul was a religious man, sincere in what he was doing (*Acts 23:1*). **I am Jesus.** He does not say, "I am the Eternal Logos, the Living God." Saul would have answered, "I am not persecuting you, Lord." The voice says, "*I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you persecute.*" And immediately Saul understands! The one whom he had hated intensely, whose religious community he had worked to destroy, is the Lord himself!!! He could reject this knowledge, as did Judas Iscariot. And the power of the vision had not offered anything to change his mind, until the voice identified itself. But his mind GRASPS this knowledge and he lies there a *believer* who desperately wants to escape his sin!

6. **Where you will be told what you must do.** He must come into the Kingdom in the same way the others have. Christ has placed the terms of salvation into human hands, and Saul must learn what to do to be saved from a human source [Ananias]. Compare *2 Cor. 4:1-7*.

7. **They heard the voice.** Saul both heard the voice and saw Jesus (*verse 17; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8*). These men were on the fringes of the vision and did not receive the full impact. Although they heard the voice, they did not understand what it said (*Acts 22:9*). It is implied they got up from the ground in a shorter time than Saul did.

8. **But could not see a thing.** This blindness was proof he had not imagined the whole thing. Saul the *destroyer* was led helplessly into the city.

9. **For three days.** Try to picture the panic and anguish of this devoutly religious man who suddenly discovered he had been *fighting against* the very God he loved and served!!! Compare *Acts 2:37* and note.

10. **There was a disciple.** Ananias is only mentioned in his connection with Saul.

¹¹The Lord said to him, "Get ready and go to Straight Street, and at the house of Judas ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying, ¹²and in a vision he saw a man named Ananias come in and place his hands on him so that he might see again."

¹³Ananias answered, "Lord, many people have told me about this man, about all the terrible things he has done to your people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴And he has come to Damascus with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

¹⁵The Lord said to him, "Go, because I have chosen him to serve me, to make my name known to Gentiles and kings, and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶And I myself will show him all that he must suffer for my sake."

¹⁷So Ananias went, entered the house and placed his hands on Saul. "Brother Saul," he said, "the Lord has sent me—Jesus himself, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. He sent me so that you might see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸At once something like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes and he was able to see again. He stood up and

The Lord told him, "Go ¹¹to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

"Lord," Ananias answered, ¹³"I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

But the Lord said to Ananias, ¹⁵"Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

Then Ananias went to the ¹⁷house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord — Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here — has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, ¹⁸something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up

11-12. **The Lord said to him.** Just as Philip was sent to the Ethiopian eunuch, Ananias is sent to Saul. **Straight Street.** This street ran across the city, from the eastern gate to the western gate, and was about 100 feet wide. **At the house of Judas.** We know only his name. **A man from Tarsus named Saul.** This would identify the right man. **He is praying.** Try to picture how Ananias must have felt, being sent to Saul of Tarsus, the fierce enemy of Christians!!!

13-14. **Ananias answered.** He voices his fears to the Lord. Put yourself in his place.

15-16. **Go, because I have chosen him.** The case of Saul is unique! He alone of the apostles, saw the Lord in this way and received this call (*1 Cor. 15:8; Acts 26: 16-18*). Note that Saul was called to be an apostle *before* his sins were forgiven, and it was his *option* whether he obeyed the Lord (*Acts 22:16*).

17. **And placed his hands on Saul.** As an act of friendship, not to give any gift [since Ananias was not an apostle]. Paul declared that he received his authority as an apostle from God, not men (*Gal. 1:1, 11-12*). The "*be filled with the Holy Spirit*" took place *after* Ananias had baptized Saul into Christ. Compare *Acts 22:13-16*. All the apostles received the "baptism with the Holy Spirit" direct from God (*Acts 1:4*), and none but the apostles could "pass on" the special gifts to others.

18. **Something like fish scales.** As soon as Ananias says "Brother Saul, see again!" this happens. **He stood up and was baptized.** J.F. Bethune-Baker, in *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine* says this of how the early church understood the role of baptism: "*It was regarded as in itself conveying the blessings and the grace which were bestowed. It was the medium by which the power of the life and death of Christ was made effective to the individual experience.*" See note on *Acts 22:16*.

was baptized; ¹⁹and after he had eaten, his strength came back.

Saul Preaches in Damascus

Saul stayed for a few days with the disciples in Damascus. ²⁰He went straight to the synagogues and began to preach about Jesus. "He is the Son of God." he said.

²¹All who heard him were amazed, and asked, "Isn't this the man who in Jerusalem was killing those who call on this name? And didn't he come here for the very purpose of arresting them and taking them back to the chief priests?"

²²But Saul's preaching became even more powerful, and his proofs that Jesus was the Messiah were so convincing that the Jews who lived in Damascus could not answer him.

²³After many days had gone by, the Jews gathered and made plans to kill Saul; ²⁴but he was told of what they planned to do. Day and night they watched the city gates in order to kill him. ²⁵But one night Saul's followers took him and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

and was baptized, and after ¹⁹taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him ²¹were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" Yet ²²Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

After many days had gone ²³by, the Jews conspired to kill him, but Saul learned of ²⁴their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. But his followers took ²⁵him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

19. Saul stayed for a few days. Paul, as we better know him, received his knowledge and his message direct from God and did not need to be taught (*Gal. 1:12*). But try to picture his intense desire for companionship! In turning to Jesus Christ, he has cut himself off from everything in the past!

20. He went straight to the synagogues. He immediately begins working to bring people to Jesus. For a short time, the *bizarre* turn-around in him would cause many unbelieving Jews to hear him out.

21. All who heard him were amazed. They knew who he was and what he had done in the past, but had not yet learned of his converting to Christ.

22. But Saul's preaching. His ability grew rapidly!

23. After many days had gone by. Probably three years time, during which he was away in Arabia (*Gal. 1:16-18*). It was when he had come back to Damascus that this persecution broke out. And made plans to kill Saul. Paul tells about this in *2 Cor. 11:32-33*. King Aretas, an Arabian, controlled Damascus at this time, and he was willing to kill Paul to please the Jews.

24. Day and night they watched. "The governor under King Aretas placed guards at the city gates to arrest me" (*2 Cor. 11:32*).

25. Lowering him in a basket. Houses built against the wall, or on the wall, gave the opportunity to escape from the city.

Saul in Jerusalem

²⁶Saul went to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples. They would not believe, however, that he was a disciple, and they were all afraid of him. ²⁷Then Barnabas came to his help and took him to the apostles. He explained to them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road, and that the Lord had spoken to him. He also told them how boldly Saul had preached in the name of Jesus in Damascus. ²⁸And so Saul stayed with them and went all over Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹He also talked and disputed with the Greek-speaking Jews, but they tried to kill him. ³⁰When the brothers found out about this, they took Saul down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

³¹And so it was that the church throughout all of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had a time of peace. It was built up and grew in numbers through the help of the Holy Spirit, as it lived in reverence for the Lord.

When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

26. **Saul went to Jerusalem.** Three years before, he had set out from Jerusalem, as a proud, talented young Pharisee, with a bright future as an agent of the Council. He set out with authority from the High Priest himself, to stamp out Christianity in Damascus. Now he comes back as a disciple of the hated Jesus of Nazareth, with no future at all as far as the Council and Judaism is concerned. Persecuted, hated, he is an outcast from his own nation. Why the change??? He had decided that what Jesus had to offer was worth more than the whole world put together!!! **And they were all afraid of him.** Could you blame them???

27. **Then Barnabas came to his help.** We met Barnabas in *Acts 4:36*. Like Paul, he was a Greek-speaking Jew. He may have known Paul personally.

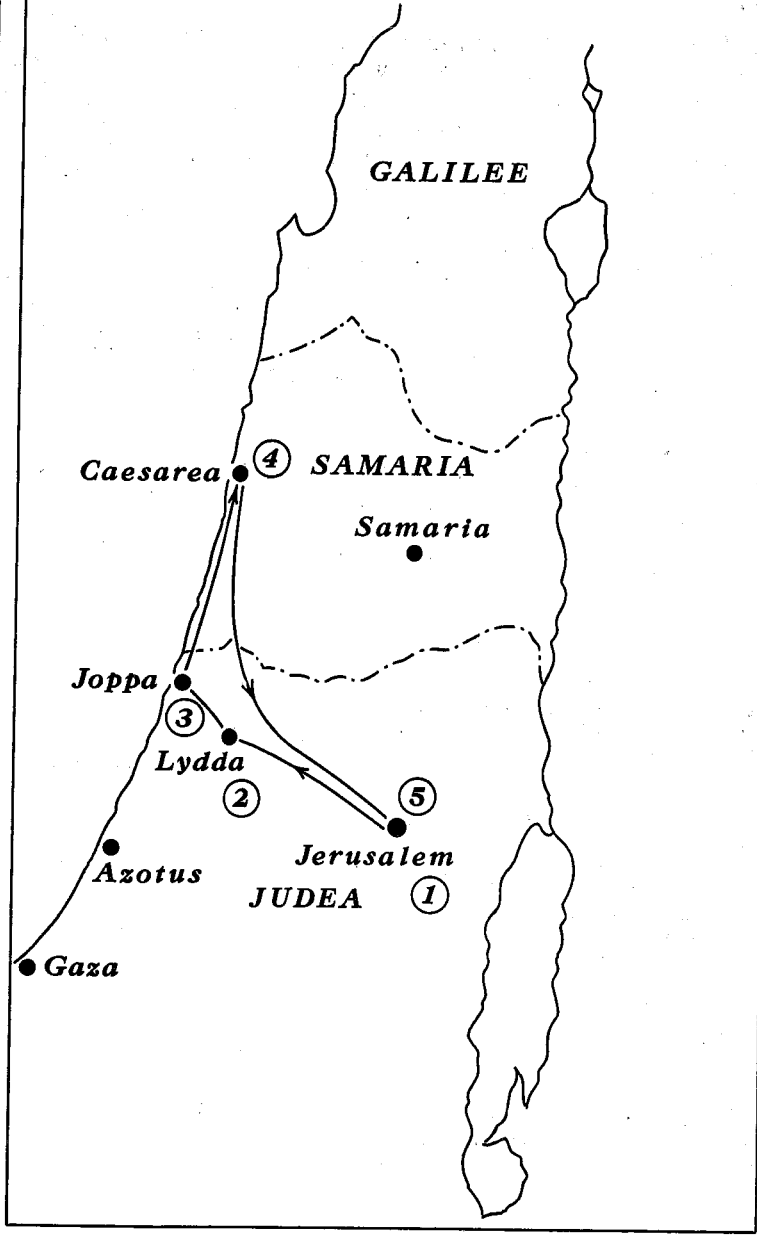
28. **And went all over Jerusalem.** He certainly was not *timid!*

29. **And disputed with the Greek-speaking Jews.** He was "one of them." But they considered him a "traitor" because he had turned to Christ. Note also that the Lord warned him to get away from Jerusalem (*Acts 22:17-21*).

30. **And sent him away to Tarsus.** The same group of Jews who had killed Stephen, now wanted to kill Paul. Some think *Gal. 1:21* implies Paul went by land through Syria. *Johnson* thinks Paul went by boat to Seleucia, on the seacoast close to Antioch, and then by land to Tarsus. Four or five years pass before we hear of Paul again (*Acts 11:26*), during which time he was busy preaching Christ (*Gal. 1:21-24; Acts 15:23, 41*).

31. **Had a time of peace.** After Paul escaped from the city, persecution ceased for a while. The Roman Emperor *Caligula* ordered his statue placed in the temple at Jerusalem. The Jews were too busy with this defilement of their temple, to persecute the Christians.

THE WORK OF PETER
9:32-11:18



THE WORK OF PETER

9:31—11:18

1. AT JERUSALEM. 9:31
The increase of the church through the preaching of Peter and others. 31 Cf. 9:32a
2. IN LYDDA. 9:32-35
 - a. Peter comes to the saints at Lydda on his preaching tour. 32
 - b. The healing of Aeneas. 33, 34
 - c. The results of this miracle and the preaching. 35
3. AT JOPPA. 9:36-43
 - a. The incident in Joppa. 36, 37
 - b. The disciples sent for Peter from Joppa to Lydda. 38
 - c. Peter in Joppa; the raising of Dorcas. 39-41
 - d. Good results. 42
 - e. Peter's residence. 43
4. IN CAESAREA. 10:1-48
 - a. Cornelius and his vision. 1-8
 - b. Peter's vision. 9-16
 - c. The messengers arrive. God directs Peter. Messengers received. 17-23a
 - d. The trip to and arrival at Caesarea. 24b-33
 - e. Peter's sermon. 34-43
 - f. The baptism in the holy Spirit. 44-46a
 - g. Baptism in water. 46b-48
5. AT JERUSALEM. 11:1-18
 - a. News of the conversion of Cornelius arrives in Jerusalem. 1
 - b. Objection of those of the circumcision. 2, 3
 - c. The answer of Peter. 4-18

Peter in Lydda and Joppa

³²Peter traveled everywhere, and one time he went to visit God's people who lived in Lydda. ³³There he met a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had not been able to get out of bed for eight years. ³⁴"Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ makes you well. Get up and make your bed." At once Aeneas got up. ³⁵All the people living in Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

³⁶In Joppa there was a woman named Tabitha, who was a believer. (Her name in Greek is Dorcas, meaning a deer.) She spent all her time doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷At that time she got sick and died. Her body was washed and laid in a room upstairs. ³⁸Joppa was not very far from Lydda, and when the disciples in Joppa heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him with the message, "Please hurry and come to us." ³⁹So Peter got ready and went with them. When he arrived he was taken to the room upstairs. All the widows crowded around him, crying and showing him the shirts and coats that Dorcas had made while she was alive. ⁴⁰Peter put them all out of the room, and knelt down and prayed; then he turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up!" She opened her eyes, and

Aeneas and Dorcas

As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years. "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and arrange your things." Immediately Aeneas got up. All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which means Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed.

32-34. **Peter traveled everywhere.** Visiting the communities of Christians in Judea. **In Lydda.** Near Joppa. Here Peter heals a man who had been paralyzed for eight years. Note he credits the healing to Christ.

35. **Living in Lydda and Sharon.** Sharon is mentioned in *Song 2:1*. "All the people" means there was a general "turning to the Lord."

36. **There was a woman named Tabitha.** Joppa has been a seaport since the time of David. Citrus fruit is grown in the flat coastal plain. She was a Christian, well known for her charity.

37. **Her body was washed.** Eastern houses often had a large upstairs room. Bodies were washed to prepare them for burial. [Note the symbolism in *Rom. 6:3-4*]

38-39. **They sent two men to him.** His fame suggests he may restore her to life. **All the widows crowded around him.** It was a bitter experience to be a widow in the first century, and it was very often necessary to depend upon charity. Tabitha had been one who helped them.

40. **Peter put them all out of the room.** Compare *1 Kings 17:19-23*; *2 Kings 4:32-36*; *Matt. 9:25*. This is so nothing will disturb him, as he kneels down in prayer. This is the first "Raising from death" done by an apostle.

when she saw Peter she sat up. ⁴¹Peter reached over and helped her get up. Then he called the believers and the widows, and presented her alive to them. ⁴²The news about this spread all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. ⁴³Peter stayed on in Joppa for many days with a leatherworker named Simon.

Peter and Cornelius

10 There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a captain in the Roman army regiment called "The Italian Regiment." ²He was a religious man; he and his whole family worshiped God. He did much to help the Jewish poor people, and was constantly praying to God. ³It was about three o'clock one afternoon when he had a vision, in which he clearly saw an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius!"

"He stared at the angel in fear and said, "What is it, sir?"

The angel answered, "God has accepted your prayers and works of charity, and has remem-

Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa and many people believed in the Lord. Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

Cornelius Calls for Peter

10 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a remembrance before God.

42-43. **The news about this.** This sort of thing "advertised" Christianity! Peter stayed on in Joppa. For perhaps a year. Joppa was a large city, and there were many people to hear the Good News. Peter is at the house of Simon the leatherworker when the messengers come to him (*Acts 10:32*).

1. **There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius.** Caesarea was the chief seaport of Palestine, also the Roman capital and military headquarters. Cornelius was one of several Gentile captains spoken of favorably in the New Testament. [Julius (*Acts 27:1-3*) the one at the cross (*Matt. 27:54*); the one who built the synagogue at Capernaum (*Luke 7:2*).] **The Italian Regiment.** Many of the conquered people served in the Roman armies. This regiment of six hundred men were all Italians, which strongly implies Cornelius was an Italian himself.

2. **He was a religious man.** This means he had turned to God and worshiped him. He was not a "Gentile converted to Judaism," because he had not been circumcised and officially become a Jew. But he and his family were part of a synagogue and worshiped the One True God. Most of the Gentiles who first "came to Christ" were from this type of people.

3. **When he had a vision.** Three o'clock was one of the Jewish hours of prayer (*Acts 3:1*). He clearly saw the angel.

4. **What is it, sir?** [*lord = sir.*] He asks the meaning of this vision which has filled him with awe. **God has accepted your prayers.** Cornelius was worshiping God to the full extent of his knowledge. When God finds one who is eager to know *him*, he makes that knowledge available!

bered you. ⁵And now send some men to Joppa to call for a certain man whose full name is Simon Peter. ⁶He is a guest in the home of a leatherworker named Simon, who lives by the sea." ⁷Then the angel who was speaking to him went away, and Cornelius called two of his house servants and a soldier, a religious man who was one of his personal attendants. ⁸He told them what had happened and sent them off to Joppa.

⁹The next day, as they were on their way and coming near Joppa, Peter went up on the roof of the house about noon in order to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry, and wanted to eat; while the food was being prepared he had a vision. ¹¹He saw heaven opened and something coming down that looked like a large sheet being lowered by its four corners to the earth. ¹²In it were all kinds of animals, reptiles, and wild birds. ¹³A voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat!"

¹⁴But Peter said, "Certainly not, Lord! I have never eaten anything considered defiled or unclean."

Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." 5
6

When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and one of his military aides who was a devout man. He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa. 7
8

Peter's Vision

About noon the following day as they were approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." 9
10
11
12
13

"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten 14

5. **To call for a certain man.** Note it is not the angel who tells him the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free. Cornelius is told to send for Peter [in order to learn what he must believe and do].

6. **In the home of a leatherworker named Simon.** Sanitary laws required leatherworkers to live outside the cities, and to be near plenty of water. Note that Cornelius will learn God's will through a human messenger.

7. **Two of his house servants and a soldier.** These also worshiped God.

9. **The next day.** They are coming near Joppa. So God sends Peter a vision to get him ready to go with them. Peter is a Jew, they are Gentiles. **Peter went up on the roof.** The roof was flat, with a wall around it about four feet high. People often slept on the roof at night, when the weather permitted. [Moses commanded this type of construction (*Deut. 22:8*).]

10. **He had a vision.** Compare *2 Cor. 12:2*; *Rev. 1:10*.

11-15. **He saw heaven opened.** The meaning of this vision is clear. Peter is hungry. He sees a sheet lowered down, containing all kinds of animals, reptiles, and wild birds. Many of these are ritually "unclean" and the Law forbids any to eat them. The voice says: "Get up, Peter; kill and eat!" Peter answers: "I have never eaten anything considered defiled or unclean." In this we can see much of the same stubbornness that Peter showed in the Gospels. The voice speaks again and says that God has declared these things clean. This can only mean that the commands of the Law about "clean" and "unclean" foods have been canceled! Peter, as a Jew, would not associate with Gentiles (*see note on John 4:9*). The purpose of the vision is to show Peter that God intends him to go with the messengers. *See Eph. 2:13-18* and notes.

¹⁵The voice spoke to him again, "Do not consider anything unclean that God has declared clean." ¹⁶This happened three times; and then the thing was taken back up into heaven.

¹⁷Peter was wondering about the meaning of this vision that he had seen. In the meantime the men sent by Cornelius had learned where Simon's house was, and were now standing in front of the gate. ¹⁸They called out and asked, "Is there a guest here by the name of Simon Peter?"

¹⁹Peter was still trying to understand what the vision meant, when the Spirit said, "Listen! Three men are here looking for you. ²⁰So get yourself ready and go down, and do not hesitate to go with them, because I have sent them." ²¹So Peter went down and said to the men, "I am the man you are looking for. Why have you come?"

²²"Captain Cornelius sent us," they answered. "He is a good man who worships God and is highly respected by all the Jewish people. He was told by one of God's angels to invite you to his house, so that he could hear what you have to say." ²³Peter invited the men in and had them spend the night there.

The next day he got ready and went with them; and some of the brothers from Joppa went along with him. ²⁴The following day he arrived in Caesarea, where Cornelius was waiting for him, together with relatives and close friends that

anything impure or unclean."

The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. They ¹⁸called out asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

While Peter was still ¹⁹thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and ²⁰go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

Peter went down and said ²¹to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

The men replied, "We ²²have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." Then Peter invited the men ²³into the house to be his guests.

Peter at Cornelius' House

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. The following ²⁴day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting

16. This happened three times. The voice spoke three times.

17-23. Peter was wondering. He is trying to understand the Lord's message to him. And do not hesitate to go with them. Peter's "Jewish attitude" would have told him not to go (compare Gal. 2:11-14). And some of the brothers. See Acts 11:12.

24. The following day. Parts of two days went into the trip, which was about thirty miles [probably walking]. Cornelius was waiting for him. The religious attitude of this man is shown by the crowd he has called together.

he had invited. ²⁵As Peter was about to go in, Cornelius met him, fell at his feet and bowed down before him. ²⁶But Peter made him rise. "Stand up," he said, "because I myself am only a man." ²⁷Peter kept on talking to Cornelius as he went into the house, where he found many people gathered. ²⁸He said to them, "You yourselves know very well that a Jew is not allowed by his religion to visit or associate with a Gentile. But God has shown me that I must not consider any man unclean or defiled. ²⁹And so when you sent for me I came without any objection. I ask you, then, why did you send for me?"

³⁰Cornelius said, "It was about this time three days ago that I was praying in my house at three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly a man dressed in shining clothes stood in front of me ³¹and said: 'Cornelius! God has heard your prayer, and has remembered your works of charity. ³²Send someone to Joppa to call for a man whose full name is Simon Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the leatherworker, who lives by the sea.' ³³And so I sent for you at once, and you have been good enough to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God, waiting to hear anything that the Lord has ordered you to say."

Peter's Speech

³⁴Peter began to speak: "I now realize that it is true that God treats all men on the same basis.

them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

Cornelius answered: ³⁰ "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and ³¹ said, 'Cornelius, God had heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. he is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' So I sent for you ³² immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

Then Peter began to ³⁴ speak:

"I now realize how true it is that God does not show

25-26. **Cornelius met him.** Note that when Cornelius "worships" Peter, he is made to *rise*. No man is to be worshiped, and, not even an angel (*Rev. 22:8-9*). Only God is to be worshiped! [Christ is God in human form.]

27-29. **That a Jew is not allowed.** Jewish tradition was much more restrictive than the Law (*Gal. 2:12*). **But God has shown me.** This is the meaning of Peter's vision. Barriers of race, sex, and social status disappear in Christ (*Gal. 3:28-29*).

30-33. **Now we are all here.** Cornelius tells Peter the vision he had, and eagerly waits to hear the message God will give him through Peter. This is the first Gentile audience to hear the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free!

34-35. **Peter began to speak.** The same preacher who announced God's terms for salvation to the Jews on Pentecost, now announces them to the Gentiles for the first time. **That God treats all men on the same basis.** God loves both Jew and Gentile. Compare *John 3:16-17* and notes.

³⁵Whoever fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him, no matter what race he belongs to. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, proclaiming the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all men. ³⁷You know of the great event that took place throughout all the land of Israel, beginning in Galilee, after the baptism that John preached. ³⁸You know about Jesus of Nazareth, how God poured out on him the Holy Spirit and power. He went everywhere, doing good and healing all who were under the power of the Devil, because God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses of all that he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ⁴⁰But God raised him from death on the third day, and caused him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people, but only to us who are the witnesses that God had already chosen. We ate and drank with him after he rose from death. ⁴²And he commanded us to preach the gospel to the people, and to testify that he is the one whom God has appointed judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets spoke about him, saying that everyone who believes in him will have his sins forgiven through the power of his name."

favoritism but accepts men 35
from every nation who fear
him and do what is right.
This is the message God sent 36
to the people of Israel, tell-
ing the good news of peace
through Jesus Christ, who is
Lord of all. You know what 37
has happened throughout
Judea, beginning in Galilee
after the baptism that John
preached—how God anoint- 38
ed Jesus of Nazareth with
the Holy Spirit and power,
and how he went around do-
ing good and healing all who
were under the power of the
devil, because God was with
him.

"We are witnesses of 39
everything he did in the
country of the Jews and in
Jerusalem. They killed him
by hanging him on a tree,
but God raised him from the 40
dead on the third day and
caused him to be seen. He 41
was not seen by all the
people, but by witnesses
whom God had already
chosen—by us who ate and
drank with him after he rose
from the dead. He com- 42
manded us to preach to the
people and to testify that he
is the one whom God ap-
pointed as judge of the living
and the dead. All the proph- 43
ets testify about him that

36-38. **You know the message.** Cornelius and his friends would know the personal history of Jesus of Nazareth, and even the "Good News of peace" which Christ had proclaimed to the Jews. Luke gives us only a short summary of what Peter said. **After the baptism that John preached.** Jesus began his public ministry after being baptized by John. **How God poured out on him.** Christ received the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit at his baptism (*John 1:33-34; 3:34*). [Remember: the Logos in taking human form took human limitations as well (*Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:9*).]

39-41. **We are witnesses.** They saw *first hand* his life and power, and saw him after he had raised from death. **Not to all the people.** The reason why he did not show himself to all the unbelievers after his resurrection, may be the principle he taught in *Matt. 7:6*. He was seen by more than just the apostles (*I Cor. 15:6*), and might have been seen by some who were favorable to him, although not his followers (see notes on *Matt. 27:52-53; Acts 1:3*).

42. **And he commanded us to preach the gospel.** [Gospel means Good News.] Compare *Luke 24:44-49*.

43. **All the prophets spoke about him.** The Old Testament was full of "Christ." **Through the power of his name.** Name = authority (compare note on *Acts 2:38*). (1) Sins are forgiven in/by his name; (2) to those who believe in him; (3) whoever believes, Jew or Gentile, can reach out through faith to grasp the sacrifice of Christ to receive all its benefits including forgiveness of sins. [Plus *sonship*; eternal life; union with God; etc.]

The Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵The Jewish believers who had come from Joppa with Peter were amazed that God had poured out his gift of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in strange tongues and praising God's greatness. Peter spoke up, ⁴⁷"These people have received the Holy Spirit, just as we also did. Can anyone, then, stop them from begin baptized with water?" ⁴⁸So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay with them for a few days.

Peter's Report to the Church at Jerusalem

11 The apostles and the brothers throughout all of Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ²When Peter went up to Jerusalem, those who were in favor of

everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Peter Explains His Actions

11 The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criti-

44. **On all those who were listening.** All those mentioned in verses 2 & 24. Peter later identifies this as: "Just as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). This answers the question about whether the 120 or only the apostles received the "baptism with the Holy Spirit" at Pentecost. *Lipscomb* says: "Here the Spirit falls on the house [household] of Cornelius when Peter begins to speak, not to make them Christians, but to prove that God accepted them, that Peter and his six Jewish brethren who came with him might be encouraged to baptize them [into Christ]. It was a proof that God was willing to receive them. The miraculous gift of [given by] the Holy Spirit was never a part of the converting process, but was to attest that the work was of God, and to guide those who received this Spirit in teaching all truth of God to the people." [additions mine, RDI]

45. **The Jewish believers.** They were amazed that God would do this to Gentiles, whom they thought of as being "cut off from God." This is the only time mentioned in the Scriptures of the Holy Spirit coming down on those who had not been baptized. Compare Acts 19:1-7 and notes. This is a unique event, for the purpose of proving to the Jews that God did accept the Gentiles.

47. **From being baptized with water?** Baptism with "water and the Spirit" (John 3:5 and note) was still necessary to initiate Cornelius and the others into union with Christ. Compare Titus 3:4-5; Acts 22:16; Col. 2:11-12.

48. **So he ordered them to be baptized.** Cornelius was such a good man that he would be received in many religious groups unbaptized! Yet to be part of the church of Christ, he must comply with Peter's command to be buried in the liquid grave.

1-2. **When Peter went up to Jerusalem.** The Jewish Christians who made up the "group" at Jerusalem [who still "kept" the Tradition (Acts 21:20)] and the Samaritan Christians were all circumcised. Cornelius and the other Christians at Caesarea were the first uncircumcised Christians. Some thought Gentiles had to convert to Judaism and be circumcised in addition to obeying Christ. Compare Acts 15.

circumcising Gentiles criticized him, ³“You were a guest in the home of uncircumcised Gentiles, and you even ate with them!” ⁴“So Peter gave them a full account of what had happened, from the very beginning:

⁵“I was praying in the city of Joppa, and I had a vision. I saw something coming down that looked like a large sheet being lowered by its four corners from heaven, and it stopped next to me. ⁶I looked closely inside and saw animals, beasts, reptiles, and wild birds. ⁷Then I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat!’ ⁸But I said, ‘Certainly not, Lord! No defiled or unclean food has ever entered my mouth.’ ⁹The voice spoke again from heaven, ‘Do not consider anything unclean that God as declared clean.’ ¹⁰This happened three times, and finally the whole thing was drawn back up into heaven. ¹¹At that very moment three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea arrived at the house where I was staying. ¹²The Spirit told me to go with them without hesitation. These six brothers from Joppa also went with me to Caesarea, and we all went into the house of Cornelius. ¹³He told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house who said to him, ‘Send someone to Joppa to call for a man whose full name is Simon Peter. ¹⁴He will speak words to you by which you

criticized him and said, “You ³ went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

Peter began and explained everything to them ⁴ precisely as it had happened:

“I was in the city of Joppa ⁵ praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air. Then I ⁶ heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’ ⁷

“I replied, ‘Surely not, ⁸ Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

“The voice spoke from ⁹ heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’ This happened three times, ¹⁰ and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

“Right then three men ¹¹ who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s ¹² house. He told us how he ¹³ had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He will bring ¹⁴ you a message through

3. In the home of uncircumcised Gentiles. This violated their Tradition! Notice that in the case of Peter himself, it took: (1) the vision; (2) God’s command; (3) Cornelius’ request; (4) the “coming down” of the Holy Spirit - to convince him that God did intend the Gentiles to come into the Kingdom. No wonder then, that Peter was criticized for what he had done.

4-17. So Peter gave them a full account. To show that he had done what God has authorized him to do. Compare notes on chapter 10. 12. These six brothers from Joppa. Peter had taken them with him to Jerusalem to be “witnesses” of all that had happened. This shows Peter expected to be criticized. 14. He will speak words to you. Cornelius could not have faith until he heard the message about Christ and believed it (Rom. 10:17). Will be saved. (1) Cornelius, a religious man, was not yet saved. (2) God’s grace brought the Good News of Jesus Christ to him through a human agent, Peter. (3) This is the first mention of a family being baptized. Were there any young children included? Note: relatives and close friends (Acts 10:24); waiting to hear (Acts 10:33); the Holy Spirit came down on all those who

and all your family will be saved.' ¹⁵And when I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came down on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶Then I remembered what the Lord had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷It is clear that God gave those Gentiles the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; who was I, then, to try to stop God!"

¹⁸When they heard this, they stopped their criticism and praised God, saying, "Then God has given to the Gentiles also the opportunity to repent and live!"

The Church at Antioch

¹⁹The believers were scattered by the persecution which took place when Stephen was killed. Some of them went as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message to Jews only. ²⁰But some of the believers, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and proclaimed the message to Gentiles also, telling them the Good News about the Lord Jesus. ²¹The Lord's power was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

which you and all your household will be saved.'

"Just as I was starting to ¹⁵ speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I ¹⁶ remembered what the Lord had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' So if God gave them ¹⁷ the same gift as he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God!"

When they heard this, ¹⁸ they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has even granted the Gentiles repentance unto life."

The Church in Antioch

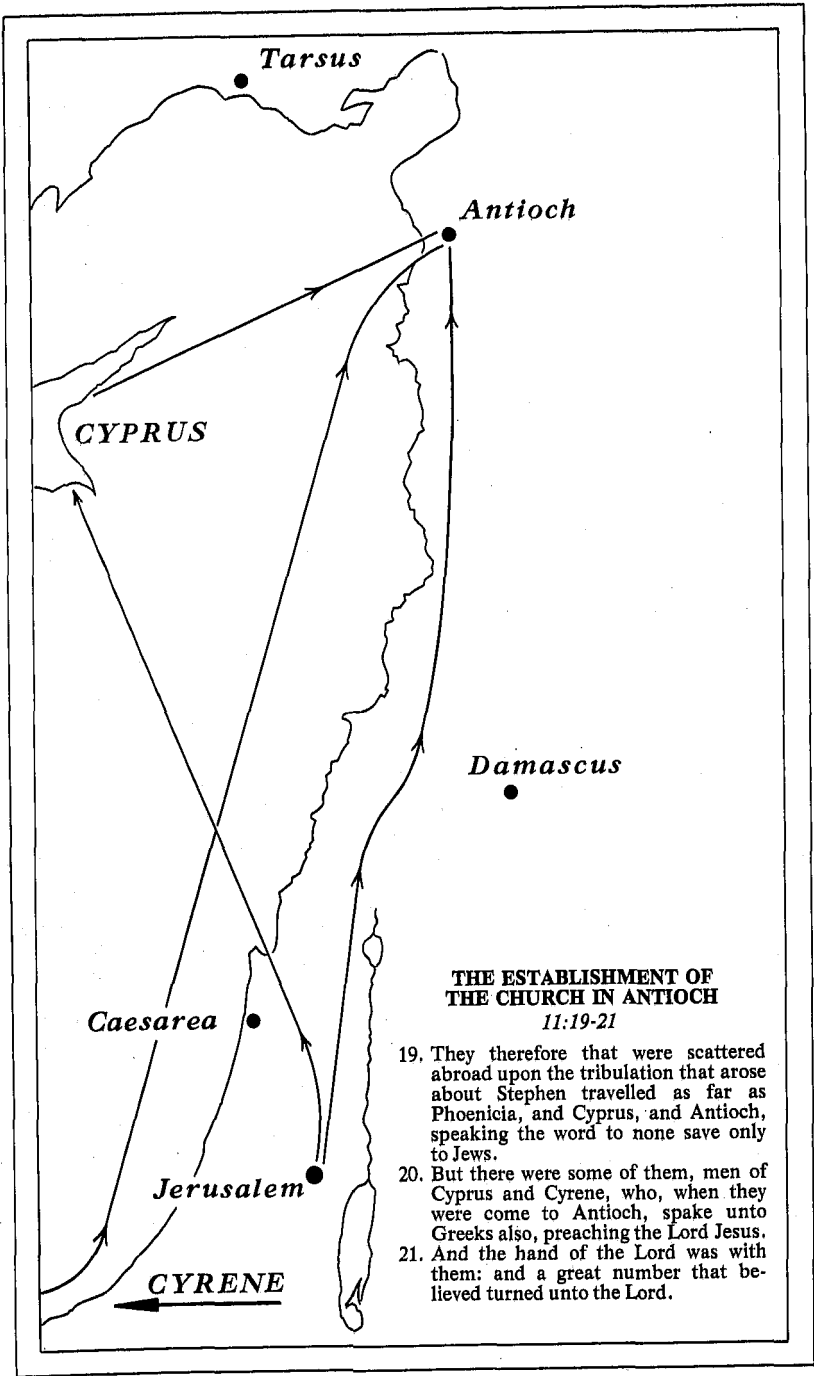
Now those who had been ¹⁹ scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however ²⁰ men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with ²¹ them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

were listening (*Acts 10:44*); and these same ones were baptized into Christ (*Acts 10:47-48*). ¹⁵ **Just as on us at the beginning.** Peter refers back to the birth-day of the church. ¹⁶ **But you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.** *Acts 1:5* and note. Peter calls this: "baptism with the Holy Spirit." Every Christian has the "Holy Spirit as a gift," along with the *fruits* of this gift (*Gal. 5:22-23*). The gifts of the Spirit (baptism with the Holy Spirit) were unusual and not every Christian had them. *See notes on Acts 8:15-17*. ¹⁷ **Who was I, then?** If God accepted Gentiles, as he showed Peter that he did, how could Peter try to stop what God was doing???

¹⁸ **When they heard this.** "Facts are stubborn things." Notice they are willing to stop their criticism and praise God!

¹⁹ **The believers were scattered.** *Acts 8:4-5*. **Phoenicia.** A long, fertile area between the mountains of Lebanon and the sea. Tyre and Sidon were cities of this area. **Cyprus.** A large island in the Mediterranean Sea. **Antioch.** Capital of the entire province of Syria, including Palestine. Only Rome and Alexandria were more important cities. **To Jews only.** They were scattered before they knew that God would save Gentiles as well.

²⁰⁻²¹ **Cyrene.** A Greek city in North Africa, which had a large Jewish population. **Proclaimed the message to Gentiles also.** ["Greek" often means "Gentile."] These *preachers* were Jews who spoke the Greek language. Led by the Spirit, they preached the Good News to these Gentiles (*see notes on Acts 10:2*); and a great number of them turned to the Lord (*compare note on Acts 3:19-20*).



THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH

11:19-21

- 19. They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews.
- 20. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.
- 21. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord.

²²The news about this reached the church in Jerusalem, so they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

²³When he arrived and saw how God had blessed the people, he was glad and urged them all to be faithful and true to the Lord with all their hearts.

²⁴Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. Many people were brought to the Lord.

²⁵Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. ²⁶When he found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year the two met with the people of the church and taught a large group. It was at Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

²⁷About the time some prophets went down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸One of them, named Agabus, stood up and by the power of the Spirit predicted that a great famine was about to come over all the earth. (It came when

News of this reached the 22
ears of the church at Jeru-
salem, and they sent Barna-
bas to Antioch. When he 23
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Then Barnabas went to 25
Tarsus to look for Saul, and 26
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prophets came down from
Jerusalem to Antioch. One 28
of them, named Agabus,
stood up and through the
Spirit predicted that a severe
famine would spread over
the entire Roman world.
(This happened during the

22-24. So they sent Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas was a "Greek-speaking Jew" (Acts 4:36), who was the friend of another "Greek-speaking Jew" named Paul (Acts 9:27). He was sent to evaluate what was happening there. And saw how God had blessed the people. This is the first "group" [messianic community, church] outside the borders of Palestine. It soon became the "center of missions" to fill the Gentile world with the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free!!!

25-26. To look for Saul. Compare note on Acts 9:30. Paul is thought to have come to Antioch in 43 A.D. [by the corrected calendar]. An "apostle" was needed at Antioch to "pass on" spiritual gifts and bring "instant maturity" to the community of believers there. Compare notes on 1 Cor. 12:27-31. First called Christians. The Jews called them "Nazarenes," and "Galileans." They called themselves "disciples," "brothers" [which includes sisters], "God's people" [ἅγιος: saint, chosen, holy (sanctified)]. What spiritual power must these disciples have had, to be called "Christians!" Christian means "one who belongs to Christ." See also Acts 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16.

27-28. About that time some prophets. See note on Acts 2:17. Named Agabus. We meet him again in Acts 21:10. A great famine. Eusebius writes: "In his reign there was a famine that prevailed over the whole world; an event, indeed, which has been handed down by historians very far from our doctrine; and by which the prediction of the prophet Agabus, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, respecting the impending famine over the whole world, received its fulfillment." This would be about 46 A.D., and is probably not the famine mentioned by Josephus [or the famine may have started in Palestine about 44 A.D. and lasted for three or four years].

Claudius was Emperor.) ²⁹The disciples decided that each of them would send as much as he could to help their brothers who lived in Judea. ³⁰They did this, then, and sent the money to the church elders by Barnabas and Saul.

More Persecution

12 About this time King Herod began to persecute some members of the church. ¹He had James, the brother of John, put to death by the sword. ²When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he went ahead and had Peter arrested. (This happened during the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.) ³After his arrest Peter was put in jail, where he was handed over to be guarded by four groups of four soldiers each. Herod planned to put him on trial in public after Passover. ⁴So Peter was kept in jail, but the people of the church were praying earnestly to God for him.

reign of Claudius.) The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, ³⁰ sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Peter's Miraculous Escape from Prison

12 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. ² When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. ³ This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. ⁴

So Peter was kept in ⁵ prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

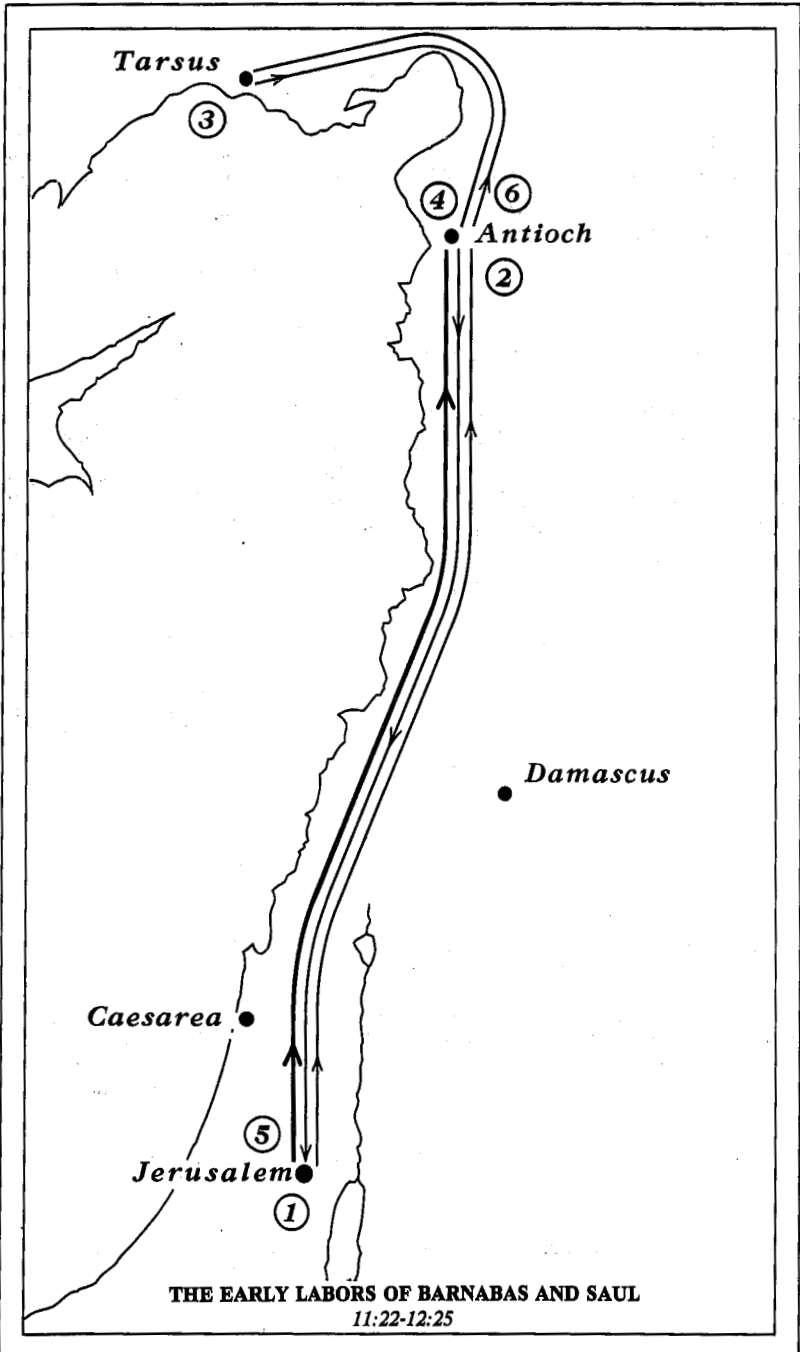
29-30. To help their brothers who lived in Judea. This marks the beginning of a new "spirit" which was to radically change the Gentile world! The *Gentiles* of Antioch "reach out in love" to their *Jewish* brothers in Judea!

1. **King Herod, Herod Agrippa.** See note on *Matt. 2:1*. Herod ruled all of Palestine. Even though he lived a wicked life, he was very strict in following Jewish ritual. He was hostile to Christianity, because he saw it competing with Judaism.

2. **James, the brother of John.** One of the three apostles who had formed the "inner circle" with Jesus. James was *beheaded*. [James the Lord's brother appears in Acts after this (*see also Gal. 1:19*). He is the one who wrote the book of James.]

3-4. **When he saw that this pleased the Jews.** This was the time for Passover, and a large number of Jews would be in Jerusalem for the Feast. He was looking for honor and popularity from them, and probably did not think too much about pleasing God.

5. **But the people of the church.** The *church* is **PEOPLE**, and they joined together in prayer, asking God to help Peter in this problem. Prayer is much more powerful than we sometimes think. Compare *James 5:16-18; Rev. 8:3-4; Rom. 8:26*.



THE EARLY LABORS OF BARNABAS AND SAUL
11:22-12:25

THE EARLY LABORS OF BARNABAS AND SAUL

11:22—12:25

1. IN JERUSALEM. 11:22
Report of the conversion of the Greeks reaches Jerusalem. They send Barnabas. 22
2. AT ANTIOCH. 11:23, 24
The rejoicing of Barnabas and his efforts in Antioch, 23, 24
3. AT TARBUS. 11:25, 26a
Barnabas to Tarsus to find Saul to help. 25, 26a
4. IN ANTIOCH. 11:26b-30
 - a. The labors of Barnabas and Saul for a year. The new name. 26b
 - b. Prophets from Jerusalem. The prophesy of Agabus. 27, 28
 - c. The free will offering taken and sent. 29, 30
5. AT JERUSALEM. 12:1-24
 - a. Persecution of Herod. James beheaded. Peter imprisoned. 1-5
 - b. The miraculous release. 6-11
 - c. At the house of Mary. 12-17
 - d. The death of the soldiers. 18, 19a
 - e. Herod's speech and death at Caesarea. 19b-23
 - f. The growth of the word. 24
6. BACK TO ANTIOCH. 12:25
Barnabas and Saul return taking with them John Mark. 25

Peter Set Free from Prison

⁶The night before Herod was going to bring him out to the people, Peter was sleeping between two guards. He was tied with two chains, and there were guards on duty at the prison gate. ⁷Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood there, and a light shone in the cell. The angel shook Peter by the shoulder, woke him up, and said, "Hurry! Get up!" At once the chains fell off Peter's hands. ⁸Then the angel said, "Tighten your belt and tie on your sandals." Peter did so, and the angel said, "Put your cloak around you and come with me." ⁹Peter followed him out of the prison. He did not know, however, if what the angel was doing was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰They passed by the first guard station, and then the second, and came at last to the iron gate that opens into the city. The gate opened for them by itself, and they went out. They walked down a street, and suddenly the angel left Peter.

¹¹Then Peter realized what had happened to him, and said, "Now I know that it is really true! The Lord sent his angel, and rescued me from Herod's power and from all the things the Jewish people expected to do."

¹²Aware of his situation, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark. Many people

The night before Herod **6**
was to bring him to trial,
Peter was sleeping between
two soldiers, bound with two
chains, and sentries stood
guard at the entrance. Sudden- **7**
ly an angel of the Lord
appeared and a light shone
in the cell. He struck Peter
on the side and woke him
up. "Quick, get up!" he
said, and the chains fell off
Peter's wrists.

Then the angel said to **8**
him, "Put on your clothes
and sandals." And Peter did
so. "Wrap your cloak a-
round you and follow me,"
the angel told him. Peter **9**
followed him out of the
prison, but he had no idea
that what the angel was do-
ing was really happening; he
thought he was seeing a
vision. They passed the first **10**
and second guards and came
to the iron gate leading to
the city. It opened for them
by itself, and they went
through it. When they had
walked the length of one
street, suddenly the angel
left him.

Then Peter came to him- **11**
self and said, "Now I know
without a doubt that the
Lord sent his angel and res-
cued me from Herod's
clutches and from every-
thing the Jewish people were
anticipating."

When this had dawned **12**
on him, he went to the house of
Mary the mother of John,
also called Mark, where
many people had gathered

6. **The night before.** Putting a man to death on Passover week, would have been a *defiling* of those holy days. Peter was sleeping between two guards. He was chained to each of them, while the other two stood guard. This was the Roman way to maintain security.

7-8. **Suddenly an angel of the Lord.** This is God's answer to the prayer of his people. Notice Peter has time to get dressed.

9-11. **He thought he was seeing a vision.** That is, he thought he was dreaming. **The gate opened for them by itself.** The outer gate of the prison. **Now I know.** After the angel leaves him outside on the street, he decides it is real.

12. **He went to the home of Mary.** She is the mother of John Mark [who is the cousin of Barnabas (*Col. 4:10*).] Many people had gathered there and were praying for the release of Peter.

had gathered there and were praying. ¹³Peter knocked at the outside door, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. ¹⁴She recognized Peter's voice and was so happy that she ran back in without opening the door, and announced that Peter was standing outside. ¹⁵"You are crazy!" they told her. But she insisted that it was true. So they answered, "It is his angel."

¹⁶Meanwhile, Peter kept on knocking. They opened the door at last and when they saw him they were amazed. ¹⁷He motioned with his hand for them to be quiet, and explained to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell this to James and the rest of the brothers," he said; then he left and went somewhere else.

¹⁸When morning came, there was a tremendous confusion among the guards; what had happened to Peter? ¹⁹Herod gave orders to search for him, but they could not find him. So he had the guards questioned and ordered them to be put to death.

After this Herod went down from Judea and spent some time in Caesarea.

and were praying. Peter ¹³ knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

"You're out of your ¹⁵ mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

But Peter kept on knock- ¹⁶ ing, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. Peter motioned for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the brothers about this," he said, and then he left for another place.

In the morning, there was ¹⁸ a great commotion among the soldiers. "What could have happened to Peter?" they asked. After Herod had ¹⁹ a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed.

13-17. **A servant girl named Rhoda.** This was at night, and they were Christians. The one at the door could be either friend or enemy, as far as they knew. **She recognized Peter's voice.** She is so happy she runs back without opening the door! **It is his angel.** The Jews believed everyone had a personal angel to guard him, and they thought this angel had assumed Peter's voice. [Luke does not tell us whether there is such a thing as a "guardian angel."] **They opened the door at last.** Peter has kept on knocking until they do. They are amazed to see him. **Tell this to James.** Not the apostle, but the Lord's brother, who has become an important leader in the church at Jerusalem. [James is mentioned in Acts 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 1:19; 2:9, 12.]

18-19. **When morning came.** The soldiers guarding Peter were probably asleep [at least the two chained to him], and did not find him missing until they woke up. **Herod gave orders to search for him.** Herod is angry, he has the guards questioned, and orders them to be put to death. **And spent some time in Caesarea.** Herod lived there part of the time, but usually lived in Jerusalem. *Josephus* says he went at this time to conduct the Games in honor of Emperor Claudius.

The Death of Herod

²⁰Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; so they went in a group to see Herod. First they won Blastus over to their side; he was in charge of the palace. Then they went to Herod and asked him for peace, because their country got its food supplies from the king's country.

²¹On a chosen day Herod put on his royal robes, sat on his throne, and made a speech to the people. ²²"It isn't a man speaking, but a god!" they shouted. ²³At once the angel of the Lord struck Herod down, because he did not give honor to God. He was eaten by worms and died.

²⁴The word of God continued to spread and grow.

²⁵Barnabas and Saul finished their mission and returned from Jerusalem, taking John Mark with them.

Herod's Death

Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while. He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.

On the appointed day ²¹ Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, ²² "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." Immediately, ²³ because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

But the word of God ²⁴ continued to increase and spread.

When Barnabas and Saul ²⁵ had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

20. **Herod was very angry.** We do not know why. **First they won Blastus.** The people from Tyre and Sidon probably bribed this man, who was in charge of the palace, and so able to influence Herod.

21. **On a chosen day.** This implies it was some special occasion. Josephus the Jewish historian tells about all this.

22. **But a god.** This is the second day of the Games. Herod is dressed in robes of silver cloth, and he stands so the sun will flash and sparkle from his robes. It may be that he announced peace with Tyre and Sidon, and the group from there led the crowd in shouting that he was a god.

23. **Struck Herod down.** *Josephus* says he lived five days in great agony. This agrees with what Luke tells us.

24. **Continued to spread.** The excitement of all that was happening helped to make people listen. Note how the word of God continued to spread so rapidly among people who were no more spiritual than people are today.

25. **Finished their mission.** *Acts 11:30* tells what this mission was. **Taking John Mark with them.** He will go with Paul and Barnabas on their next tour of missions.

Barnabas and Saul Chosen and Sent

13 In the church at Antioch there were some prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon (called the Black), Lucius (from Cyrene), Manaen (who had been brought up with Governor Herod), and Saul. ²While they were serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said to them, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul, to do the work to which I have called them."

³They fasted and prayed, placed their hands on them, and sent them off.

In Cyprus

⁴Barnabas and Saul, then having been sent by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to the island of Cyprus. ⁵When they arrived at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. They had John Mark with them to help in the work.

Barnabas and Saul Sent Off

13 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

On Cyprus

The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

1. **In the church at Antioch.** See notes on Antioch in *Acts 11:19-26*. This was the "parent congregation" of the Gentile Christians. Antioch was the third most important city in the world at that time. *Chrysostom* writes that in his day (fourth century) Antioch had a population of 200,000, over half of whom were Christians, and that they supported 3,000 helpless poor people out of the church treasury. **Prophets and teachers.** Prophets had supernatural knowledge from the Holy Spirit. Teachers did not. See *Eph. 4:11* and note. **Barnabas.** See *Acts 4:36*. **Simon.** Some identify him with Simon from Cyrene (*Matt. 27:32*), but nothing is known of him. **Lucius.** Not the writer of Acts, but possibly one of the men in *Acts 11:20* who planted the church here, perhaps the Lucius of *Rom. 16:21*. **Manaen.** The Latin Vulgate calls him "foster-brother" to Herod [Antipas]. **And Saul.** Paul, the apostle.

2. **While they were serving the Lord and fasting.** Fasting and prayer often go together, and these men must have been asking God to show them how they could do more to spread the Good News of Christ. **The Holy Spirit said to them.** He spoke through one of the prophets. Compare *Acts 20:23; 21: 10-11*. **Set apart for me.** Both Barnabas and Paul had been chosen by God to preach to the Gentiles. This, then, is a request to officially identify them.

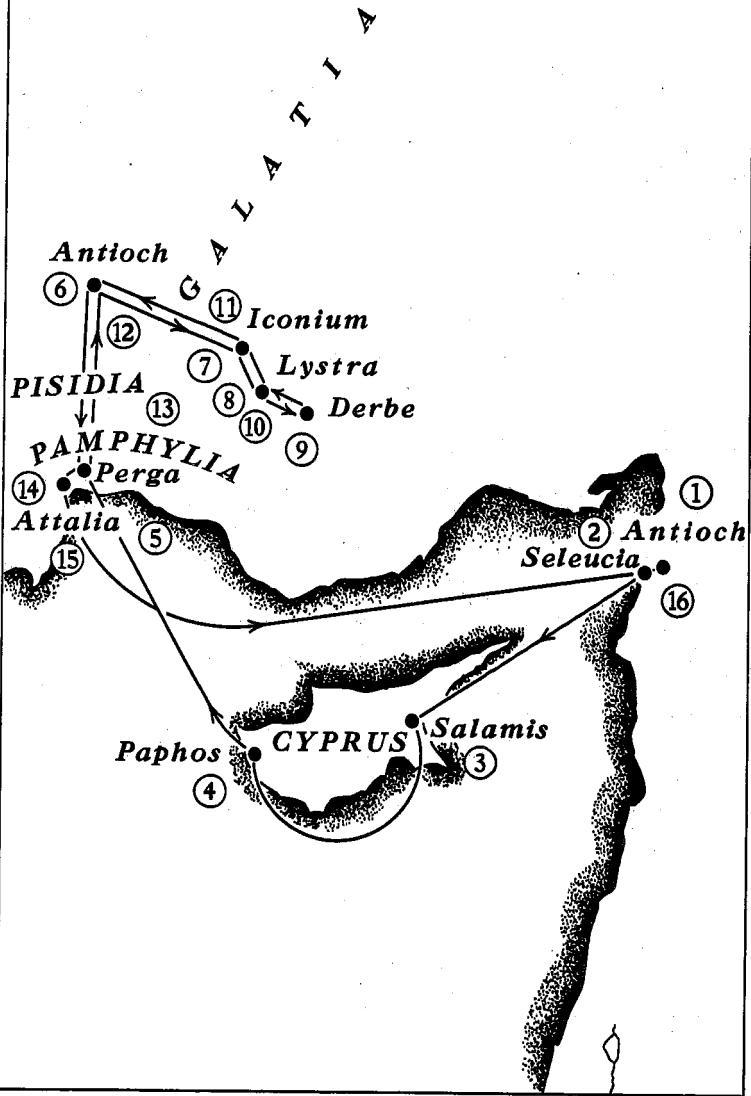
3. **And sent them off.** Paul was already an apostle. This simple ceremony identifies he and Barnabas as men who have been chosen for a special mission. These are the first two men to be sent on a tour of missions by a congregation of Gentile Christians. We see them return after their tour, to report their results, in *Acts 14:27*.

4. **Went down to Seleucia.** This was the seaport of Antioch, about sixteen miles away. Cyprus was the old home of Barnabas (*Acts 4:36*). It had a large Jewish population.

5. **Salamis.** On the eastern side of Cyprus. This would be about fifty miles distant from Seleucia, and would take about a day to travel. **In the Jewish synagogues.** The fact there was more than one, shows the size of the Jewish population. The Gospel had already been planted on Cyprus (*Acts 11:19-20*). **They had John Mark.** *Johnson* thinks John Mark probably did most of the work of baptizing people into Christ (compare *1 Cor. 1:14-17*). John Mark was related to Barnabas (*Col. 4:10*).

THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

13:1-14:28



THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

13:1—14:28

1. AT ANTIOCH. 13:1-3
 - a. The leaders of the church. 1
 - b. The directions of the Holy Spirit. 2
 - c. Barnabas and Saul set aside for their work. 3
2. AT SELEUCIA. 13:4
The seaport for Antioch from where they sailed to Cyprus. 4
3. IN SALAMIS. 13:5
 - a. Preached in synagogues. 5a
 - b. Had John Mark as attendant. 5b
4. AT PAPHOS. 13:6-12
 - a. Through the whole island. 6a
 - b. Elymas and his opposition. 6b-8
 - c. The rebuke and miracle of Paul. 10, 11
 - d. The results of this incident on the proconsul. 12
5. IN PERGA. 13:13
Where John Mark left for Jerusalem. 13
6. IN ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA. 13:14-52
 - a. In the synagogue, the first sermon of Paul. 14-41
 - b. The desire to hear more the next sabbath. 42
 - c. The interest of the Jews and devout proselytes. 43
 - d. Great gathering the next sabbath. Contradiction of the Jews. 44, 45
 - e. Turn to the Gentiles with good results. 46-48
 - f. The spread of the word. 49
 - g. The persecution and leaving the city. 50, 51
7. AT ICONIUM. 14:1-6a
 - a. In the synagogue the conversion of many Jews and Greeks. 1
 - b. The opposition of the Jews. 2
 - c. Stay some time in spite of opposition. God blesses. 3
 - d. The city divided in opinion. 4
 - e. Plot laid for stoning, so they leave. 5, 6a
8. IN LYSTRA. 14:6b-20
 - a. General statement of the work. 6b-7
 - b. The healing of the lame man. 8-10
 - c. The multitudes worship them as gods. 11-13
 - d. The objection of Paul and Barnabas. 14-18
 - e. Opposition from Jews from Antioch and Iconium. Paul stoned. 19
 - f. He is raised and returns to the city. 20
 - g. Timothy, his mother and grandmother converted here. Cf. 16:1; 1 Tim. 1:5
9. AT DERBE. 14:21a
Preached here. Many converted. 21a
10. IN LYSTRA. 14:22, 23
Confirmed the souls of the disciples and appointed elders. 22, 23
11. AT ICONIUM. 14:22, 23
Same as above. 22, 23
12. IN ANTIOCH. 14:22, 23
Same as above. 22, 23
13. THROUGH THE PROVINCES OF PISIDIA AND PAMPHYLIA. 14:24
14. AT PERGA. 14:25a
The word spoken. 25a
15. AT ATTALIA. 14:25b
They boarded the ship. 25b
16. IN ANTIOCH. 14:26-28
 - a. The gathering of the church to hear all that God had done. 26, 27
 - b. They tarry here some time. 28

⁶They went all the way across the island to Paphos, where they met a certain magician named Bar-Jesus, a Jew who claimed to be a prophet. ⁷He was a friend of the Governor of the island, Sergius Paulus, who was an intelligent man. The Governor called Barnabas and Saul before him because he wanted to hear the word of God. ⁸But they were opposed by the magician Elymas (this is his name in Greek); he tried to turn the Governor away from the faith. ⁹Then Saul—also known as Paul—was filled with the Holy Spirit; he looked straight at the magician ¹⁰and said, “You son of the Devil! You are the enemy of everything that is good; you are full of all kinds of evil tricks, and you always keep trying to turn the Lord’s truths into lies! ¹¹The Lord’s hand will come down on you now; you will be blind, and will not see the light of day for a time.”

At once Elymas felt a black mist cover his eyes, and he walked around trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. ¹²The Governor believed when he saw what had happened; he was greatly amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun.”

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

6. **Across the island to Paphos.** The island is about 130 miles long by 50 miles wide. Salamis is at the east end, and Paphos at the west end. Paphos was the capital, and famous for the worship of Venus. **A certain magician named Bar-Jesus.** Jewish law prohibited witchcraft and magic of this sort (*Deut. 18:9-22*), but at this time, Jewish magicians had great influence over the people including government officials.

7. **He was a friend of the Governor.** The government officials of this era asked advice from magicians and fortune-tellers as a normal practice. Since *Jewish* magicians had the greatest influence at this time, Sergius Paulus is interested in *two Jews* who claim to have a new revelation from God.

8. **But they were opposed.** This man could see Christianity in competition with him. He had used his magic to impress people and make himself rich. **Elymas.** It was usual for a Jew to also have a Gentile name. This man calls himself “Elymas,” which means “Wise Man.”

9. **Then Saul - also known as Paul.** From this point on, we know him by his Greek name. He becomes the leader, and Barnabas fades into the background. **Was filled with the Holy Spirit.** This is to show us that what he does now is directed by the Holy Spirit himself.

10-12. **You son of the Devil!** This is the only recorded miracle by an apostle, done for the purpose of injury. Yet this had to be done to show the power of Christ superior to the power of this man. Sergius Paulus and the others were deceived by the tricks of Elymas. Denouncing him and striking him with blindness settled the question of who spoke the truth. Compare Elijah and the priests of Baal. **The Governor believed.** This implies he became a Christian.

In Antioch of Pisidia

¹³Paul and his companions sailed from Paphos and came to Perga, in Pamphylia; but John Mark left them there and went back to Jerusalem. ¹⁴They went on from Perga and came to Antioch of Pisidia; and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵After the reading from the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets, the officials of the synagogue sent them a message: "Brothers, we want you to speak to the people if you have a message of encouragement for them." ¹⁶Paul stood up, motioned with his hand, and began to speak:

"Fellow Israelites and all Gentiles here who worship God: hear me! ¹⁷The God of this people of Israel chose our ancestors, and made the people a great nation during the time they lived as foreigners in the land of Egypt. God brought them out of Egypt by his great power, ¹⁸and for forty years he endured them in the desert. ¹⁹He destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan and made his people the owners of the

In Pisidian Antioch

From Paphos, Paul and ¹³his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. From Perga they ¹⁴went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the ¹⁵Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak."

Standing up, Paul ¹⁶motioned with his hand and said:

"Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! The God of the ¹⁷people of Israel chose our fathers and made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt. With mighty power he led them out of that country and endured their ¹⁸conduct forty years in the desert. He overthrew seven ¹⁹nations in Canaan and gave their land to his people as

13. **Paul and his companions.** Perga is northwest from Cyprus. **But John Mark left them.** We do not know why. It could have been the dangers he could see ahead in their work; or it could have been his Jewish sense of pride was hurt by preaching to the Gentiles. *Acts 15:38-39* shows us it was a serious matter. But it was "worked out" (*Col. 4:10 and note*).

14. **And came to Antioch of Pisidia.** There were a number of cities named Antioch. This one was almost directly north of Perga, and was the capital of the province of Pisidia. **They went into the synagogue.** Whenever there was a synagogue in a city, they went there first with the Good News of Christ.

15. **After the reading.** Reading the Bible out loud to the people was very important, since copies were scarce. [They had to be copied by hand.] It was usual for the leaders of the synagogue to invite visiting Jewish brothers to speak to the group. Some think the synagogues followed a "uniform lesson series," and that since Paul quotes from *Deut. 1:31* and *Isa. 1:2* [both from the Septuagint], it proves that this was the forty-fourth Sabbath of the Jewish year [sometime in July or August].

16. **Paul stood up.** In Judea, the speakers remained seated. Among the Greek-speaking Jews, they stood up to speak to the group. These next verses show us how Paul preached in the Synagogues. He begins by showing the glory of Israel; then to King David, hero of all Israelites; then to David's descendant, Jesus Christ. He did this to build up a common bond with them, so they would listen when he told them about Jesus. Compare *1 Cor. 9:19-23*. **Fellow Israelites.** Those who were born Jews. **All Gentiles here.** Judaism was "missionary-minded" at this time and attracted Gentiles who learned to "fear" [reverence] God and study his word.

17-19. **Destroyed seven nations.** See *Deut. 7:1-6*.

land ²⁰for about four hundred and fifty years.

"After this he gave them judges, until the time of the prophet Samuel. ²¹And when they asked for a king, God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, from the tribe of Benjamin, to be their king for forty years. ²²After removing him, God made David their king. This is what God said about him, 'I have found that David, the son of Jesse, is the kind of man I like, a man who will do all I want him to do.' ²³It was Jesus, a descendant of David, that God made the Savior of the people of Israel, as he had promised. ²⁴Before Jesus began his work, John preached to all the people of Israel that they should turn from their sins and be baptized. ²⁵And as John was about to finish his mission, he said to the people, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the one you are waiting for. But look! He is coming after me, and I am not good enough to take his sandals off his feet.'

²⁶"My brothers, descendants of Abraham, and all Gentiles here who worship God: it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent! ²⁷For the people who live in Jerusalem, and their leaders, did not know that he is the Savior, nor did they understand the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath day. Yet they made the prophets' words come true by condemning

their inheritance. All this ²⁰took about 450 years.

"After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then ²¹the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. ²²After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.' From this ²³man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. ²⁴Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. As John was completing his work, he said: ²⁵'Who do you think I am? I am not that one. No, but he is coming after me, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'

"Brothers, children of A- ²⁶braham, and you God fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. The people of ²⁷Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every

20. **After this he gave them judges.** Johnson thinks the 450 years is counted from the time they came out of Egypt to the time when God made David king. "After this" refers to the events in verses 17-19.

21. **God gave them Saul.** He was the first king of Israel.

22. **God made David their king.** This young shepherd became Israel's second king. Is the kind of man I like. This is implied in 1 Sam. 13:14. David was not perfect, but he was not a rebel like king Saul.

23. **As he had promised.** See God's promise in 2 Sam. 7:12; Isa. 11:1; Zech. 3:8; 6:12.

24-25. **John preached to all the people.** The Jews believed John the Baptist to have been an important prophet. See Matt. 3:1-12; John 5:32-35. John pointed to the Messiah.

26. **It is to us.** This Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free has been sent to both Jew and Gentile.

27-37. **For the people.** Paul now explains the facts of the gospel. (1) Christ was rejected by the Jewish leaders; (2) the prophecies made to come true; (3) they force Pilate to kill him, even though they could find no reason; (4) the Scriptures came true in his death; (5) God raised him from death; (6) God's

Jesus. ²⁸And even though they could find no reason to pass the death sentence on him, they asked Pilate to have him put to death. ²⁹And after they had done everything that the Scriptures say about him, they took him down from the cross and placed him in a grave. ³⁰But God raised him from the dead, ³¹and for many days he appeared to those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now witnesses for him to the people of Israel. ³²⁻³³And we are here to bring the Good News to you: what God promised our ancestors he would do, he has now done for us, who are their descendants, by raising Jesus to life. As it is written in the second Psalm,

'You are my Son;
today I have become your Father.'

³⁴And this is what God said about raising him from the dead, never again to return to decay.

'I will give you the sacred and sure blessings that I promised to David.'

³⁵As indeed he says in another passage,

'You will not allow your devoted servant to suffer decay.'

³⁶For David served God's purposes in his own time; and then he died, was buried beside his ancestors, and suffered decay. ³⁷But the one whom God raised from the dead did not suffer decay. ³⁸⁻³⁹All of you, my brothers, are to know for sure that it is through Jesus that the message about forgiveness of sins is preached to you; you are to know that everyone who believes in him is set free from all the sins from which the Law of

Sabbath. Though they found ²⁸
no proper ground for a death
sentence, they asked Pilate
to have him executed. When ²⁹
they had carried out all that
was written about him, they
took him down from the tree
and laid him in a tomb. But ³⁰
God raised him from the
dead, and for many days he ³¹
was seen by those who had
traveled with him from Gali-
lee to Jerusalem. They are
now his witnesses to our
people.

"We tell you the good ³²
news: What God promised
our fathers he has fulfilled ³³
for us, their children, by
raising Jesus from the dead.
As it is written in the second
Psalm:

'You are my Son;
today I have become
your Father.'

The fact that God raised him ³⁴
from the dead, never to de-
cay, is stated in these words:

'I will give you the holy
and sure blessings prom-
ised to David.'

So it is stated elsewhere: ³⁵

'You will not let your
Holy One undergo decay.'

"For when David had ³⁶
served God's purpose in his
own generation, he fell a-
sleep; he was buried with his
ancestors and his body de-
cayed. But the one whom ³⁷
God raised from the dead
did not undergo decay.
Therefore, my brothers, I ³⁸
want you to know that
through Jesus the forgiveness
of sins is proclaimed to you.
Through him everyone who
believes is justified from
everything from which you
could not be justified by the ³⁹

promise to the ancestors had now been fulfilled to the descendants. **You are my Son.** This is explained by *Rom. 1:4*. God "became his father" by raising Jesus to life. **Never again to return to decay.** Others had been raised from death, but Jesus was the first to conquer death. He will never die again! Compare *1 Cor. 15:20*. **You will not allow your devoted servant.** See notes on *Acts 2:27-32*.

38-41. That it is through Jesus. See *Acts 4:12* and note. **Is set free.** Compare *Gal. 5:1-6*. **The Law of Moses could not set you free.** Compare *Heb. 10:2-4*. **Take care, then.** It is fatal to reject Christ! *Verse 41*

Moses could not set you free. ⁴⁰Take care, then, so that what the prophets said may not happen to you,

⁴¹'Look, you scoffers! Wonder and die! For the work that I am doing in your own day is something that you will not believe, even when someone explains it to you!'

⁴²As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to come back the next Sabbath and tell them more about these things. ⁴³After the people had left the meeting, Paul and Barnabas were followed by many Jews and many Gentiles converted to Judaism. The apostles spoke to them and encouraged them to keep on living in the grace of God.

⁴⁴The next Sabbath day nearly everyone in the town came to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy; they spoke against what Paul was saying and insulted him. ⁴⁶But Paul and Barnabas spoke out even more boldly. "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. But since you reject it, and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we will leave you and go to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷For this is the commandment that the Lord has given us,

'I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, to be the way of salvation for the whole world.'

law of Moses. Take care that **40** what the prophets have said does not happen to you:

'Look, you scoffers, **41** wonder and perish, because I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you.'

As Paul and Barnabas **42** were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. When the congregation was **43** dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

On the next Sabbath **44** almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the **45** crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying.

Then Paul and Barnabas **46** answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the **47** Lord has commanded us:

'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'

is paraphrased from *Habakkuk 1:5*. Just a few years after this, the "scoffers" did "wonder and die" in the siege of Jerusalem (see note on *Matt. 24:21*).

42-43. The people invited them. They wanted to learn more about God's act in Christ. **Living in the grace of God.** By trusting and obeying him. They could not do this if they rejected Christ. The apostles urged everyone to "reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ" (compare note on *Acts 2:38*).

44. Nearly everyone in the town came. This shows us the intense interest generated by preaching the Good News.

45. When the Jews saw the crowds. A certain type of Jew (compare *Acts 6:9* and note) opposed the Good News, even with violence (see *Acts 17:5-9; 1 Thess. 2:14-16*).

46. It was necessary. The Good News was sent first to the Jews (*Acts 1:8; 3:26; Rom. 1:16*). But God had already planned to save the Gentiles. See what James says in *Acts 15:12-18* and notes.

47. For this is the commandment. See *Acts 26:16-18*. Paul quotes *Isa. 49:6* to prove what he says. Jesus is the world's Savior! God treats all men on the same basis (*Acts 10:34*)!

⁴⁸When the Gentiles heard this they were glad and praised the Lord's message; and those who had been chosen for eternal life became believers.

⁴⁹The word of the Lord spread everywhere in that region. ⁵⁰But the Jews stirred up the leading men of the city and the Gentile women of high social standing who worshiped God. They started a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and threw them out of their region. ⁵¹The apostles shook the dust off their feet against them and went on to Iconium. ⁵²The disciples in Antioch were full of joy and the Holy Spirit.

When the Gentiles heard 48 this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

The word of the Lord 49 spread through the whole region. But the Jews incited 50 the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. So they shook 51 the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. And the 52 disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

In Iconium

In Iconium

14 The same thing happened in Iconium: Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of Jews and Gentiles became believers. ²But the Jews who would not believe stirred up the Gentiles and turned their feelings against the brothers. ³The apostles stayed there for a long time. They spoke boldly about the Lord, who proved that their message about his grace was true by giving them the power to perform

14 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. Paul and Barnabas spent 3 considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miracu-

48. **When the Gentiles heard this.** They were glad, both because of the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free, and because the Jewish Scriptures declared this promise. **And those who had been chosen.** Verse 46 shows the Jews acted through their own choice. God chooses those who choose him. Compare *2 Thess. 3:1; 1 Cor. 16:15*. Wesley says: "Not that God rejected the rest; it was his will that they also should be saved, but they thrust salvation from them." **Became believers.** Made a public declaration of their faith.

49-51. **But the Jews stirred up.** They did what they could to cause trouble. **And threw them out of their region.** This interrupted the work of Paul and Barnabas, but not the spread of the Good News. They came back later (*Acts 14:21*). **Shook the dust off.** *Luke 9:5* and note. **Iconium.** About fifty miles east.

52. **The disciples in Antioch.** Even though Paul and Barnabas had been ejected from their area, they were full of joy and the Holy Spirit because they were new in Christ! Compare *1 Thess. 1:6; Rom. 14:17*.

1. **The same thing happened in Iconium.** Just as it had on the island of Cyprus and at Antioch. They went first to the Jewish synagogue and preached the Good News of God's act in Christ. Some Jews would believe, plus a number of the Gentiles who could be found in every synagogue. [Gentiles attended the synagogue to learn more about the God of Israel.]

2-3. **But the Jews who would not believe.** Christ brings division (*Matt. 10:34-36*). Those who refuse to believe, hate and fight against the Good News (*Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2*). [But like Paul, some change.] Note the apostles stayed there a long time and turned many people to Christ.

miracles and wonders. ⁴The crowd in the city was divided: some were for the Jews, others for the apostles.

⁵Then the Gentiles and the Jews, together with their leaders, decided to mistreat the apostles and stone them. ⁶When the apostles learned about it they fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities in Lycaonia, and to the surrounding territory. ⁷There they preached the Good News.

In Lystra and Derbe

⁸There was a man living in Lystra whose feet were crippled; he had been lame from birth and had never been able to walk. ⁹Sitting there, he listened to Paul's words. Paul saw that he believed and could be healed, so he looked straight at him ¹⁰and said in a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" The man jumped up and started walking around. ¹¹When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they started to shout in their own Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us!" ¹²They gave Barnabas the name Zeus, and Paul the name Hermes, because he was the one who

lous signs and wonders. The 4
people of the city were divid-
ed; some sided with the
Jews, others with the apost-
les. There was a plot afoot 5
among the Gentiles and
Jews, together with their
leaders, to mistreat them
and stone them. But they 6
found out about it and fled
to the Lycaonian cities of
Lystra and Derbe and to the
surrounding country, where 7
they continued to preach the
good news.

In Lystra and Derbe

In Lystra there sat a man 8
crippled in his feet, who was
lame from birth and had
never walked. He listened 9
to Paul as he was speaking.
Paul looked directly at him,
saw that he had faith to be
healed and called out, 10
"Stand up on your feet!" At
that, the man jumped up
and began to walk.

When the crowd saw what 11
Paul had done, they shouted
in the Lycaonian language,
"The gods have come down
to us in human form!" Bar-
nabas they called Zeus, and 12
Paul they called hermes be-
cause he was the chief

4-7. **The crowd in the city was divided.** Many believed, but many refused to believe. **Decided to mistreat the apostles.** The Greek text implies *sudden action*, such as raising a mob. **They fled to Lystra and Derbe.** Cities close to Iconium. Early church history often speaks of Lystra as a center of Christian influence.

8-10. **There was a man.** Verse 3 shows us how many miracles were done to prove the Good News to be true. This one shows us something of the attitude and humility of the apostles. **He listened to Paul's words.** His friends might have brought him here. **Paul saw that he believed.** Faith comes from hearing the message (*Rom. 10-17*). This miracle, like those Christ did, is a parable of being "set free" from sin. (1) The message of the Good News is heard; (2) faith comes from hearing; (3) the command calls for faith to "reach out" [act]; (4) faith obeys; (5) the man is *set free* from his deformity by the obedience of faith. "His faith had saved him!"

11-13. **When the crowds saw.** The people of Lystra were heathen who believed in many *gods*. Their tradition said the *gods* often came down in the form of men, and intervened in human affairs. **Zeus.** The chief of the *gods*. Barnabas must have been more impressive than Paul (*compare 2 Cor. 10:10*). **Hermes.** The spokesman for the *gods*. [Jupiter and Mercurius are the Latin names.] **The priest of the god Zeus.** He comes to offer worship to those whom the people think to be *gods*. The sacrificial bulls were decorated with flowers, and the priest wore a wreath of flowers on his head. **To the apostles.** "Apostle" means "one sent" [by the Holy Spirit]. We use it as a title for the Twelve, but Barnabas and others were also "apostles." It is used to mean those who "represent the churches" (*2 Cor. 8:23*).

did the speaking. ¹³The priest of the god Zeus, whose temple stood just outside the town, brought bulls and flowers to the gate. He and the crowds wanted to offer sacrifice to the apostles.

¹⁴When Barnabas and Paul heard what they were about to do, they tore their clothes and ran into the middle of the crowd, shouting, ¹⁵"Why are you doing this, men? We are just men, human beings like you! We are here to announce the Good News, to turn you away from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven, earth, sea, and all that is in them. ¹⁶In the past he allowed all peoples to go their own way. ¹⁷But he has always given proof of himself by the good things he does: he gives you rain from heaven and crops at the right times; he gives you food and fills your hearts with happiness." ¹⁸Even with these words the apostles could hardly keep the crowds from offering a sacrifice to them.

¹⁹Some Jews came from Antioch of Pisidia and from Iconium; they won the crowds to their side, stoned Paul and dragged him out of town, thinking that he was dead. ²⁰But when the believers gathered around him, he got up and went back into the town. The next day he and Barnabas went to Derbe.

speaker. The priest of Zeus, ¹³ whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

But when the apostles ¹⁴ Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed into the crowd, shouting: "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. ¹⁶ In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." Even ¹⁸ with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

Then some Jews came ¹⁹ from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But ²⁰ after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

14-18. **They tore their clothes.** This was a symbol of grief, anger, and horror. Compare *Matt. 26:65* **We are just men.** This shows their complete commitment to *truth!* They would not permit themselves to be worshipped. **To the living God.** These other things are worthless! See *Rom. 1:25*. **In the past.** Compare *Acts 17:30*. History proves that man cannot find God by their own wisdom, even though "Nature" speaks God's glory with many voices. (*Rom. 1:18-21*).

19-20. **Some Jews came from Antioch.** Some think Paul's "thorn in the flesh" refers to these Jews. [compare *Num. 33:55; Josh. 23:13; 2 Tim. 4:14-17.*] The Lystrans, frustrated because they were not permitted to worship Paul and Barnabas, were easily turned against them. This is the first *injury* Paul suffered for Christ (*2 Cor. 11:25*). **He got up.** We are not told whether this was a miracle. When persecuted in one city, they would move on to another, as Christ had commanded.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

²¹Paul and Barnabas preached the Good News in Derbe, and won many disciples. Then they went back to Lystra, then to Iconium, and then to Antioch of Pisidia. ²²They strengthened the believers and encouraged them to remain true to the faith. "We must pass through many troubles to enter the Kingdom of God," they taught. ²³In each church they appointed elders for them; and with prayers and fasting they commended them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

²⁴After going through the territory of Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. ²⁵They preached the message in Perga and then went down to Attalia, ²⁶and from there they sailed back to Antioch, the place where they had been commended to the care of God's grace for the work they had now completed.

²⁷When they arrived in Antioch they gathered the people of the church together and told them of all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the way for the Gentiles to believe. ²⁸They stayed a long time there with the believers.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

They preached the good 21
news in that city and won a
large number of disciples.
Then they returned to
Lystra, Iconium and Anti- 22
och, strengthening the dis-
ciples and encouraging them
to remain true to the faith.
"We must go through many
hardships to enter the king-
dom of God," they said.
Paul and Barnabas appoint- 23
ed elders for them in each
church and, with prayer and
fasting, committed them to
the Lord in whom they had
put their trust. After going 24
through Pisidia, they came
into Pamphylia, and when 25
they had preached the word
in Perga, they went down to
Attalia.

From Attalia they sailed 26
back to Antioch, where they
had been committed to the
grace of God for the work
they had now completed. On 27
arriving here, they gathered
the church together and
reported all that God had
done through them and how
he had opened the door of
faith to the Gentiles. And 28
they stayed there a long time
with the disciples.

21-23. **Then they went back to Lystra.** The Jewish leaders may have been "chasing after" Paul in other cities, so while they were away, he can return to strengthen the believers. We would expect him to "organize" the groups of believers by appointing church-leaders [elders] and church-helpers [deacons]. Compare *Titus* 1:5. One of the believers was Timothy (*Acts* 16:1). **Through many troubles.** God has set this world up as an "obstacle-course," where we must *pass through* the "mud and barbed-wire" to "sort ourselves out" and *grow spiritually!* Compare *1 Thess.* 3:3; *Rom.* 5:3-4; *2 Cor.* 4:17; *Heb.* 12:5-11; *James* 1:2-4. **In each church.** (1) Elders were appointed within a few years of the church being planted in an area. (2) Each church [group of believers] had their own elders. (3) There were always more than one in each church. (4) They were *identified* by a simple ceremony of prayer and fasting (see note on *Acts* 13:3). (5) We infer from *Acts* 6:3-6 that each group chose their own church-leaders. See note on *Titus* 1:5.

24-28. **They preached the message in Perga.** They had not preached here when they landed from Paphos (*Acts* 13:13-14). **Attalia.** A seaport close to Perga. **Back to Antioch.** The Antioch in Syria. See notes on *Acts* 13:1. *W. M. Ramsay* thinks the first tour of missions began in 47 A.D., and ended in the Autumn of 49 A.D. (by the corrected calendar). **And told them.** They made a report to their "sponsoring church." **They stayed a long time.** Until their second tour of missions.

The Meeting at Jerusalem

15 Some men came from Judea to Antioch and started teaching the brothers, "You cannot be saved unless you are circumcised as the Law of Moses requires." ²Paul and Barnabas had a fierce argument and dispute with them about this; so it was decided that Paul and Barnabas and some of the others in Antioch should go to Jerusalem and see the apostles and elders about this matter.

³They were sent on their way by the church, and as they went through Phoenicia and Samaria they reported how the Gentiles had turned to God; this news brought great joy to all the brothers. ⁴When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, the apostles, and the elders, to whom they told all that God had done with them. ⁵But some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "They have to be circumcised and told to obey the Law of Moses."

The Council at Jerusalem

15 Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." ²This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. ³The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad. ⁴When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

⁵Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and

1. **Some men came from Judea.** This chapter shows us something of the sharp conflict which shook the church of that day. Was Christianity just an extension of Judaism, or, was it something completely new??? The Jerusalem and Judean Christians remained strict Jews (*Acts 21:20-21*). The Samaritan Christians were already circumcized. Peter and his fellow believers were amazed that Cornelius and his friends could be baptized into Christ without first being circumcized. The planting of the Gentile church at Antioch in Syria, and the great crowds of Gentiles who became Christians without being circumcized, caused a certain group of Jews to react with anger! **Unless you are circumcized.** These Jews made this the supreme test of fellowship! Read the literal translation of Paul's inspired comment in *Gal. 5:12*. The issue of authority had to be settled, and the Jerusalem Meeting was called to show that the apostles and elders did not authorize forcing the Gentiles to be circumcized. This important question would decide whether Christianity would also be Jewish (following Jewish tradition), or, be free as God's sons. Paul calls these "men from Judea" *spies* who pretended to be brothers (*Gal. 2:4*).

2. **Had a fierce argument.** This shows the importance of the issue. These men were from Jerusalem, and could claim they were acting by the authority of the apostles. **Should go to Jerusalem.** The Twelve were there.

3-4. **They were sent on their way by the church.** This was an official mission. *Johnson* thinks a special escort of church-members went along with them to Jerusalem. They visited the churches in Phoenicia and Samarai as they went through, and told them what God was doing among the Gentiles. [The Holy Spirit produces faith through the hearing of the message (*Rom. 10:17*). The Gentiles heard, believed, and turned to God.]

5. **But some of the believers.** Like Paul, they had *converted* to Christ, but unlike him, they had not given up their prejudice (*see Acts 21:20-21*). Some may have been Paul's old friends. They quickly raised the question when Paul and Barnabas gave the report of *verse 4*.

⁶The apostles and the elders met together to consider this question. ⁷After a long debate Peter stood up and said, "My brothers, you know that a long time ago God chose me from among you to preach the message of Good News to the Gentiles, so that they could hear and believe. ⁸And God, who knows the hearts of men, showed his approval of the Gentiles by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he had to us. ⁹He made no difference between us and them; he purified their hearts because they believed. ¹⁰So then, why do you want to put God to the test now by laying a load on the backs of the believers which neither our ancestors nor we ourselves were able to carry? ¹¹No! We believe and are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they are."

¹²The whole group was silent as they heard Barnabas and Paul report all the wonders and miracles that God had done through them among the Gentiles. ¹³When they finished speaking, James spoke up, "Listen to me, brothers!

said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses."

The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them:

"Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. When they finished, James spoke up:

"Brothers, listen to me.

6. **The apostles and the elders met together.** *W. M. Ramsay* gives 49 A.D. as the date of this. [*Johnson* gives 51 A.D.] The Twelve had been reduced by one (*Acts 12:2*). James, the Lord's brother, was a chief man in the Jerusalem church. Historians often call him the pastor or bishop. Note that both of these titles mean "elder," and there were more than one. *Gal. 2:12* implies that James was the leader of the "circumcision party."

7-11. **After a long debate.** Some Jews believed God was their personal property, and that the Gentiles had to accept their Law and Tradition and come to God through them. Paul and others knew that God had terminated the Law (*Col. 2:14*), and of course, Tradition had no authority at all. **Peter stood up.** He tells about the Gentiles being accepted by God (*see Acts 10 & 11*). **He made no difference between us and them.** God's SAME terms of salvation are for BOTH Jew and Gentile. **He purified their hearts.** The Jews believed Gentiles were religiously unclean, and that they had to convert to Judaism and become a "Jew" before God's promises could be available to them. **So then.** The Law was a load which no one could carry. To force this on the believers was the same thing as opposing God. Compare *Acts 5:39*. **Just as they are.** BOTH Jew and Gentile must believe and be saved by grace (*Rom. 3:27-31*).

12. **The whole group was silent.** They are amazed! The miracles show that God approves the work among the Gentiles.

13. **James spoke up.** Note it is James, the brother of Jesus, who takes charge of the situation. See *Gal. 2:9* and the introduction to *James*.

¹⁴Simon has just explained how God first showed his care for the Gentiles by taking from among them a people to be all his own. ¹⁵The words of the prophets agree completely with this. As the scripture says,

¹⁶After this I will return, says the Lord,
and I will raise David's fallen house.

I will restore its ruins,
and build it up again.

¹⁷And so all other people will seek the Lord,
all the Gentiles whom I have called to
be my own.

¹⁸So says the Lord, who made this known
long ago.'

¹⁹"It is my opinion," James went on, "that we should not trouble the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰Instead, we should write a letter telling them not to eat any food that is unclean because it has been offered to idols; to keep themselves from immorality; not to eat any animal that has been strangled, or any blood. ²¹For the Law of Moses has been read for a very long time in the synagogues every Sabbath, and his words are preached in every town."

Simon has described to us 14 how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

'After this I will return 16
and rebuild the fallen
house of David.

Its ruins I will rebuild,
and I will restore it,
that the rest of mankind 17
may seek the Lord, and
all the Gentiles who
bear my name,
says the Lord, who does
these things'
that have been known 18
for ages.

"It is my judgment, there- 19
fore, that we should not
make it difficult for the
Gentiles who are turning to
God. Instead we should 20
write to them, telling them
to abstain from food pollut-
ed by idols, from sexual im-
morality, from the meat of
strangled animals and from
blood. For Moses has been 21
preached in every city from
the earliest times and is read
in the synagogues on every
Sabbath."

14. Simon has just explained. Read what Simon Peter said in *verses 7-11*. This is what James refers to.

15-18. The words of the prophets. James paraphrases *Amos 9:11-12*. **Raise David's fallen house.** Restore the glory of David in the Messiah. Note that James applies this to what had already happened.

And so all other people. This prophecy of the Gentiles being called to God, does not mention circumcision. **So says the Lord.** Making salvation available to the Gentiles has been part of God's Plan all along! David's fallen house is restored in the Gentiles coming to Christ.

19. It is my opinion. James can plainly see that this is God's will, so he must agree with it. **See note on verse 6.**

20. We should write a letter. Four things are mentioned, all of which were common practices in the Gentile world. **Food that is unclean.** Johnson thinks this includes everything that went into the worship of idols (*see note on Rev. 2:20*). But this must be understood in view of what Paul said in *1 Cor. 10:23-33*. **Immorality.** Sex activity with someone not a marriage partner of the one involved. This included adultery, homosexuality (both male and female); "peeping-tom-ism." etc. **That has been strangled.** This kept the blood in the animal. Romans would drown birds in wine, then cook and eat them. **Or any blood.** Blood was drunk in idol worship, and it was common to drink blood and wine together. This use of blood would horrify any Jew, so wisdom required this prohibition against eating blood. **For the Law of Moses.** Some would be afraid the Law would be forgotten (*Acts 21:20-25*). Also, there should be nothing to cause schism between Jewish and Gentile Christians.

The Letter to the Gentile Believers

²²Then the apostles and the elders, together with the whole church, decided to choose some men from the group and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas, two men who were highly respected by the brothers. ²³They sent the following letter by them:

“We, the apostles and the elders, your brothers, send greetings to all brothers of Gentile birth who live in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. ²⁴We have heard that some men of our group went out and troubled and upset you by what they said; they had not, however, received any instructions from us to do this. ²⁵And so we have met together and have all agreed to choose some messengers and send them to you. They will go with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶who have risked their lives in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷We send you, then, Judas and Silas, who will tell you in person the same things we are writing. ²⁸The Holy Spirit and we have agreed not to put any other burden on you besides these necessary rules: ²⁹eat no food that has been offered to idols; eat no blood; eat no animal that has been strangled; and keep yourselves from immorality. You will do well if you keep yourselves from doing these things. Good-bye.”

³⁰The messengers were sent off and went to Antioch, where they gathered the whole group

The Council's Letter to Gentile Believers

Then the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers. With them they sent the following letter:

The apostles and elders, your brothers,
To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:
Greetings.

We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul—men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food offered to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell.

The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and deliver-

22-29. **Together with the whole church.** The entire group of Christians were in agreement about this. **They chose Judas.** He was a prophet (*verse 32*). **Silas.** He became Paul's associate (*verse 40*). **They sent the following letter by them.** The letter explains the question and the answer. **The Holy Spirit and we.** This is not just a human decision. The Holy Spirit directed what they did. The four prohibitions are explained in the notes on *verses 20-21*.

30-35. **They were filled with joy.** Because the Law did not apply to them, and because of the good will of their Jewish brothers in Christ. **Judas and Silas.** *Prophets:* see note on *Eph. 4:11*. They had super-normal knowledge. **They were sent off in peace.** This shows the close fellowship between the Jewish and

of believers and gave them the letter. ³¹When the people read the letter, they were filled with joy by the message of encouragement. ³²Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, spoke a long time with the brothers, giving them courage and strength. ³³After spending some time there, they were sent off in peace by the brothers, and went back to those who had sent them. [³⁴But Silas decided to stay there.]

³⁵Paul and Barnabas spent some time in Antioch. Together with many others, they taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Separate

³⁶Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit our brothers in every city where we preached the word of the Lord, and find out how they are getting along." ³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, ³⁸but Paul did not think it was right to take him, because he had not stayed with them to the end of their mission, but had turned back and left them in Pamphylia. ³⁹They had a sharp argument between them, and separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark and sailed off for Cyprus, ⁴⁰while Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the care of the Lord's grace. ⁴¹He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

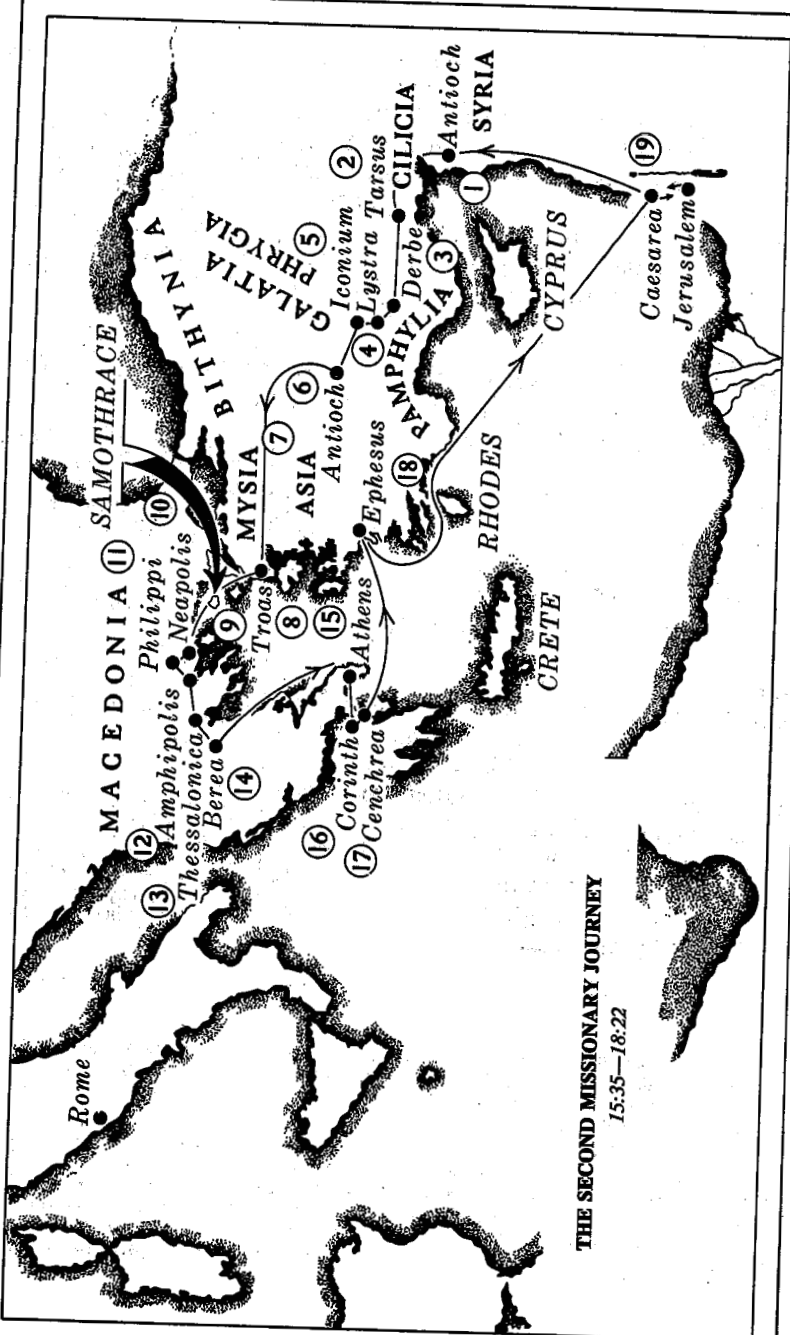
ed the letter. The people ³¹ read it and were glad for its encouraging message. Judas ³² and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. After spending ³³ some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. Paul and Barnabas ³⁵ remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas

Some time later Paul said ³⁶ to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted ³⁷ to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul ³⁸ did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had ³⁹ such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul ⁴⁰ chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He ⁴¹ went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Gentile Christians. **But Silas.** This verse is omitted in most manuscripts, but there is some authority for it. It agrees with the facts. **Paul and Barnabas.** They stayed almost a year. Since the New Testament had not been written down, the Christians had to depend upon those teachers who had supernatural knowledge, for the word of the Lord.

36-41. **Let us go back.** This begins the second tour of missions. *W. M. Ramsay* gives the date as 50 A.D. (by the corrected calendar). **Barnabas wanted to take John Mark.** See notes on *Acts 13:5,13*. **They had a sharp argument.** Neither one would "give in," yet note this was not a fight, but a friendly disagreement. **And separated from each other.** This solved the problem. Now there were two teams making this second tour. **Commended by the brothers.** This implies that a meeting of the church was held to "identify" them (see notes on *Acts 13:2-3*). Both teams had their blessings. **Syria and Cilicia.** See *Gal. 1:21*.



THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY
15:35—18:22

THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

15:35—18:22

1. IN ANTIOCH. 15:36-40
 - a. The desire to revisit the churches established on the first tour. 36
 - b. The desire of Barnabas to take John Mark. 37
 - c. Disagreement and parting of Barnabas and Saul. 38-40
2. THROUGH THE PROVINCES OF SYRIA AND CILICIA. 15:41
Confirmed the churches in this region. Cf. Gal. 1:21-24
3. AT DERBE. 16:1a
Confirmed the church. 1a
4. IN LYSTRA. 16:1b-5
 - a. Timothy, his faith and ancestry. 1b
 - b. The good report of Timothy's work from the nearby churches. 2
 - c. The circumcision of Timothy by Paul in preparation for their work. 3
5. THROUGH THE CITIES OF ICONIUM AND ANTIOCH TO WHOM THEY DELIVERED THE DECREES OF THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL. THE CHURCHES WERE GREATLY STRENGTHENED. 16:4, 5
6. THROUGH THE REGION OF PHRYGIA AND GALATIA. 16:6a; Cf. Gal. 4:13-15; 1 Cor. 16:1,2
7. WHILE IN THE ABOVE STATED REGIONS THEY WERE FORBIDDEN BY THE SPIRIT TO SPEAK THE WORD IN ASIA. THEY PASSED THROUGH THE PROVINCE OF MYSIA AND ASSAYED TO GO INTO THE PROVINCE OF BITHYNIA BUT THEY WERE AGAIN FORBIDDEN. 16:6b-8a
8. AT TROAS. 16:8b-10
 - a. The vision. 8b, 9
 - b. God's call to Macedonia. 10
9. AT SAMOTHRACE. 16:11a
A small island where they anchored overnight. 11a
10. AT NEAPOLIS. 16:11b
A large seaport city. No time spent here. 11b
11. IN PHILIPPI. 16:12-40
 - a. A description of Philippi. 12
 - b. The prayer meeting and the conversion. 13-15
 - c. The incident of the maid with the evil spirit. 16-18
 - d. The result of the casting out of the evil spirit. 19-24
 - e. Praise and prayer in jail. 25
 - f. The earthquake; prisoners released. 26
 - g. The desperation of the jailer. 27
 - h. The intervention of Paul. 28
 - i. The inquiry of the jailer for salvation. 29, 30
 - j. The reply and explanation. 31, 32
 - k. The results. 33, 34
 - l. The suggested release of Paul and Silas. 35-37
 - m. The report of Paul's reply to the magistrates, their action. 38, 39
 - n. The final visit with the brethren at the house of Lydia. 40
12. PASSING THROUGH THE CITIES OF AMPHIPOLIS AND APPOLLONIA. 17:1a
13. AT THESSALONICA. 17:1b-10a
 - a. Entering the synagogue and reasoning for three sabbaths. 1b-3
 - b. Many respond. 4
 - c. The Jews, full of jealousy, stir up a persecution. 5
 - d. The trial of Jason and certain brethren. 6-9
 - e. The brethren send them away by night. 10a
14. AT BEREAE. 17:10b-14a
 - a. Entering the synagogue. 10b
 - b. The noble attitude of the Berean Jews. 11
 - c. The good results. 12
 - d. The Jews from Thessalonica stir up opposition. Paul leaves with brethren; Silas and Timothy remain. 13, 14a

15. IN ATHENS. *17:14b-34*
 - a. The brethren from Berea go with Paul as far as Athens and take back a command for the coming of Silas and Timothy. *14b, 15*
 - b. Paul is provoked in spirit and reasons in the synagogue. *16, 17*
 - c. The contact with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. *18-21*
 - d. Paul's message on the unknown God. *22-31*
 - e. The results. *32-34*
16. IN CORINTH. *18:1-17*
 - a. Coming to Corinth. *1*
 - b. His meeting and abiding with Priscilla and Aquilla. *2, 3*
 - c. Reasoning in the synagogue. *4*
 - d. The arrival of Silas and Timothy. *5*
 - e. The opposition; turns to the Gentiles. *6*
 - f. The services in the house of Titus Justus. *7*
 - g. The encouraging vision by night. *8-10*
 - h. One year and six months spent here. *11*
 - i. Paul's trial before Gallio. *12-16*
 - j. The beating of Sosthenes. *17*
17. AT CENCHREA. *18:18*

Where Paul cut his hair in fulfillment of a vow; accompanied by Priscilla and Aquilla. *18*
18. IN EPHESUS. *18:19-21*
 - a. Enters the synagogue and reasons with Jews. *19*
 - b. Their desire that he would abide a longed time. *20*
 - c. His leaving and promise to return. *21*
19. AT CAESAREA. *18:22a*

Saluted the church. *22a*
20. IN ANTIOCH. *18:22b*

Back home. *22b*

Timothy Goes with Paul and Silas

16 Paul traveled on to Derbe and Lystra. A believer named Timothy lived there; his mother, also a believer, was Jewish, but his father was Greek. ²All the brothers in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy. ³Paul wanted to take Timothy along with him, so he circumcised him. He did so because all the Jews who lived in those places knew that Timothy's father was Greek. ⁴As they went through the towns they delivered to the believers the rules decided upon by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and told them to obey these rules. ⁵So the churches were made stronger in the faith and grew in numbers every day.

In Troas: Paul's Vision

⁶They traveled through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, because the Holy Spirit did not let them preach the message in the province of Asia. ⁷When they reached the border of Mysia, they tried to go into the province of Bithynia, but the

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

16 He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. ²The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Paul's Vision of the Macedonian

Paul and his companions ⁶traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow

1-3. **Paul traveled on to Derbe and Lystra.** Compare *Acts 14:6-21*. A believer named Timothy. Born of a Jewish mother and a Greek father, and had been taught the Scriptures from childhood (*2 Tim. 3:15*) by his devout mother and grandmother (*2 Tim. 1:5*). *J. G. Malphurs* thinks Timothy's father was a "Gentile converted to Judaism," and that he was in the crowd on Pentecost and was baptized into Christ. Timothy's mother and grandmother were Christians as well, and this explains why such devout people had not circumcised Timothy. *1 Cor. 4:17* shows us that Paul brought Timothy to Christ. Timothy could not have been more than fifteen at that time. Here he is probably sixteen or seventeen. **So he circumcised him.** Timothy was part Jewish, so Paul did this to prevent trouble with the Jews. Because Timothy was a descendant of Abraham, he could be circumcised as a *civil rite*. Since circumcision is without meaning (*1 Cor. 7:18-19*), this could be done on the principle of *1 Cor. 9:20*. But in the case of Titus, who was a Gentile, the case was different. To have allowed him to be circumcised would have damaged the messianic community (*Gal. 2:1-5*). At this time Timothy was also "identified" [ordained] (*1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6*). Compare notes on *Acts 13:2-3*.

4-5. **As they went through the towns.** They delivered the message from the Jerusalem church (*Acts 15:23-29*) to the churches [groups of believers] in the towns along the way.

6-10. **Through the region of Phrygia and Galatia.** *McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia* says the Province of Phrygia did not yet exist, but the name referred to the area south of Galatia. **In the province of Asia.** Ephesus was the capital. The Holy Spirit, also called the Spirit of Jesus, had other plans for them at this time. These other areas were not excluded from the gospel, but Paul's mission was to be in

Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. ⁸So they traveled right on through Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹Paul had a vision that night in which he saw a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" ¹⁰As soon as Paul had this vision, we got ready to leave for Macedonia, because we decided that God had called us to preach the Good News to people there.

them to. So they passed by ⁸ Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night ⁹ Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

In Philippi: the Conversion of Lydia

¹¹We left by ship from Troas and sailed straight across to Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis. ¹²From there we went inland to Philippi, a city of the first district of Macedonia; it is also a Roman colony. We spent several days in that city. ¹³On the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where we thought there would be a Jewish place for prayer. We sat down and talked to the women who gathered there. ¹⁴One of those who heard us was Lydia, from Thyatira, who was a dealer in purple goods. She was a woman who worshiped God, and the Lord opened her mind to pay attention to

Lydia's Conversion in Philippi

From Troas we put out to ¹¹ sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. From ¹² there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

On the Sabbath we went ¹³ outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named ¹⁴ Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's

Macedonia. **Paul had a vision.** This is the way the Holy Spirit's message was communicated to him. Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea were all in Macedonia. **We got ready to leave.** We are not told they preached in Troas at this time. But a few years later we find a church here (*Acts 20:6-12*). From here on, Luke speaks as an eyewitness, which implies that he joined Paul and the others at Troas and went with them.

11-12 And sailed straight across. Samothrace is an island at the half-way point. Neapolis is the seaport, just a few miles from Philippi. **A Roman colony.** Emperor Augustus had planted this colony. It was a miniature Rome, with its own government. Note the apostles planted the Good News **FIRST** in the population centers, from which it would be taken home to the rural areas.

13-15. To the riverside. The Gangas, a small river. **A Jewish place for prayer.** Evidently, there was no synagogue. A few devout Jews, mostly women, met on the river banks to worship God. **And talked to the women.** Some of these may have been "Gentiles converted to Judaism." **Lydia** is a Greek name. **Thyatira** is in the province of Asia, some hundreds of miles distant. **Purple goods** were valuable luxury items. Since Thyatira was a Macedonian colony, Lydia may have had relatives here in Philippi. **And the Lord opened her mind.** "The Holy Spirit produces faith through the message." *To open* is the Lord's part; *to pay attention* was her part (*Rom. 10:17*). Compare *Eph. 1:18; Acts 17:3*. **Were baptized.** This was always done immediately. Early Christians viewed baptism as *participating* in the death of Christ

what Paul was saying. ¹⁵She and the people of her house were baptized. Then she invited us, "Come and stay in my house, if you have decided that I am a true believer in the Lord." And she persuaded us to go.

In Prison at Philippi

¹⁶One day as we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had an evil spirit in her that made her predict the future. She earned much money for her owners by telling fortunes. ¹⁷She followed Paul and us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God! They announce to you how you can be saved!" ¹⁸She did this for many days, until Paul became so upset that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I order you to come out of her!" The spirit went out of her that very moment. ¹⁹When her owners realized that their chance of making money was gone, they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the authorities in the public square. ²⁰They brought them before the Roman officials and said, "These men are Jews, and they are causing trouble in our city. ²¹They are teaching customs that are against our law; we are Romans and cannot accept or practice them." ²²The crowd joined the attack against them; the officials tore the clothes off Paul and Silas, and ordered them

message. When she and the ¹⁵ members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Paul and Silas in Prison

Once when we were going ¹⁶ to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a lot of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and ¹⁷ the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She kept this up for ¹⁸ many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

When the owners of the ¹⁹ slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought ²⁰ them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for ²¹ us Romans to accept or practice."

The crowd joined in the ²² attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped

(see note on Col. 2:12). The people of her house would be her servants and friends. She was a business woman who sold purple goods, therefore wealthy. Then she invited us. This is an offer of support. Paul did not usually take financial help from his converts (Acts 20:33; 2 Cor. 12:17), but this time he was persuaded (compare Luke 8:1-3).

16-18. We were met by a slave girl. She was possessed by a demon, who gave her supernatural abilities. These men are servants. The demon knew who they were (James 2:19). Compare Mark 3:12; Luke 4:34-35. In the name of Jesus Christ. Compare Mark 16:17; Acts 19:13-16.

19-22. They grabbed Paul and Silas. Nothing angers men more than seeing their greed defeated. These men are Jews. That fact alone would incriminate them. Compare Acts 18:2 and note. Tore the clothes off. It was the custom to strip convicted prisoners and whip the bare body.

to be whipped. ²³After a severe beating they were thrown into jail, and the jailer was ordered to lock them up tight. ²⁴Upon receiving this order, the jailer threw them into the inner cell and fastened their feet between heavy blocks of wood.

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, which shook the prison to its foundations. At once all the doors opened, and the chains fell off all the prisoners. ²⁷The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open he thought that all the prisoners had escaped; so he pulled out his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸But Paul shouted at the top of his voice, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

²⁹The jailer called for a light, rushed in, and fell trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he led them out and asked, "What must I do, sirs to be saved?"

³¹"Believe in the Lord Jesus," they said, "and you will be saved—you and your family." ³²Then they preached the word of the Lord to him and

and beaten. After they had ²³ been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon ²⁴ receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and ²⁵ Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there ²⁶ was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. The jailer ²⁷ woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, ²⁸ "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

The jailer called for lights, ²⁹ rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He ³⁰ then brought them out and asked, "Men, what must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Believe in ³¹ the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they ³² spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others

23-24. **After a severe beating.** The Law of Moses regulated whipping (*Deut. 25:3; 2 Cor. 11:24*). Romans had no such restriction. **The inner cell.** A damp cell, with no source of light, used for "solitary confinement."

25-28. **About midnight.** Note they were praying and singing in spite of their physical condition and the place where they were! **Suddenly there was a violent earthquake.** This was God's answer. Compare *Acts 4:31; 5:19*. **And was about to kill himself.** Guards who allowed prisoners to escape forfeited their own lives (*Acts 12:19*). A Roman would commit suicide under these circumstances. **But Paul shouted.** Paul could see out of the darkness through the now opened doors. He and Silas were still there, and the other prisoners were probably too shocked to move.

29-34. **And fell trembling.** He is convinced they are under divine protection! **What must I do?** Paul's answer to this question shows the jailer knew they preached a new religion. **Believe in the Lord Jesus.** This was the point of beginning for this man. To those who already believed, Peter said "repent and be baptized" (*Acts 2:38*). To one who already believed and had repented, Ananias said "be baptized" (*Acts 22:16*). Faith reaches out to God (compare *Heb. 11:4*). **You and your family.** This does not mean the family would be saved as a unit. The same way open to him, was also open to them. **Then they preached the word.** They could not believe what they did not know. Paul presents the Good News of

to all the others in his house. ³³At that very hour of the night the jailer took them and washed off their wounds; and he and all his family were baptized at once. ³⁴He took Paul and Silas up into his house and gave them some food to eat. He and his family were filled with joy, because he now believed in God.

³⁵The next morning the Roman authorities sent police officers with the order, "Let those men go."

³⁶So the jailer told it to Paul, "The officials have sent an order for you and Silas to be released. You may leave, then and go in peace."

³⁷But Paul said to the police officers, "We were not found guilty of any crime, yet they whipped us in public—and we are Roman citizens! Then they threw us in prison. And now they want to send us away secretly? Not at all! The Roman officials themselves must come here and let us out."

³⁸The police officers reported these words to the Roman officials; and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were afraid. ³⁹So they went and apologized to them; then they led them out of the prison and asked

in his house. At that hour ³³ of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought ³⁴ them into his house and set a meal before them, and the whole family was filled with joy, because they had come to believe in God.

When it was daylight, the ³⁵ magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." The jailer told Paul, "The ³⁶ magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."

But Paul said to the ³⁷ officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

The officers reported this ³⁸ to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They ³⁹ came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave

God's act in Christ to set men free. This implies all who heard could understand and believe, **And washed off their wounds.** They were covered with blood, dust, and bruises. *Howson* thinks they were washed in a large tank or reservoir in the prison courtyard, which was kept full by rainwater from the roof. **Were baptized at once.** Paul and Silas were washed from fleshly wounds; the jailer and his family were washed from the deeper wounds and stains of sin (*compare Titus 3:4-5; 1 Pet. 3:21*). [No trace of the baptism of infant children of Christians is found in the New Testament.] **Up into his house.** The house may have been built on the wall above the prison. This shows his thankfulness. **Were filled with joy.** The joy of the Holy Spirit which followed his baptism. Although the text of *verse 34* speaks directly of the jailer, *verse 33* shows they had all believed and been baptized.

35-40. **The Roman authorities.** It may have been fear of the earthquake, or "second-thoughts" about their cruel treatment of "holy men" which influenced them to order the release. **But Paul said.** Roman law said no Roman citizen could be whipped or tortured. Paul makes an issue of this, probably to benefit the church at Philippi. Paul was born a Roman citizen. (*Acts 22:25-29*). He did not hesitate to call on the Roman government to help him, when it would promote the cause of Christ to do so. **And when they heard.** Paul could have demanded their punishment and dismissal. **And went to Lydia's house.** The small group of believers was meeting there. Later they would become a large group, and Paul

them to leave the city. ⁴⁰Paul and Silas left the prison and went to Lydia's house. There they met the brothers, spoke words of encouragement to them, and left.

In Thessalonica

17 They traveled on through Amphipolis and Apollonia, and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ²According to his usual habit, Paul went to the synagogue. There during three Sabbath days he argued with the people from the Scriptures, ³explaining them and proving from them that the Messiah had to suffer, and rise from death. "This Jesus whom I announce to you," Paul said, "is the Messiah." ⁴Some of them were convinced and joined Paul and Silas; so did a large group of Greeks who worshiped God, and many of the leading women.

the city. After Paul and 40 Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left.

In Thessalonica

17 When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

would address a letter to them. **And left.** They go on to Thessalonica. Philippi was the first place (so far as we know) in Europe where the gospel was preached; the first one to obey the truth was a woman; the preachers of the Good News were severely beaten and jailed; but through God's grace and power, a great victory was won. This young church sent aid to Paul at Thessalonica (*Phil. 4:15-16*).

1-4. They traveled on. They went along the Roman military road that crossed Macedonia and Greece to the seaport of Dyrrachium; and resuming at the port of Brundisium on the coast of Italy, continued to Rome itself. Amphipolis was some thirty miles from Philippi (about one day's travel time); Apollonia about thirty miles still farther west; and Thessalonica about twenty-eight miles more. Thessalonica was a rich commerical city, the captial of Macedonia. **According to his usual habit.** Where there was a Jewish synagogue, this is where Paul began. Here he found people, both Jew and Gentile, who believed in the living God and the Old Testament Scriptures. He would show how the prophets predicted the death and resurrection of the Messiah, and that this proved Jesus to be the Messiah who was to come. **Three Sabbath days.** This is how long he argued in the synagogue. **Some of them were convinced.** These were Jews. **A large group of Greeks.** These were Gentiles who wanted to learn about the God of Israel, and who came to the synagogue regularly, but had not converted to Judaism and been circumcised. **And many of the leading women.** Wives of the leading citizens, who had much influence. *Ramsay* thinks the synagogue would have in it: Jews; "Gentiles converted to Judaism"; Greeks [Gentiles]; leading women [mentioned as a climax]. There seemed to be a small number of Jews converted to Christ, plus a large number of Gentiles, some of whom had been idol-worshippers (*1 Thess. 1:9 and note*).

⁵But the Jews were jealous and gathered some of the worthless loafers from the streets and formed a mob. They set the whole city in an uproar, and attacked the home of Jason, trying to find Paul and Silas and bring them out to the people. ⁶But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers to the city authorities and shouted, "These men have caused trouble everywhere! Now they have come to our city, ⁷and Jason has kept them in his house. They are all breaking the laws of the Emperor, saying that there is another king, by the name of Jesus." ⁸With these words they threw the crowd and the city authorities in an uproar. ⁹The authorities made Jason and the others pay the required amount of money to be released, and then let them go.

In Berea

¹⁰As soon as night came, the brothers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹The people were more open-minded than the people in Thessalonica. They listened to the message with great eagerness, and every day they studied the Scriptures to see if what Paul said was really true. ¹²Many of them believed; and many Greek women of high social standing and many Greek men also be-

But the Jews were jealous; ⁵ so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. But when ⁶ they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed ⁷ them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called ⁸ Jesus." When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into ⁹ turmoil. Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

In Berea

As soon as it was night, ¹⁰ the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now ¹¹ the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was ¹² true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

5-9. **But the Jews were jealous.** As usual, those who did not believe were filled with hatred. **And attacked the home of Jason.** Paul and Silas had been staying with him (*verse 7*). **To the city authorities.** It is ironic that *Jews* would go to the Roman authorities and complain that Paul and Silas were promoting *another king*. **These men have caused trouble everywhere!** This shows the revolutionary power of the Faith. It changed the world! **With these words.** They were charging Paul and Silas with the crime of treason against the Romans. **Pay the required amount of money.** A *bond* that they would keep the peace.

10-12. **The brothers sent Paul and Silas to Berea.** Between forty-five and sixty miles west of Thessalonica. **The people there were more open-minded.** They were willing to investigate the claims of Paul and Silas. **Many of them believed.** See note on *verse 2*. The same types of people were always the first to respond to the preaching of the Good News.

lieved. ¹³But when the Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul had preached the word of God in Berea also, they came there and started exciting and stirring up the mobs. ¹⁴At once the brothers sent Paul away to the coast; but both Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. ¹⁵The men who were taking Paul went with him as far as Athens. Then they went back to Berea with instructions from Paul that Silas and Timothy join him as soon as possible.

In Athens

¹⁶While Paul was waiting in Athens for Silas and Timothy, he was greatly upset when he noticed how full of idols the city was. ¹⁷So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the Gentiles who worshiped God, and in the public square every day with the people who happened to come by. ¹⁸Certain Epicurean and Stoic teachers also debated with him. Some said, "What is this ignorant show-off trying to say?"

Others said, "He seems to be talking about foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹So they took Paul, brought him before the meeting of the Areopagus, and said, "We would like to know this new teaching that you are talking

When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. The men who accompanied Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

In Athens

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbling trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching about Jesus and the resurrection. Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?"

13-15. **They came there.** A certain type of Jew followed Paul and tried to destroy the message of Christ. See note on *Acts 14:19-20*. **Sent Paul away to the coast.** Ramsay says Luke often passes over the difficulties and dangers which drove Paul from place to place. Alford says the language implies Paul and the others went by sea to Athens. It would have been some 250 miles by land. When Timothy came to Athens, he was at once sent back to Thessalonica (*1 Thess. 3:1-2 and note*).

16-18. **While Paul was waiting in Athens.** Some think he had intended to wait until the others came, before beginning his work. **He was greatly upset.** ΠΑΡΟΞΥΝΕΤΟ: burning with anger [righteous indignation]. He saw that they were worshiping what God had created, rather than the Creator himself (compare *Rom. 1:25*). The attitude of the people toward these beautiful sculptured images, turned them away from God. **So he argued.** He went first to those who had some knowledge of God (see note on *verse 2*), but he did not stop there. **Epicurean.** They taught that happiness is the highest goal of life. **Stoic.** They taught that happiness is found in being completely free from both pain and pleasure. **They said this because.** Note Paul's message: Jesus Christ is Lord and Messiah; the dead will be raised to life.

19-21. **So they took Paul.** *Areopagus* was the name of both the hill and the group which met there.

about. ²⁰Some of the things we hear you say sound strange to us, and we would like to know what they mean." ²¹(For all the citizens of Athens and the foreigners who lived there liked to spend all their time telling and hearing the latest new thing.)

²²Paul stood up in front of the meeting of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³For as I walked through your city and looked at the places where you worship, I found also an altar on which is written, 'To an Unknown God.' That which you worship, then, even though you do not know it, is what I now proclaim to you. ²⁴God, who made the world and everything in it, is Lord of heaven and earth, and does not live in temples made by men. ²⁵Nor does he need anything that men can supply by working for him, since it is he himself who gives life and breath and everything else to all men. ²⁶From the one man he created all races of men, and made them live over the whole earth. He himself fixed beforehand the exact times and the limits of the places

You are bringing some 20
strange ideas to our ears,
and we want to know what
they mean." (All the Athen- 21
ians and the foreigners who
lived there spent their time
doing nothing but talking
about and listening to the
latest ideas.)

Paul then stood up in the 22
meeting of the Areopagus
and said?

"Men of Athens! I see
that in every way you are
very religious. For as I walk- 23
ed around and observed
your objects of worship, I
found even an altar with this
inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN
GOD. Now what you worship
as something unknown I am
going to proclaim to you.

"The God who made the 24
world and everything in it is
the Lord of heaven and earth
and does not live in temples
built by hands. And he is not 25
served by human hands, as
if he needed anything, be-
cause he himself gives all
men life and breath and
everything else. From one 26
man he made every nation of
men, that they should in-
habit the whole earth; and
he determined the times set
for them and the exact
places where they should

[Mars-hill is a Latin name applied to it.] This group compared to our Supreme Court. Remember that Athens was the literary capital of the ancient world; the most cultured city; and the place where Romans went to complete their education at the University where thousands came to study. The hill itself is about fifty feet high, and at that time was surrounded by the most beautiful sculptures in Athens. **The latest new thing.** Curiosity, not a love for truth, motivated these people.

22-31. **Paul stood up.** Many seem to think Paul made a great mistake in what he said to this group, and see a resolve never to repeat this error in what he says in *1 Cor. 2:1-5*. But this cannot be! Paul was an inspired apostle! Therefore, what he said was proper for this situation. (1) *These people were totally ignorant of God.* (2) *Verse 19* implies they were hostile to some degree. (3) Paul spoke the truth plainly, without any verbal trickery. (4) He followed the principle of *1 Cor. 9:21*. **Men of Athens.** Since this is an unofficial meeting, he says this to call them to order. **You are very religious.** [Superstitious *originally meant* religious.] This is a compliment. He saw this wherever he went in Athens. **To an Unknown God.** We infer that there were a number of altars in Athens with this inscription which he quotes. **Is what I now proclaim to you.** "I, whom you consider an ignorant show-off, proclaim to you the God whom you are only dimly aware of." This is not an insult, but is designed to make them listen. **God, who made the world.** He describes God: (1) He made the world. (2) Lord of heaven and earth. (3) Does not live in temples. (4) Does not need the service of men. (5) Is the source of life to all men. (6) Created all races from the one man. (7) Decrees that men should look for him. (8) We too are his children. (9) God is not

where they would live. ²⁷He did this so that they would look for him, and perhaps find him as they felt around for him. Yet God is actually not far from any one of us; ²⁸as some one has said,

‘In him we live and move and exist.’

It is as some of your poets have said,

‘We too are his children.’

²⁹Since we are God’s children, we should not suppose that his nature is anything like an image of gold or silver or stone, shaped by the art and skill of man. ³⁰God has overlooked the times when men did not know, but now he commands all men everywhere to turn away from their evil ways. ³¹For he has fixed a day in which he will judge the whole world with justice, by means of a man he has chosen. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising that man from death!”

³²When they heard Paul speak about a raising from death, some of them made fun of him, but others said, “We want to hear you speak about this again.” ³³And so Paul left the meeting. ³⁴Some men joined him and believed; among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, a woman named Damaris, and some others.

live. God did this so that ²⁷ men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his children.’

²⁸“Therefore since we are ²⁹ God’s children, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man’s design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people every- ³⁰ where to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the ³¹ dead.”

When they heard about ³² the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this sub- ³³ ject.” At that, Paul left the ³⁴ Council. A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

like any image shaped by man. It dishonors him to worship an idol. **God has overlooked the times.** Before Christ came, the Gentiles had no revelation from God, and the Jews had only an imperfect one (*Heb. 1:1-2; 8:6-7*). Since Christ has come, God’s final and complete Truth has been given to mankind. **To turn away from their evil ways.** Knowledge implies responsibility. When men learn the truth, they are obligated to obey it. The gospel leaves no one out. God’s command is to *all men everywhere*. **For he has fixed a day.** Everyone will be required to account for how he has used his earthly life. **By means of a man.** It will be Jesus Christ who sits at Judgment. **He has given proof of this.** The proof is the Resurrection. If Jesus is raised from death, then all will be raised (*1 Cor. 15:20*); this proves the Judgment.

32-34. Some of them made fun of him. Many want to believe that death “ends it all.” Some wanted to hear him talk about this again. This does not show any great interest, and Athens does not seem to have been such a great success. However, notice that some did believe, Not bad results from *one* sermon to people who did not even know the living God. Nothing is said of planting a church here, and even as late as Constantine the Great, Athens remained a center of Paganism. Paul did not return to Athens, nor did he write to Christians at Athens. But his greeting to “all God’s people in Greece” (*2 Cor. 1:1*) would have included any Christians in Athens.

In Corinth

18 After this, Paul left Athens and went on to Corinth. ²There he met a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had just come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Emperor Cladius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³and stayed and worked with them, because he earned his living by making tents, just as they did. ⁴He argued in the synagogue every Sabbath, trying to convince both Jews and Greeks.

⁵When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul gave his whole time to preaching the message, testifying to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. ⁶When they opposed him and said evil things about him, he protested by shaking the dust from his clothes and saying to them, "If you are lost, you yourselves must take the blame for it! I am not responsible. From now

In Corinth

18 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he argued in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

1. **And went on to Corinth.** This distance is forty-five miles by sea. The Romans had destroyed this city in 146 B.C., and it had been rebuilt by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. It was a *gateway* for commerce between Italy and Asia. Its *moral climate* was demonstrated by the Temple of Venus Pandemos, which utilized a thousand *prostitutes*.

2. **A Jew named Aquila.** Some think the term "Jew" shows he was not yet a Christian. *Johnson* thinks both Aquila and Priscilla became Christians at Corinth. Yet Paul may mention that this man was a Jew, only to account for the fact he had just come from Italy.

3. **And stayed and worked with them.** They both made tents. Every Jewish boy was taught a manual trade, no matter what future had been planned for him. They said: "*Whoever does not teach his son to work, teaches him to steal.*" Paul sometimes worked at his trade to support himself. See *Acts 20:34; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8; 1 Cor. 4:12*. Other times he received money from others (*Phil. 4:15-16*).

4. **He argued in the synagogue.** After working six days making tents, he spent the seventh day proclaiming the Good News of Christ.

5. **When Silas and Timothy arrived.** They had stayed at Berea (*Acts 17:14*), but Paul had sent for them to join him. Timothy must have joined him at Athens, and been immediately sent back to Thessalonica (*1 Thess. 3:1*). He would now be returning from there to be with Paul. Some, however, think Timothy is just now meeting with Paul the first time since Berea. Paul now devoted full time to preaching the message of Christ.

6. **When they opposed him.** They became hostile and said evil things against both him and the Christ he preached. **He protested.** Shaking the dust off was symbolic (*see Luke 9:5 and note*). **I am not responsible.** The choice was their own. Paul had fulfilled his mission. He would now go to the Gentiles in this area. [But see *Acts 19:8*.]

on I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷So he left them and went to live in the house of a Gentile named Titius Justus, who worshiped God; his house was next to the synagogue. ⁸Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, he and all his family; and many other people in Corinth heard the message, believed, and were baptized.

⁹One night Paul had a vision, in which the Lord said to him, "Do not be afraid, but keep on speaking and do not give up, ¹⁰because I am with you. No one will be able to harm you, because many in this city are my people." ¹¹So Paul stayed there for a year and a half, teaching the people the word of God.

¹²When Gallio was made the Roman governor of Greece, the Jews got together, seized Paul and took him into court. ¹³"This man," they said, "is trying to persuade people to worship God in a way that is against the law!"

¹⁴Paul was about to speak, when Gallio said to the Jews, "If this were a matter of some wrong or evil crime that has been committed, it would be reasonable for me to be patient with you Jews. ¹⁵But since it is an argument about words and names and your own law, you yourselves must settle it. I will not be the judge of such things!"

Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court. "This man," they charged, is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law."

Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such

7-11. **So he left them.** Paul now makes the house of a Gentile into his own synagogue, next door to the Jewish synagogue! **Titus Justus** may be the Titus to whom Paul wrote a letter. See introduction to *Titus*. **Crispus.** Paul baptized the leader of the synagogue with his own hands (*1 Cor. 1:14*). **One night Paul had a vision.** God promised success in his mission to turn people to Christ. No political ideology can give Christianity a greater test than it received at Corinth. Yet there were many even here who would and did respond to the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free. See what Paul says in *1 Cor. 6:9-11*. **So Paul stayed there.** During this time he wrote the two letters to the Thessalonians.

12-17. **When Gallio was made.** Ramsay thinks this was in the summer of 52 A.D. Gallio's brother, Seneca, was the teacher of Nero. **Seized Paul and took him into court.** This implies they could not stir up a mob against him, as had been done at other places. **In a way that is against the law.** Rome permitted many religions, including Judaism. Since these Jews have no authority over Paul, they try to make him "look bad" to Gallio. **Paul was about to speak.** Gallio interrupts to scold the Jews for bringing this to him. He seems to think Christianity is just another sect of Judaism. He has no love for either the Jews or the Christians, and throws the whole thing out of court. This does show that the Roman

¹⁶And he drove them out of the court. ¹⁷They all grabbed Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the court. But that did not bother Gallio a bit.

things." So he had them e- 16
jected from the court. Then 17
they all turned on Sosthenes,
the synagogue ruler, and
beat him in front of the court.
But Gallio showed no concern
whatever.

The Return to Antioch

¹⁸Paul stayed on in Corinth with the brothers for many days, then left them and sailed off with Priscilla and Aquila for Syria. Before sailing he made a vow in Cenchreae and had his head shaved. ¹⁹They arrived in Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He went into the synagogue and argued with the Jews. ²⁰They asked him to stay with them a long time, but he would not consent. ²¹Instead, he told them as he left, "If it is the will of God, I will come back to you." And so he sailed from Ephesus.

Apollos

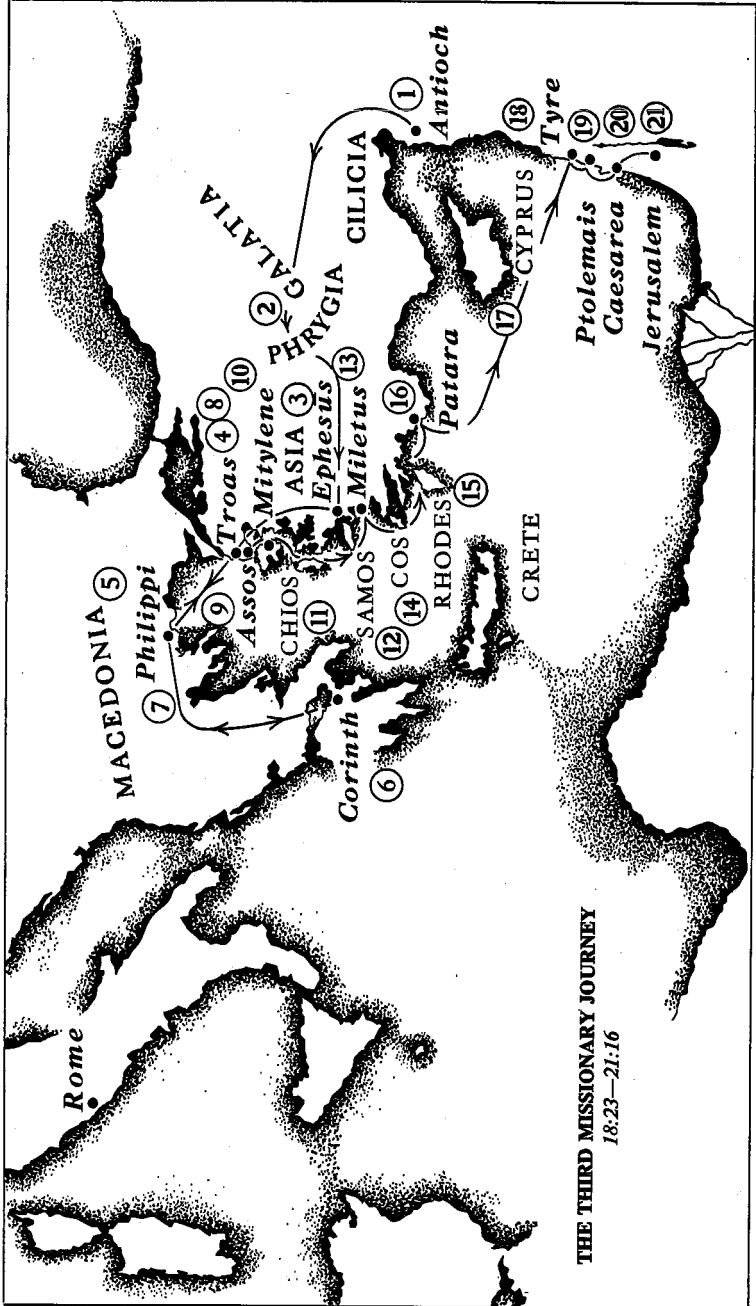
Paul stayed on in Corinth 18
for some time. Then he left
the brothers and sailed for
Syria, accompanied by Priscilla
and Aquila. Before he
sailed, he had his hair cut
off at Cenchrea because of a
vow he had taken. They ar- 19
rived at Ephesus, where Paul
left Priscilla and Aquila. He
himself went into the syna-
gogue and reasoned with the
Jews. When they asked him 20
to spend more time with
them, he declined. But as he
left, he promised, "I will 21
come back if it is God's
will." Then he set sail from
Ephesus.

²²When he arrived at Caesarea he went to Jerusalem and greeted the church, and then went to Antioch. ²³After spending some time there he left. He went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the believers.

When he landed at Caes- 22
area, he went up and greeted
the church and then went
down to Antioch. After 23
spending some time in Anti-
och, Paul set out from there
and traveled from place to
place throughout the region
of Galatia and Phrygia,
strengthening all the
disciples.

authorities would do nothing to stop the spread of Christianity at this time. **And he drove them out.** The guards ejected them. **They all grabbed Sosthenes.** They take out their frustration on their own leader by beating him. Gallio ignored the whole thing. It was only the Jews, who he considered irrational anyway.

18-23. **Paul stayed on in Corinth.** This may be included in the year and a half (*verse 11*). The point is that he was not forced to leave the area by what the Jews were doing. **Then left them and sailed off.** Heading back to Antioch in Syria, to the "parent church" that sent him out. **Before sailing he made a vow.** Cenchreae was the eastern harbor of Corinth, where shipping for the East arrived and departed. Jews often made vows for personal reasons. Why Paul did this just now, we do not know. It could be that it was part of some custom which would help him reach his Jewish people with the gospel (*compare Acts 21:24*). **They arrived in Ephesus.** On the coast of the Roman province of Asia. **He went into the synagogue.** As he always did. Compare note on *Acts 17:2*. They seemed to be interested in what he said, but he could not stay. **If it is the will of God.** See *James 4:13-17*. Paul was making a hurried trip to Jerusalem, perhaps for the feast of Pentecost. He did return (*Acts 19:1*). He sailed from Ephesus to Caesarea, then traveled some seventy miles inland to Jerusalem. **And greeted the church.** We are told nothing else about this visit. This would be his fourth visit to Jerusalem since becoming a Christian (*Acts 9:26; 11:30; 12:25*). It could be that he made this fourth visit to complete a vow (*verse 18*). **Then went to Antioch.** The "parent church" of the Gentile Christians. He did not stay long, but started his third tour of missions.



THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY
18:23—21:16

THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

18:23—21:16

1. IN ANTIOCH OF SYRIA. 18:23a
Having spent some time here they prepare for the third journey. 23a
2. THROUGH THE PROVINCES OF GALATIA AND PHYRGIA. 18:23b
3. AT EPHEBUS. 18:24—19:41
 - a. Apolos teaching the baptism of John is corrected by Priscilla and Aquilla. 18:24-28
 - b. Paul corrects some on the baptism of John, Baptizes them, lays hands on them; they receive the spiritual gifts. 19:1-7
 - c. Paul preaches in the synagogues and the school of Tyrannus. 19:8-12
 - d. Exorcists overcome by evil spirit. The name of the Lord magnified. 19:13-20
 - e. Paul's far reaching plans. 19:21, 22
 - f. The riot of the silversmiths. 19:23-41
4. AT TROAS. 2 Cor. 2:12, 13
 - a. A door opened for the word. 12
 - b. Greatly troubled at the failure to find Titus; presses on into Macedonia. 13
5. IN MACEDONIA. 20:1, 2
 - a. A tender parting. 1
 - b. Spoke on the way to Macedonia. 2
6. AT CORINTH IN GREECE. 20:3-5
 - a. His labors with the Corinthian church. 3-5
 - b. He probably wrote the epistle of Romans. Cf. Rom. 15:23, 24; 16:23
 - c. Also the epistle of Galatians from here.
 - d. Learning of the plot for his life he changes his plans. 5
 - e. A collection was taken from here by Paul according to previous instructions. Cf. 1 Cor. 16:1, 2
7. AT PHILIPPI. 20:6a
Sailed from here after "the days of unleavened bread" on his way to Jerusalem. 6a
8. IN TROAS. 20:6b-13
 - a. The seven days stay. 6b
 - b. The worship on the first day of the week. 7
 - c. Paul's sermon. The raising of Eutychus. 8-13
9. AT ASSOS. 20:14a
Met Paul here as he had walked from Troas. 14a
10. AT MITYLENE. 20:14b
Overnight stop. 14b
11. OVER AGAINST CHIOS. 20:15a
Overnight stop. 15a
12. AT SAMOS. 20:15b
Overnight stop. 15b
13. IN MILETUS. 20:15c-38
 - a. Past Ephesus to Miletus. Calls elders. 15c-17
 - b. Paul's past ministry, as exemplified at Ephesus. 18-21; 26
 - c. His attitude to his own future. 22-24
 - d. His ultimate concern as touching his hearers. 25
 - e. Conditions at Ephesus in the near future. 28-30
 - f. The self-sacrificing spirit of his example. 31-35
 - g. The tender farewell. 36-38
14. AT COS. 21:1a
Anchored overnight. 21a
15. AT RHODES. 21:1b
Overnight stop. 1b
16. AT PATARA. 21:1c-2
Change of ships. 1c-2
17. IN THE SIGHT OF CYPRUS ON THE LEFT. 21:3a
18. AT TYRE. 21:3b-6
 - a. Tarrying seven days. 3b-4a
 - b. Tried to prevent Paul from going to Jerusalem. 4b
 - c. Sorrowful parting. 5, 6
19. IN PTOLEMAIS. 21:7
Saluted the brethren and abode one day. 7
20. CAESAREA. 21:8-14
 - a. Stayed with Philip the evangelist and his four gifted daughters. 8
 - b. Prophetic promise of affliction in Jerusalem. 9-14
21. IN JERUSALEM. 21:15, 16
On to Jerusalem to stay in the home of Mnason. 15, 16

Apollos in Ephesus and Corinth

²⁴A certain Jew named Apollos, born in Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent speaker and had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord, and with great enthusiasm spoke and taught correctly the facts about Jesus. However, he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home with them and explained to him more correctly the Way of God. ²⁷Apollos decided to go to Greece, so the believers in Ephesus helped him by writing to their brothers in Greece, urging them to welcome him there. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who through God's grace had become believers. ²⁸For with his strong arguments he defeated the Jews in public debates, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.

Paul in Ephesus

19 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior of the province and arrived in Ephesus. There he found

Meanwhile a Jew named ²⁴ Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, knowing only the baptism of John. He began to speak ²⁶ boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

When Apollos wanted to ²⁷ go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For ²⁸ he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Paul in Ephesus

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disci-

24-28. A certain Jew named Apollos. Alexandria was the cultural center of the Greek-speaking Jews. The Septuagint [Greek translation of the Old Testament] was written there; and the most magnificent synagogue was there. Johnson thinks this man was a teacher of the Law. And taught correctly the facts about Jesus. He may have known as much of the facts as were contained in Mark's Gospel, in its mutilated form (*without the longer ending*), and so knew only John's water baptism. See note on Acts 19:4. He knew nothing of the final instructions Christ had given (*Matt. 28:19-20*) and the events of Pentecost. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him. The fact that he knew only the baptism of John distorted his understanding, and it was necessary to explain more correctly the Way of God. Nothing is said about him being re-immersed (baptized), but Acts 19:5 would strongly imply that he was. Apollos decided to go to Greece. The believers send letters along with him to "identify" him to their brothers (in Christ) there. He was a great help. His knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures helped him present a powerful argument to prove Jesus is the Messiah.

1. Paul traveled through the interior of the province. He took the less traveled but shorter mountainous route. Ephesus was on the coast, near sea level. There he found some disciples. These disciples BELIEVED in Christ as the Messiah, yet did not have a complete knowledge of him, and they had not received "Christian baptism" (*verse 3*). We do not have enough facts to get the whole picture of their exact situation. They had been baptized with John's baptism - after the Great Commission had been given, and were likely Jews. Some connect them with Apollos (*Acts 18:25*), and think he had baptized them with John's baptism.

some disciples, ²and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

"We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit," they answered.

³"Well, then, what kind of baptism did you receive?" Paul asked.

"The baptism of John," they answered.

"Paul said, "The baptism of John was for those who turned from their sins; and he told the people of Israel to believe in the one who was coming after him—that is, in Jesus."

ples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that the Holy Spirit has been given."

So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in

2. **Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?** Paul's question must refer to the special gifts, since a believer would be expected to have the Spirit living (indwelling) in him (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*). Their answer shows a defect in their basic relationship to Christ. **We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.** John the Baptist taught that the Spirit would be given. Their answer must mean: "*We do not know the role of the Holy Spirit in this.*" They seemed to know nothing about Pentecost and all that happened there. They live nearly a thousand miles from Jerusalem, without means of rapid communication.

3. **What kind of baptism did you receive?** Their ignorance immediately causes Paul to question their basic obedience in baptism. Note he does not question their faith. This implies that receiving the Spirit as a gift (indwelling) is to be associated with "Christian baptism." Compare *Acts 2:38; 5:32; Titus 3:5*. Their ignorance of the role of the Holy Spirit being given - showed something wrong with the baptism they had received. **The baptism of John.** The baptism of John the Baptist was for a different purpose, and did not confer the rights and privileges which Christian baptism does.

John's Baptism

Subjects: the saved (fleshly Israel).
Qualifier: repentance.
Purpose: to demonstrate repentance. renewal only - no change in state.
Elements: water only. by the authority of God, but in/into no Name.
Result: spiritual re-activation of one who was already God's child and already in the kingdom by a natural birth.

Christian Baptism

Subjects: the unsaved.
Qualifier: faith in Christ, repentance, confession.
Purpose: a change in state - a whole new relationship to God. new birth (regeneration).
Elements: water & Spirit [John 3:5; Titus 3:5], by the authority of God. IN the name of Jesus Christ. INTO the Three Names of God. INTO the death of Jesus [Rom. 6:3-4]. INTO many precious promises.
Result: forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift [Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 6:19-20]; transfer into the Kingdom/church [Col. 1:13]; transformed into God's friend.

4. **The baptism of John was for those who turned from their sins.** John's baptism was a *sign* of repentance - in water only. Christian baptism is *so that your sins will be forgiven* and to *receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit*. It is a *new birth* of "water and the Spirit." Also, the baptism of John the Baptist pointed people forward to Jesus and prepared them to accept him.

⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶Paul placed his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them; they spoke in strange tongues and also proclaimed God's message. ⁷They were about twelve men in all.

⁸Paul went into the synagogue, and for three months spoke boldly with the people, arguing with them and trying to convince them about the Kingdom of God. ⁹But some of them were stubborn and would not believe, and said evil things about the Way of the Lord before the whole group. So Paul left them and took the disciples with him; and every day he held discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰This went on for two years, so that all the people who lived in the province of Asia, both Jews and Gentiles, heard the word of the Lord.

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ture hall of Tyrannus. This 10
went on for two years, so that
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lived in the province of Asia
heard the word of the Lord.

5. **When they heard this.** Paul explained the difference between John's baptism and Christian baptism. They immediately were baptized into the union with Christ (*Gal. 3:27*). This example shows it is not wrong to correct a defect in obedience, upon learning the will of Christ.

6. **Paul placed his hands on them.** The special *gifts* the Spirit gives were only transmitted in this way [through an apostle, or with an apostle present]. Paul lays his hands on them (*compare Acts 8:17; Rom. 1:11*). **They spoke in strange tongues.** Languages sound strange to one who does not understand them. This gift: (1) God understood (*1 Cor. 14:2*); (2) helped only the speaker (*1 Cor. 14:4*); (3) had to be explained to benefit others (*1 Cor. 14:5-27*). All Christians have the Spirit living in them (*Rom. 8:9*); but not all Christians received the special *gifts* the Spirit gives (*1 Cor. 12:4-7*).

7. **They were about twelve men in all.** These men appear here and nowhere else. Perhaps this type of thing happened many times, but God included this one to show the contrast between John's baptism and Christian baptism. John's baptism expired at the Cross.

8. **Paul went into the synagogue.** This is the one he spoke in before (*Acts 18:19-20*).

9. **But some of them were stubborn.** Those who refused to believe severely opposed the Good News of Christ. So Paul left, taking all the believers with him, and began using the lecture hall of Tyrannus as a base of operations. This is very much like the case of Titus Justus (*Acts 18:7*).

10. **This went on for two years.** He used this lecture hall for two years. His total time in Ephesus was three years (*Acts 20:31*). **So that all the people.** Paul's preaching had strong influence in the province of Asia. We know this from: (1) the effect on those who practiced magic; (2) from what Demetrius says (*verses 24-27*); (3) about forty years later, Pliny wrote in a letter to Trajan that Christianity had caused the temples of the gods to be deserted.

The Sons of Sceva

¹¹God was performing unusual miracles through Paul. ¹²Even handkerchiefs and aprons he had used were taken to the sick, and their diseases were driven away and the evil spirits would go out of them. ¹³Some Jews who traveled around and drove out evil spirits also tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus to do this. They said to the evil spirits, "I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches." ¹⁴There were seven sons of a Jewish High Priest named Sceva who were doing this.

¹⁵But the evil spirit said to them, "I know Jesus and I know about Paul; but you—who are you?"

¹⁶The man who had the evil spirit in him attacked them with such violence that he defeated them. They all ran away from his house, wounded and with their clothes torn off. ¹⁷All the Jews and Gentiles who lived in Ephesus heard about this; they were all filled with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was given greater honor. ¹⁸Many of the believers came, publicly admitting

God did extraordinary 11
miracles through Paul,
Handkerchiefs and aprons 12
that had touched him were
taken to the sick, and their
illnesses were cured and the
evil spirits left them.

Some Jews who went a- 13
round driving out evil spirits
tried to invoke the name of
the Lord Jesus over those
who were demon-possessed.
They would say, "In the
name of Jesus whom Paul
preaches, I command you to
come out." Seven sons of 14
Sceva, a Jewish chief priest,
were doing this. The evil 15
spirit answered them, "Jesus
I know and Paul I know, but
who are you?" Then the 16
man who had the evil spirit
jumped on them and over-
powered them all. He gave
them such a beating that
they ran out of the house
naked and bleeding.

When this became known 17
to the Jews and Greeks living
in Ephesus, they were all
seized with fear, and the
name of the Lord Jesus was
held in high honor. Many of 18
those who believed now came
and openly confessed their

11-12 **God was performing unusual miracles.** Miracles are always God's doing. To show Paul spoke by his authority, God let his power go with things carried from Paul to the sick. The people could see that the charms and amulets which they had trusted, did not have the power which handkerchiefs and aprons from Paul had.

13-16. **Some Jews.** These were "professional exorcists" who made their living by driving out evil spirits. *Justin Martyr* says that most of these Jewish exorcists had adopted the same superstitions and magic-aids as the heathen. **Also tried to use the name.** They thought the name of "Jesus Christ" was an *incantation* to drive out evil spirits. **There were seven sons.** Sceva may have been a *chief priest* at Jerusalem, who had been deposed. "High Priest" may only mean he was from a high-priestly family (*compare Acts 4:6*). **But the evil spirit said to them.** The spirit spoke and acted through the man he possessed. God may have directed this to show Paul's authority. [On demon possession, see note on *Matt. 4:24*.] **Attacked them with such violence.** This would show that they had no power at all over the evil spirit.

17-20. **All the Jews and Gentiles.** Ephesus was a center of magic and the black arts. This happening would have a strong effect on those who sold magic charms, etc., and would honor the Christ whom Paul preached. **Many of the believers came.** Many had believed in Christ, but secretly continued to hold on to their belief and practice of magic. There are Christians today who wear charms, go by signs,

and revealing what they had done. ¹⁹Many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the presence of everyone. They added up the price of the books and the total came to fifty thousand dollars. ²⁰In this powerful way the word of the Lord kept spreading and growing stronger.

The Riot in Ephesus

²¹After these things had happened, Paul made up his mind to travel through Macedonia and Greece and go on to Jerusalem. "After I go there," he said, "I must also see Rome." ²²So he sent Timothy and Erastus, two of his helpers, to Macedonia, while he spent more time in the province of Asia.

²³It was at this time that there was serious trouble in Ephesus because of the Way of the Lord. ²⁴A certain silversmith named Demetrius made silver models of the temple of the goddess Artemis, and his business brought a great deal of profit to the workers. ²⁵So he called them all together, with others whose work was like theirs, and said to them, "Men, you know that our

evil deeds. A number who ¹⁹ had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the ²⁰ word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

After all this had hap- ²¹ pened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." He sent two of his ²² helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

The Riot in Ephesus

About that time there ²³ arose a great disturbance about the Way. A silversmith ²⁴ named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. He called them together, ²⁵ along with the workmen in related trades, and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this

and go to fortune-tellers. **Brought their books together.** Books of charms, incantations, etc., which claimed to make it possible to force spirits to work for a person, gain health, wealth and fame. They showed their repentance by their action. **Fifty thousand dollars.** This itself would be a strong argument in the minds of the people. **In this powerful way.** About this time Paul wrote in his First Letter to the Corinthians: "*There is a real opportunity here for great and worthwhile work*" (1 Cor. 16:9).

21-22. **After these things had happened.** The things just mentioned. He is now ready to move on to other places. He sends Timothy and Erastus on ahead to Macedonia. Compare 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10-11. Erastus is mentioned in Rom. 16:23 as the "city treasurer" of Corinth [although it might not be the same man], and in 2 Tim. 4:20.

23-34. **That there was serious trouble.** Things had been peaceful up to now. Notice trouble starts from a Gentile source. **Made silver models of the temple.** The temple of Artemis [Diana] was one of the wonders of the world. The third temple then stood, built of white marble, 425 feet long by 220 feet wide, with 127 columns. In it was a "sacred stone that fell down from heaven," probably a meteorite, which may have been carved into an image of Artemis. Thousands came to this temple, and brought these silver models which were small enough to wear as a "charm" on a bracelet. Demetrius and the

prosperity comes from this work. ²⁶You can see and hear for yourselves what this fellow Paul is doing. He says that gods made by men are not gods at all, and has succeeded in convincing many people, both here in Ephesus and in nearly the whole province of Asia. ²⁷There is the danger, then, that this business of ours will get a bad name. Not only that, there is also the danger that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will come to mean nothing, and that her greatness will be destroyed—the goddess worshiped by everyone in Asia and in all the world!”

²⁸As the crowd heard these words they became furious, and started shouting, “Great is Artemis of Ephesus!” ²⁹The uproar spread throughout the whole city. The mob grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, two Macedonians who were traveling with Paul, and rushed with them to the theater. ³⁰Paul himself wanted to go before the crowd, but the believers would not let him. ³¹Some of the provincial authorities, who were his friends, also sent him a message begging him not to show himself in the theater. ³²Meanwhile, the whole meeting was in an uproar: some people were shouting one thing, others were shouting something else, because most of them did not

business. And you see and ²⁶hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. There is danger not ²⁷only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”

When they heard this, ²⁸they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” Soon ²⁹the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater. Paul ³⁰wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. Even ³¹some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

The assembly was in con- ³²fusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were

others were making themselves rich by selling these. **You can see and hear.** As Paul led people to Christ, they quit buying the silver models. The religious zeal of Demetrius was based on greed. **Johnson** says that when paganism fell, much of the material of this temple was taken to Constantinople and used in building the church of St. Sophia. **The uproar spread.** Nothing would stir up a mob more quickly than to believe both their business and their religion were in danger. **And rushed with them to the theater.** This was a large amphitheater, which would seat 20,000 to 30,000 people. It was used for public meetings. **Paul himself wanted to go.** He wanted to speak to the mob and answer the charges, but the believers were afraid the frenzied mob would kill him. **Some of the provincial authorities.** Ten of these “Asiarchs” were chosen each year to take charge of the games and festivals. Their president always lived in Ephesus. We see many times in the life of Paul when the Roman officials treat him not only with respect, but empathy. **Most of them did not even know.** It was a “blind mob,” caught up in the

even know why they had come together. ³³Some of the people concluded that Alexander was responsible, since the Jews made him go up to the front. Then Alexander motioned with his hand and tried to make a speech of defense before the people. ³⁴But when they recognized that he was a Jew, they all shouted together the same thing for two hours, "Great is Artemis of Ephesus!"

³⁵At last the city clerk was able to calm the crowd. "Men of Ephesus!" he said. "Everyone knows that the city of Ephesus is the keeper of the temple of the great Artemis and of the sacred stone that fell down from heaven. ³⁶Nobody can deny these things. So then, you must calm down and not do anything reckless. ³⁷You have brought these men here, even though they have not robbed temples or said evil things about our goddess. ³⁸If Demetrius and his workers have an accusation against someone, there are the regular days for court and there are the authorities; they can accuse each other there. ³⁹But if there is something more that you want, it will have to be settled in the legal meeting of citizens. ⁴⁰For there is the danger that we will be accused of a riot in what has happened today. There is no excuse for all this uproar, and we would not be able to give a good reason for it." ⁴¹After saying this, he dismissed the meeting.

there. The Jews pushed 33 Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. But when they realized he was a Jew, they all 34 shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

The city clerk quieted the 35 crowd and said:

"Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? Therefore, since these facts 36 are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash. You have brought 37 these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. If, then, Demetrius 38 and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. If 39 there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. As it is, we are in danger of 40 being charged with rioting because of today's events. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it." After he had 41 said this, he dismissed the assembly.

passion of the moment. **That Alexander was responsible.** One of the Jewish leaders, who intended to speak to the mob and put all the blame on the Christians. But this "backfires," and the mob places the guilt on he and the other Jews. They will not allow him to speak, and they shout for two hours!

35-40. **At last the city clerk.** He ranked next to the mayor, and was sometimes "acting mayor." He is able to calm them and reason with them. **Of the sacred stone.** Meteorites were believed to be supernatural, and heathen priests often built religions around them. This one may have been carved into an image of Artemis. Other such *sacred stones from heaven* were: the Palladium of Troy; the Diana of Tauris; and the Pallas of Athens. **You have brought these men.** Gaius and Aristarchus (*verse 29*). They had neither robbed temples nor said evil things about the goddess. **If Demetrius.** He must respect the "due process of law." **For there is the danger.** Roman authorities were severe to those who started riots (*see Mark 15:7*). Ephesus was a "free city," with its own government, but could lose this freedom for just such things as this riot.

To Macedonia and Greece

20 After the uproar died down, Paul called together the believers, and with words of encouragement said good-bye to them. Then he left and went on to Macedonia. ²He went through those regions and encouraged the people with many messages. Then he came to Greece, ³where he stayed three months. He was getting ready to go to Syria when he discovered that the Jews were plotting against him; so he decided to go back through Macedonia. ⁴Sopater, the son of Pyrrhus, from Berea, went with him; so did Aristarchus and Secundus, from Thessalonica; Gaius, from Derbe; Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus, from the province of Asia. ⁵They went ahead and waited for us in Troas. ⁶We sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined them in Troas, where we spent a week.

Paul's Last Visit in Troas

⁷On Saturday evening we gathered together for the fellowship meal. Paul spoke to the people, and kept on speaking until midnight, since he

Through Macedonia and Greece

20 When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-bye and set out for Macedonia. He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, where he stayed three months. Because the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, and from the province of Asia Tychicus and Trophimus. These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Eutychus Raised from the Dead at Troas

On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul preached

1-6. **After the uproar died down.** Paul had already decided to go through Macedonia and Greece (*Acts 19:21*), but planned to stay in Ephesus until after Pentecost (*1 Cor. 16:8*). This time had come (about the middle of May, 55 or 56 A.D. by the corrected calendar). **After he encouraged the disciples,** he left for Macedonia. **He went through those regions.** Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and perhaps other churches. **Then he came to Greece.** To Corinth. During the three months there, he wrote the Letter to the Romans (*Ramsay* gives the spring of 57 A.D. as the date for this). **When he discovered.** We have no details of this. To avoid them, he did not sail to Syria, but went back through Macedonia. **Sopater.** Only mentioned here. [Sosispater (*Rom. 16:21*) is a different person.] **Aristarchus.** *Acts 19:29.* **Secundus.** Only mentioned here. **Gaius, from Derbe.** Not the Gaius of *Acts 19:29.* **Timothy.** See notes on *Acts 16:1-4* **Tychicus.** *Col. 4:7-8.* **Trophimus.** *Acts 21:29.* **They went ahead.** Paul stayed in Philippi while they went ahead to Troas and waited for him. **Waited for us.** *Us* implies Luke was along also. We see Luke with Paul a few years before this (see note on *Acts 16:10*). Some think Luke had stayed on at Philippi until this time, working with the church there. **And five days later.** This had only taken two days before (*Acts 16:11-12*), which implied bad weather.

7. **On Saturday evening.** This is the evening of the "first day of the week." By the Jewish way of figuring time, the Sabbath expired at 6:00 P.M. on the day we call Saturday, and the first day of the week began there and continued until 6 P.M. of the day we call Sunday, at which time it terminated and the second day of the week began. We follow the Roman method of counting from midnight to midnight.

was going to leave the next day. ⁸There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. ⁹A young man named Eutychus was sitting in the window; and as Paul kept on talking, Eutychus got sleepier and sleepier, until he finally went sound asleep and fell from the third story to the ground. They picked him up, and he was dead. ¹⁰But Paul went down and threw himself on him and hugged him. "Don't worry," he said, "he is still alive!" ¹¹Then he went back upstairs, broke bread, and ate. After talking with them for a long time until sunrise, Paul left. ¹²They took the young man home alive, and were greatly comforted.

to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

From Troas to Miletus

¹³We went on ahead to the ship and sailed off to Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had told us to do this, because he

Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders

We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos,

We gathered together. This is a clear example of the practice of the believers which began immediately after the Lord Jesus raised from death. They met together on the first day of the new week for religious purposes (*compare 1 Cor. 16:1-2*). This was their regular meeting, at which Paul spoke. **For the fellowship meal.** It was the custom well into the middle of the second century to eat the Lord's Supper [Holy Meal] in the CONTEXT of a "fellowship meal" (also known as a "love feast," "agape," "eucharist"). Compare notes on *Acts 2:42,46; Jude 12*. Note they gathered together for this. *Verse 11* shows the actual eating of the Lord's Supper [Holy Meal]. **The next day.** Sunday morning. The Sabbath (Saturday) was still a day of rest for many. [On the use of *day*, see *John 11:9*.] Sunday is the *Lord's Day* (see note on *Rev. 1:10*).

8-10. There were many lamps. These were their source of light. On the "upstairs room," see note on *Mark 14:15*. **Eutychus was sitting in the window.** The language implies that he was killed by the fall, and that he was then brought back to life by a miracle (*similar to 2 Kings 4:34*).

11. Broke bread, and ate. This is the Lord's Supper [Holy Meal]. The Fellowship Meal would follow this. The two were closely associated, yet distinct from each other. *McGarvey* says: "To the objection that Paul alone is said to have broken and eaten the bread, I answer, that this would be a very natural expression to indicate that Paul officiated at the table; but, on the other hand, if it was a common meal, it would be strange that he alone should eat, especially to the exclusion of his traveling companions, who were going to start as early in the morning as he did." *Johnson* says: "It is probable that this meeting at Troas began at the close of the Sabbath, in the evening, was continued through the night, the Lord's Supper being celebrated in the latter part of the night, before dawn of Sunday, and that at day-break Paul departed."

WHEN WE MEET TOGETHER ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, AND TOGETHER WE EAT THE SUPPER OF THE LORD, WE HAVE DONE WHAT GOD AUTHORIZED US TO DO.

13-16. And sailed off to Assos. Luke says: "we went on ahead," implying that he and some others went by ship. Paul followed the Roman road that connected Troas with Assos (a distance of twenty miles). It was about twice as far by ship, but Paul could expect to arrive there about the same time. We do not

was going there by land. ¹⁴When he met us in Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. ¹⁵We sailed from there and arrived off Chios the next day. A day later we came to Samos, and the following day we reached Miletus. ¹⁶Paul had decided to sail on by Ephesus, so as not to lose any time in the province of Asia. He was in a hurry to arrive in Jerusalem, if at all possible, by the day of Pentecost.

Paul's Farewell Speech to the Elders of Ephesus

¹⁷Paul sent a message from Miletus to Ephesus, asking the elders of the church to meet him. ¹⁸When they arrived, he said to them, "You know how I spent the whole time I was with you, from the first day I arrived in the province of Asia. ¹⁹With all humility and many tears I did my work as the Lord's servant, through the hard times that came to me because of the plots of the Jews. ²⁰You know that I did not hold back anything that would be of help to you as I preached and taught you in public and in your homes. ²¹To Jews and Gentiles alike I gave solemn warning that they should turn from their sins to God,

where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

From Miletus, Paul sent ¹⁷ to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived, he said to them:

"You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I ¹⁹ served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. You ²⁰ know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I ²¹ have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

know why Paul walked, or whether he went by himself. *Johnson* thinks a number of brethren walked with Paul. **Mitylene.** About thirty miles from Assos, it is the capital of the island of Lesbos. **Chios.** An island near the coast of Asia (the Roman province), famous for its wine. **Samos.** Another island, separated from the mainland by a narrow channel. **Miletus.** About thirty miles south of Ephesus. *Ramsay* thinks the route of the ship forced Paul to land here rather than Ephesus. Paul may have done this deliberately, because of his hurry to reach Jerusalem before Pentecost. *Verse 16* seems to say this.

17-27. **Asking the elders of the church to meet him.** We are not told about them before this, but it was Paul's custom to appoint elders in each church (*Acts 14:23*). Elders [church leaders] are also called shepherds [bishops] in *verse 28*. The modern system of a "heirarchical series of bishops" is *post-apostolic*, not beginning until after the death of Paul and the other apostles. **You know how.** He reminds them of the example he set in his own life. **As I preached and taught you in public and in your homes.** Three months in the synagogue at Ephesus; two years in the lecture-hall of Tyrannus; plus many other times and places. **I gave solemn warning.** The positive message of God's act in Christ to

and believe in our Lord Jesus. ²²And now, in obedience to the Holy Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. ²³I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit has warned me that prison and troubles wait for me. ²⁴But I reckon my own life to be worth nothing to me, in order that I may complete my mission and finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do, which is to declare the Good News of the grace of God.

²⁵"I have gone about among all of you, preaching the Kingdom of God. And now I know that none of you will ever see me again. ²⁶So I solemnly declare to you this very day: if any of you should be lost, I am not responsible. ²⁷For I have not held back from announcing to you the whole purpose of God. ²⁸Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock which the Holy Spirit has placed in your care. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he made his own through the death of his own Son. ²⁹I know that after I leave, fierce wolves will come among you, and they will not spare the flock. ³⁰The time will come when some men from your own group will tell lies to lead the believers away after them. ³¹Watch, then, and remember that with many tears, day and night, I taught every one of you for three years.

"And now, compelled by ²² the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life ²⁴ worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

"Now I know that none of ²⁵ you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I ²⁷ have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you ²⁸ overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, ²⁹ savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your ³⁰ own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! ³¹ Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

set men free, also contains some negative warnings. In obedience to the Holy Spirit. He was obeying the instructions of the Spirit. That none of you will ever see me again. This is his personal opinion. He may have expected to die for Christ at Jerusalem. Some are almost certain that Paul did revisit these churches during the time of his release from the first imprisonment until he was again imprisoned and put to death. If any of you should be lost. He would not be responsible, if they were lost, because he had already announced to them the whole purpose of God.

28-31. Keep watch. This is said especially to elders [church leaders]. Compare *Heb. 13:17*. Over yourselves. Their first responsibility was over themselves, since they could not fulfill their mission unless they themselves set an example by their own lives. And over all the flock. The flock is the group of believers who make up the church in a locality. "Church leaders [elders] are a horizontal extension of the congregation, called to guide the spiritual growth and development of each member." Through the death of his own Son. Death is symbolic of the totality of God's act in Christ. Compare *Matt. 20:28*; *Mark 10:45*; *Titus 2:14*; *Heb. 2:9, 14-17*; *Gal. 3:13*. [Blood is symbolic of both life and death (*Lev. 17:11*).] Fierce wolves will come among you. He still uses the symbolism of the flock. "Fierce wolves" are false teachers, and the special reference is to the "circumcisers" (*Acts 15:1-2*). Paul's whole ministry was a battle with these people. The early church faced all the problems which we face today! See the *Third Letter of John*.

³²“And now I place you in the care of God and the message of his grace. He is able to build you up and give you the blessings he keeps for all his people. ³³I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴You yourselves know that with these hands of mine I have worked and provided everything that my companions and I have needed. ³⁵I have shown you in all things that by working hard in this way we must help the weak, remembering the words that the Lord Jesus himself said, ‘There is more happiness in giving than in receiving.’”

³⁶When Paul finished, he knelt down with them all and prayed. ³⁷They were all crying as they hugged him and kissed him good-bye. ³⁸They were especially sad at the words he had said that they would never see him again. And so they went with him to the ship.

Paul Goes to Jerusalem

21 We said good-bye to them and left. After sailing straight across, we came to Cos; the next day we reached Rhodes, and from there we went on to Patara. ²There we found a ship that was going to Phoenicia; so we went aboard

“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

On to Jerusalem

21 After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Cos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on

32-35. **And now I place you in the care of God.** He places a solemn obligation upon them. Compare *James 1:21; Heb. 4:12. For all his people.* See *1 Cor. 1:2; 6:9-11. I have not coveted.* He had not preached because of any motives of self-interest or a desire to make himself rich. At Ephesus he had worked at making tents to support both himself and his companions. See note on *Acts 18:3.* The “love of money” is sinful (*1 Tim. 6:10*). **There is more happiness in giving than in receiving.** These are genuine words of Jesus. The *Four Gospels* give only a small part of all Jesus said and did (*John 21:25*). Paul had “acted out” these words of Jesus in his life!

36-38. **He knelt down with them all and prayed.** This is the final good-bye. These people are more emotional than we are, but remember Paul is their spiritual leader and close friend, and they never expect to see him again in this world of time!!! *Johnson* thinks Paul did get to see them one more time, after his release from the first imprisonment (see note on verse 25).

1. **We said good-bye to them and left.** The Greek implies “tearing themselves away,” a separation both difficult and painful. **We came to Cos.** A small island, forty miles south of Miletus. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, was born there. **Rhodes.** Fifty miles further south. The Colossus of Rhodes was one of the wonders of the world, but an earthquake had brought it to the ground by this date. **Patara.** On the coast of Lycia, some thirty miles west of Myra. His ship ended its route here, and he found another ship which was going to Phoenicia (see *Tyre*). **Where we could see Cyprus.** He had worked there on his first tour of missions (*Acts 13:4-13*). **On to Syria.** The Romans used Syria as the general name for Phoenicia, Palestine, and Antioch. **We went ashore at Tyre.** Tyre was a city of

and sailed away. ³We came to where we could see Cyprus, and sailed south of it on to Syria. We went ashore at Tyre, where the ship was going to unload its cargo. ⁴We found some believers there, and stayed with them a week. By the power of the Spirit they told Paul not to go to Jerusalem. ⁵But when our time with them was over, we left and went on our way. All of them, with their wives and children, went with us out of the city. We all knelt down on the beach and prayed. ⁶Then we said good-bye to one another, and we went on board the ship while they went back home.

⁷We continued our voyage, sailing from Tyre to Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day. ⁸On the following day we left and arrived in Caesarea. There we went to the house of the evangelist Philip, and stayed with him. He was one of the seven men who had been chosen in Jerusalem. ⁹He had four unmarried daughters who proclaimed God's message. ¹⁰We had been there for several days when a prophet named Agabus arrived from Judea. ¹¹He came to us, took Paul's belt, tied

board and set sail. After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. After saying good-by to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day. Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy.

After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied

Phoenicia. "It's most important ruins now lie beneath the sea and can be seen through its waters." **We found some believers there.** They did not "stumble on them," but knew they were there (*Acts 15:3*). **And stayed with them a week.** This seems to be Paul's usual plan of action (*compare Acts 20:6; 28:14*). It implies he would wait to have one solemn meeting with them on the Lord's Day, and eat the Lord's Supper [Holy Meal] with them. **By the power of the Spirit.** They warned him of the dangers waiting for him at Jerusalem. This does not contradict *Acts 20:22*, since he himself speaks of the fact that the same Holy Spirit had warned him in the next verse of that chapter. **We all knelt down.** The whole congregation, men, women, and children. They prayed together, then Paul and the others went on board the ship.

7-14. **To Ptolemais.** On the coast, about half-way to Caesarea. Named for the Egyptian king who rebuilt the city. This is the Accho of *Judges 1:31*. **And arrived in Caesarea.** Some thirty or forty miles south. Paul had been here twice before (*Acts 9:30; 18:22*). The first Gentiles were brought to Christ here. **To the house of the evangelist Philip.** He had preached in the cities of the sea coast (*Acts 8:40*). **Who proclaimed God's message.** *Compare Acts 2:17*. The fact that they were unmarried does not mean they were members of a special religious order. The spirit of prophecy is not confined to men, either in the Old or New Testaments. Deborah and Huldah are Old Testament examples. Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, and the daughters of Philip are New Testament examples. On the role of a prophet, see note on *Eph. 4:11*. In the East, men would not be free to spend much time teaching women in private, but a woman prophet could. *Compare Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 14:34-35*. **A prophet named Agabus.** He had come especially to meet Paul. [We met this man in *Acts 11:28*.] In the style of the Old Testament prophets, Agabus takes Paul's belt and in a dramatic way shows what will happen to Paul. *Compare*

up his own feet and hands with it, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: The owner of this belt will be tied up in this way by the Jews in Jerusalem, and they will hand him over to the Gentiles."

¹²When we heard this, we and the others there begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. ¹³But he answered, "What are you doing, crying like this and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be tied up in Jerusalem but even to die there for the sake of the Lord Jesus."

¹⁴We could not convince him, so we gave up and said, "May the Lord's will be done."

¹⁵After spending some time there, we got our things ready and left for Jerusalem. ¹⁶Some of the disciples from Caesarea also went with us, and took us to the house of the man we were going to stay with—Mnason, from Cyprus, who had been a believer since the early days.

Paul Visits James

¹⁷When we arrived in Jerusalem the brothers welcomed us warmly. ¹⁸The next day Paul went with us to see James; and all the church elders were present. ¹⁹Paul greeted them and gave a complete report of everything that God had done among the Gentiles through his work. ²⁰After hearing him, they all praised God. Then they

his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

When we heard this, we ¹²and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." When he ¹⁴would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

After this, we got ready ¹⁵and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

Paul's Arrival at Jerusalem

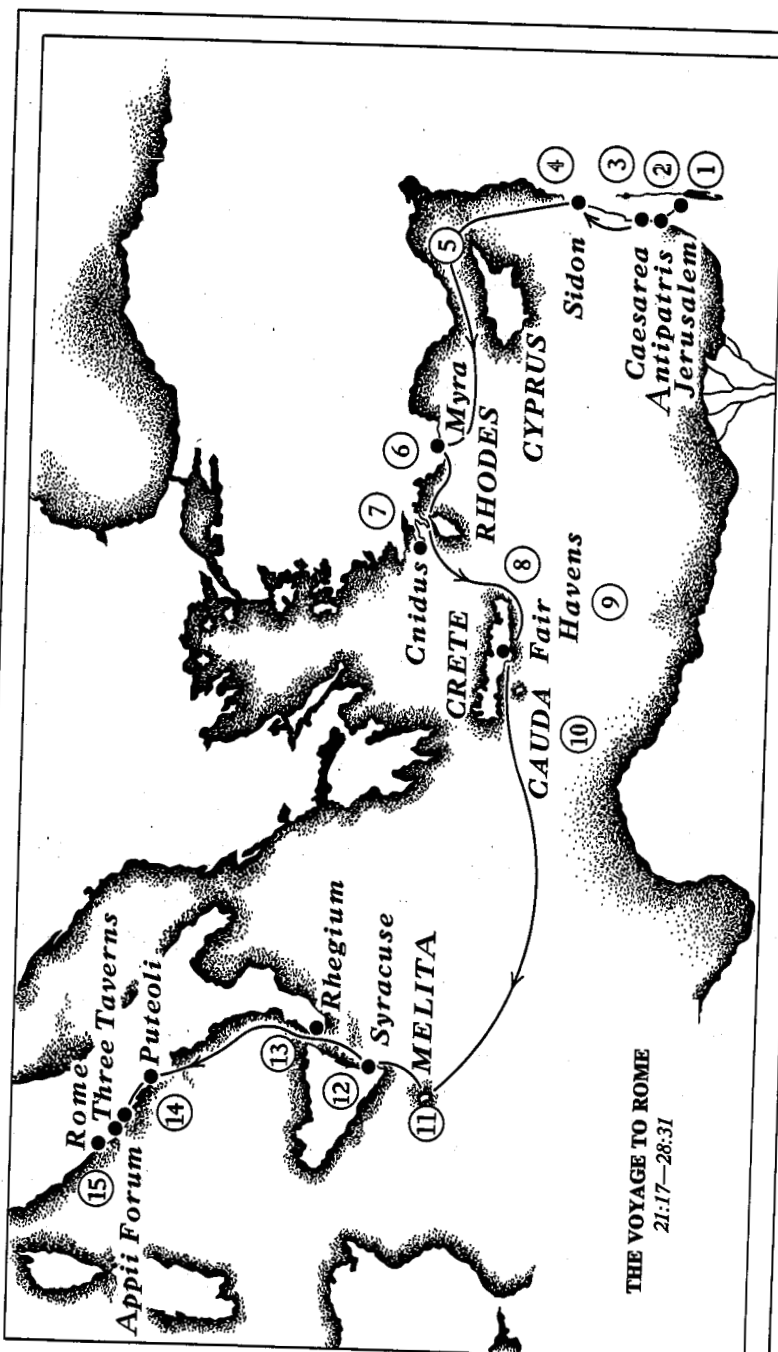
When we arrived at Jerusalem, ¹⁷the brothers received us warmly. The next day ¹⁸Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. Paul ¹⁹greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

When they heard this, ²⁰they praised God. Then they said to Paul:

1 Kings 22:11; Isa. 20:2; etc. Agabus either lived in Jerusalem or was closely connected with that city, and had first-hand knowledge of what would happen to Paul there. The prophecies of the danger Paul faced were designed to focus the attention of the entire church on Jerusalem. Paul deliberately walked into the danger to prevent a schism that threatened the church (*compare Acts 15*)! Jerusalem was the headquarters of the "circumcision party."

15-17. Some of the disciples from Caesarea. Groups often went along with Paul as he traveled. They could talk together and he could teach them. **Mnason, from Cyprus.** The Latin Vulgate has Mnason in Caesarea, and going along with Paul to Jerusalem. **When we arrived in Jerusalem.** This is the fifth time Paul entered Jerusalem, since he left for Damascus about twenty-two years before. *Ramsay* dates this 57 A.D., near Pentecost (the latter part of May).

18-27. To see James. This James was *not* one of the Twelve, but is the human brother of Jesus (see note on *1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 15:6*). He seemed to be a man of great influence in the Jerusalem church (*Gal. 1:19*). **And gave a complete report.** *McGarvey* says Paul also brought "money to God's people in Judea," the contribution to help the poor (*compare 1 Cor. 16:1-4; Acts 24:17*). **They all praised God.**



THE VOYAGE TO ROME
21:17-28:31

THE VOYAGE TO ROME

21:17—28:31

1. AT JERUSALEM. 21:17—23:30
 - a. Paul's salutation and advice of the elders. 21:17-26
 - b. Jews from Asia cause Paul's arrest. 21:27-40
 - c. Paul addresses the Jewish mob. 22:1-21
 - d. The response of the mob. Paul imprisoned. 22:22-30
 - e. Paul addresses the council. 23:1-10
 - f. The Lord encourages Paul. 23:11
 - g. The plot for Paul's life and his escape. 23:12-30
 2. AT ANTIPATRIS. 23:31, 32
The soldiers traveled this far and returned, the horsemen went on with Paul. 31, 32
 3. IN CAESAREA. 23:33—27:1
 - a. Paul is brought before Felix the governor. 23:33-35
 - b. Paul's trial before Felix the governor. 24:1-22
 - c. Paul's two year's imprisonment in Caesarea. 24:23-27
 - d. Festus visits Jerusalem. 25:1-6a
 - e. Paul's trial, defense and appeal to Caesar. 25:6b-12
 - f. Paul's defense before King Agrippa. 25:13—26:32
 - g. Preparations for leaving. 27:1, 2
 4. AT SIDON. 27:3
A stop for refreshment. 3
 5. UNDER THE LEE OF CYPRUS. 27:4
 6. AT MYRA. 27:5, 6
Changed ships. 5, 6
 7. AT CNIDUS. 27:7a
Over against this place with difficulty. 7a
 8. UNDER THE LEE OF CRETE. 27:7b
 9. AT FAIR HAVENS. 27:8-15
 - a. Came into port. 8
 - b. Because of the weather Paul wants to stay. 9, 10
 - c. The centurion listened to the captain who advised that they sail on. 11, 12
 10. CAUDA. 27:16-17
 - a. Strengthened the ship. 16, 17
- DRIVEN FOR FOURTEEN DAYS BY THE WIND. 18-27
LANDING ON MELITA. 28-44
11. MELITA. 28:1-10
 - a. Barbarians show them much kindness. 1, 2
 - b. Incident of Paul and the snake. 3-6
 - c. Paul heals Publius' father and many others. 7-9
 - d. Leave with many honors on a ship from Alexandria. 10
 12. AT SYRACUSE. 28:11, 12
Stayed here three days. 11, 12
 13. AT RHEGIUM. 28:13a
A stop on the way. 13a
 14. IN PUTEOLI. 28:13b, 14
 - a. Found brethren and tarried with them seven days.
- THE MARKET OF APPIUS AND THE THREE TAVERNS. 15
15. AT ROME. 28:16-31
 - a. Paul dwelt alone with a guard. 16
 - b. Paul speaks with the chief Jews. 17-29
 - c. Stays two years in his own hired dwelling while preaching the kingdom of God. 30, 31

said to Paul, "You can see how it is, brother. There are thousands of Jews who have become believers, and they are all very devoted to the Law. ²¹They have been told about you that you have been teaching all the Jews who live in Gentile countries to abandon the Law of Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or follow the Jewish customs. ²²They are sure to hear that you have arrived. What should be done, then? ²³Do what we tell you. There are four men here who have taken a vow. ²⁴Go along with them and join them in the ceremony of purification and pay their expenses; then they will be able to shave their heads. In this way everyone will know that there is no truth in any of the things that they have been told about you, but that you yourself live in accordance with the Law of Moses. ²⁵But as to the Gentiles who have become believers, we have sent them a letter telling them we decided that they must not eat any food that has been offered to idols, or any blood, or any animal that has been strangled, and that they must keep themselves from immorality."

²⁶So Paul took the men and the next day performed the ceremony of purification with them.

"You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. They ²¹ have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. What shall we ²² do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do ²³ what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these ²⁴ men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. As for the Gentile ²⁵ believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food offered to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality."

The next day Paul took ²⁶ the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

James and the church elders approved of what Paul was doing (*Acts 15:12-22*). And they are all very devoted to the Law. Many thousands of Jewish Christians had come to Jerusalem to take part in the Feast of Pentecost. This proves that in Christianity there is room to do the "same thing in different ways." Jewish Christians could practice Jewish customs and traditions without disturbing their relationship to Christ. Gentile Christians could practice their own special customs, etc. Compare what Paul says in *1 Cor. 9:19-23; 7:17-24*. However, to force Gentile Christians to obey the Law of Moses as a RELIGIOUS RITE, would have been a sin (*Gal. 5:4*). Jewish pride was the real source of the problem. It took a direct act of the Holy Spirit to prove to them that God would accept the Gentiles (*Acts 10*). They have been told. Certain Jewish leaders were telling the people a distorted version of what Paul taught. They did this to try to destroy Paul's influence. What should be done, then? To prove that this distorted version of Paul's message was not what he really taught. Do what we tell you. A "ceremony of purification" seems to have grown out of the "Nazirite vow" (*Num. 6:1-18*). Any Jew, like Paul, who had been living with Gentiles, and who had not kept the "ritual law of cleanness," would be excluded from the Temple until he had been purified. The hair was shaved off the head, and burnt as an offering to God, and sacrifices were also offered on the altar. Evidently Paul's action in Cenchræe (*Acts 18:18*) was to prepare him for this. He would have saved the hair and brought it along. So Paul took the men. They performed the ceremony together, then Paul went into the temple and notified the priest when the sacrifice would be offered (so that all necessary things would be there).

Then he went into the temple and gave notice of how many days it would be until the end of the period of purification, when the sacrifice for each one of them would be offered.

Paul Arrested in the Temple

²⁷When the seven days were about to come to an end, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul in the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and grabbed Paul. ²⁸"Men of Israel!" they shouted, "Help! This is the man who goes everywhere teaching everyone against the people of Israel, the Law of Moses, and this temple. And now he has even brought some Gentiles into the temple and defiled this holy place!" ²⁹(They said this because they had seen Trophimus from Ephesus with Paul in the city, and they thought that Paul had taken him into the temple.)

³⁰Confusion spread through the whole city, and the people all ran together, grabbed Paul, and dragged him out of the temple. At once the temple doors were closed. ³¹The mob was trying to kill Paul when a report was sent up to the commander of the Roman troops that all of Jerusalem was rioting. ³²At once the commander took some officers and soldiers and rushed down to the crowd. When the people saw him with the

Paul Arrested

When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting, ²⁸ "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place." (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.) ²⁹

The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. While they were trying ³⁰ to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³¹ ³²

27-40. **Some Jews from the province of Asia.** These were not Christian Jews, but probably the Jews from Ephesus mentioned in *Acts 20:3*. The language implies they did not see Paul until the seven days of purification were about to end. When they see him, they stir up the people and grab Paul. **And defiled this holy place.** Note how they try to build up charges against him. They charge him with trying to turn people against the Jews, the Law of Moses, and the Temple of God at Jerusalem. Not only this, but they also charge him with defiling the sacred temple by bringing unclean Gentiles into it. Nothing would arouse fanatical frenzy more than to think that Paul had done this!!! **And dragged him out of the temple.** They were willing to murder him, but not in the temple. **The mob was trying to kill Paul.** Probably in their frenzy they were fighting each other and getting in each other's way, as they attempted to kill Paul. Stoning would be the right way to kill a *religious criminal* (*Acts 7:57-60 and notes*.) **When a report was sent up.** The Roman soldiers would be in the Castle of Antonia. The men standing guard would have seen the riot, and the commander would have rushed down the stairs to the temple area.

soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³³The commander went over to Paul, arrested him, and ordered him to be tied up with two chains. Then he asked, "Who is this man, and what has he done?" ³⁴Some in the crowd shouted one thing, others something else. There was such confusion that the commander could not find out exactly what had happened; so he ordered his men to take Paul up into the fort. ³⁵They got with him to the steps, and then the soldiers had to carry him because the mob was so wild. ³⁶They were all coming after him and screaming, "Kill him!"

Paul Defends Himself

³⁷As they were about to take Paul into the fort, he spoke to the commander, "May I say something to you?"

"Do you speak Greek?" the commander asked. ³⁸"Then you are not that Egyptian fellow who some time ago started a revolution and led four thousand armed terrorists out into the desert?"

³⁹Paul answered, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of an important city. Please, let me speak to the people."

⁴⁰The commander gave him permission, so Paul stood on the steps and motioned with his

The commander came up ³³ and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. Some in the crowd ³⁴ shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. When Paul reached the ³⁵ steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers. The crowd that followed ³⁶ kept shouting, "Away with him!"

Paul Speaks to the Crowd

As the soldiers were about ³⁷ to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?"

"Do you speak Greek?" he replied. "Aren't you the ³⁸ Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?"

Paul answered, "I am a ³⁹ Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people."

Having received the com- ⁴⁰ mander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic:

The Castle was built against the temple wall. **The commander went over to Paul.** He thought Paul was an Egyptian revolutionary (*verse 38*). Note the confusion of the mob, and how wild they were! The soldiers were forced to carry Paul. **Do you speak Greek?** This surprised the commander. [Greek was the "Esperanto" of the Roman Empire, the universal language of communication. That's why it was chosen as the language of the New Testament.] **Egyptian fellow.** Josephus tells about this Egyptian. He was probably illiterate and could not speak Greek. While Felix was governor, he gathered a crowd of 30,000 people on the Mount of Olives, and said that at his word, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down (like Jericho). Felix had brought the army against this fellow, who fled into the desert, while the majority of his followers were captured or killed. *Josephus* says of these armed terrorists: "They mingled with the crowds at the Festivals, stabbed their political opponents unobserved, and drew suspicion from themselves by apparent indignation at such crimes." They are also known as "Assassins." **I am a Jew, born in Tarsus.** This fact places Paul above suspicion. **Please, let me speak to the people.** He has the legal right to do this. The commander knows nothing of Paul and the reason for this riot. He may think that allowing Paul to speak will clear up the mystery. **Paul spoke to them in Hebrew.** He stands, tied up with two chains, ready to make his defence. He speaks in their beloved Hebrew language, in the dialect spoken in Judea (*see note on Acts 26:14*).

hand to the people. When they were quiet, Paul spoke to them in Hebrew,

22 "Men, brothers and fathers, listen to me as I make my defense before you!" ²When they heard him speaking to them in Hebrew, they were even quieter; and Paul went on,

³"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up here in Jerusalem as a student of Gamaliel. I received strict instruction in the Law of our ancestors, and was just as dedicated to God as all of you here today are. ⁴I persecuted to the death the people who followed this Way. I arrested men and women and threw them into prison. ⁵The High Priest and the whole Council can prove that I am telling the truth. I received from them letters written to the Jewish brothers in Damascus, so I went there to arrest these people and bring them back in chains to Jerusalem to be punished."

Paul Tells of His Conversion

(Also Acts 9.1-19; 26.12-18)

⁶"As I was traveling and coming near Damascus, about midday a bright light from the sky flashed suddenly around me. ⁷I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me?' ⁸"Who are you, Lord?" I asked. 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom

22 "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense."

When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said:

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

"About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'"

"Who are you, Lord?" I asked.

"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,"

1-3. When they heard him speaking to them in Hebrew. The Aramaic or Chaldee dialect of Hebrew was the standard language which every Jew could speak and understand. Even though their "native language" (see Acts 2:8 and note) might be different, all were taught Hebrew in the synagogue schools. I am a Jew. To disprove their charge that he prejudiced people against the Jews, he shows that he is himself a Jew, brought up in Jerusalem [but evidently not here during Christ's public ministry, crucifixion and resurrection], educated in the Law by Gamaliel (see Acts 5:34). And was just as dedicated to God. Note how he makes himself one of them! This is his first opportunity to explain to the Jewish leaders the reason why he had become a Christian.

4-5. I persecuted to the death. He did this because he thought his loyalty to God demanded it! The High Priest and the whole Council. A different man was high priest now, than when Paul had been "deputized," but he knew the facts, as did the council. Probably most of the crowd also knew these facts.

6-11. And coming near Damascus. See notes on Acts 9:3-9. The bright light flashed at the time the sun was the brightest, and was much brighter than the sun (Acts 26:13). Saul, Saul. The voice spoke in Hebrew (Acts 26:14). Why do you persecute me? By persecuting the messianic community, he was

you persecute,' he said to me. ⁹The men with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. ¹⁰I asked, 'What shall I do, Lord?' and the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything that God has determined for you to do.' ¹¹I was blind because of the bright light, and so my companions took me by the hand and led me into Damascus.

¹²"There was a man named Ananias, a religious man who obeyed our Law and was highly respected by all the Jews living in Damascus. ¹³He came to me, stood by me and said, 'Brother Saul, see again!' At that very moment I saw again and looked at him. ¹⁴He said, 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see his righteous Servant, and hear him speaking with his own voice. ¹⁵For you will be a witness for him to tell all men what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶And now, why wait any longer? Get up and be baptized and have your sins washed away by calling on his name.'"

Paul's Call to Preach to the Gentiles

¹⁷"I went back to Jerusalem, and while I was praying in the temple I had a vision, ¹⁸in which I saw the Lord as he said to me, 'Hurry and leave Jerusalem quickly, because the people here

he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. ⁹

"What shall I do, Lord?" I asked. ¹⁰

"Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me. ¹¹

"A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him. ¹²

"Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.' ¹³

"When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. ¹⁴

persecuting Christ himself! **But did not hear the voice.** From *Acts 9:4, 7* we infer that those with Paul heard the *sound*, but could not *hear* what the voice said. That is, they could not understand it. **I was blind because of the bright light.** Some think *Gal. 4:15* implies that his eyes never fully recovered from this.

12-16. **A man named Ananias.** He was a Christian (*Acts 9:10*), but kept the Law strictly. **Brother Saul, see again!** See *Acts 9:17-18* and notes. **The God of our ancestors.** Compare *Acts 7:32; 1 Pet. 1:1-2*. He says this to show they both worship the One True God. **To see his righteous Servant, Jesus Christ.** Paul had to see him, to be an apostle. Paul mentions the fact that he did see Christ, a number of times (*1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8*). **And have your sins washed away.** Paul had both believed and repented, yet he still had his sins to wash away. "Calling on his name" must refer to *baptism* as it *completes* the act of "reaching out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make yourself part of it." Compare *Acts 2:38; 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:21; and notes*. Note also baptism is spoken of as a "washing away."

17-21. **I went back to Jerusalem.** This was three years after he became a Christian (*Gal. 1:17-18*). He goes on to show that God himself had sent him to the Gentiles. **I had a vision.** Compare *Acts 10:10*. Some think this vision might be the one mentioned in *2 Cor. 12:2-3*. **The people here will not accept your witness about me.** They believed Paul to be a traitor to Judaism. **They know very well.** This answer

will not accept your witness about me.' ¹⁹"Lord," I answered, 'they know very well that I went to the synagogues and arrested and beat those who believe in you. ²⁰And when your witness Stephen was put to death, I myself was there, approving of his murder and taking care of the cloaks of his murderers.' ²¹"Go," the Lord said to me, 'because I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' "

²²The people listened to Paul until he said this; but then they started shouting at the top of their voices, "Away with him! Kill him! He's not fit to live!" ²³They were screaming, waving their clothes, and throwing dust up in the air. ²⁴The Roman commander ordered his men to take Paul into the fort, and told them to whip him to find out why the Jews were screaming like this against him. ²⁵But when they had tied him up to be whipped, Paul said to the officer standing there, "Is it lawful for you to whip a Roman citizen who hasn't even been tried for any crime?"

'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'

" 'Lord,' I replied, 'these 19 men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'

"Then the Lord said to 21 me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' "

Paul the Roman Citizen

The crowd listened to Paul 22 until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, "Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!"

As they were shouting and 23 throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, the commander ordered 24 Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. As they stretched 25 him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"

to God showed his eagerness to work with his own race. He had a strong desire to counteract some of what he had done through ignorance. **Because I will send you far away.** The God of heaven had himself decreed that Paul go to the Gentiles.

22-23. Until he said this. As the Jews were crushed by foreign powers and occupation troops, they took comfort in the thought that when the Messiah came, the Gentile would be struck down and the Jew would stand with his foot on their neck. At this time the fires smoldered that would break out in the Jewish wars, terminating in the destruction of Jerusalem itself in 70 A.D. See *Matt. 24* and notes. When Paul claimed their God had sent him to the Gentiles they explode in frenzied rage!! "They strip off their clothes and wave them in the air, throwing dust up in the air also, as a symbol of their rage!!"

24-30. And told them to whip him. Whether the Roman commander had understood a word Paul had said to the people (since it was in Hebrew), he could see from their actions that they considered him a dangerous man. It had long been a common practice to torture prisoners to make them tell the truth. The whip had bits of bone or stone tied in the ends of the thongs, and these would tear the flesh where they hit. Compare *Matt. 27:26* and note. **Paul said to the officer.** It was illegal to whip a Roman citizen, or to torture him in any way. The name "Roman" was *magic* (compare *Acts 16:38*). Since the penalty was death for falsely claiming to be a Roman citizen, the officer immediately believes what Paul says.

²⁶When the officer heard this, he went to the commander and asked him, "What are you doing? That man is a Roman citizen!"

²⁷So the commander went to Paul and asked him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?"

"Yes," answered Paul.

²⁸The commander said, "I became one by paying a large amount of money."

"But I am one by birth," Paul answered.

²⁹At once the men who were going to question Paul drew back from him; and the commander was afraid when he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen, and that he had put him in chains.

Paul before the Council

³⁰The commander wanted to find out for sure what the Jews were accusing Paul of; so the next day he had Paul's chains taken off and ordered the chief priests and the whole Council to meet. Then he took Paul, and made him stand before them.

23 Paul looked straight at the Council and said, "My brothers! My conscience is perfectly clear about my whole life before God, to this very day." ²The High Priest Ananias ordered those who were standing close to Paul to strike him on the mouth. ³Paul said to him, "God will certainly strike you—you whitewashed wall! You

When the centurion heard **26** this, he went to the commander and reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "This man is a Roman citizen."

The commander went to **27** Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?"

"Yes, I am," he answered.

Then the commander **28** said, "I had to pay a big price for my citizenship."

"But I was born a citizen," Paul replied.

Those who were about to **29** question him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.

Before the Sanhedrin

The next day, since the **30** commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

23 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day." At this the high priest **2** Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. Then **3** Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed

Are you a Roman citizen? The commander himself asks this. He says he paid a large sum of money to become a Roman. Paul, however, was born a Roman, which means his father had been a Roman citizen as well (*compare note on Acts 6:9*). Tarsus was a *free city*, which gave its citizens *status*. **And the commander was afraid.** He had broken the law by tying Paul with chains. **So the next day.** To find out just what this was all about, the Roman commander orders the whole Council to meet and takes Paul before them. *Acts 23:10* implies that Paul faced the Council, not in any way as a prisoner, but as an equal.

1. Paul looked straight at the council. He speaks to them, not as judges, but as fellow countrymen. He probably knew some of those who formed the Council. **My conscience is perfectly clear.** His whole life had been lived to please God. He deeply regretted the time he spent opposing Christ, but he had been sincere in doing it (even though wrong).

2-5. To strike him on the mouth. This is not the Annas of *Acts 4:7*, but the son of Nebedaeus, whom Herod had appointed to be high priest. He served from 47 - 59 A.D. He flares up in anger when Paul claims to have a clear conscience about all that he had done. **God will certainly strike you.** Paul is

sit there to judge me according to the Law, yet you break the Law by ordering them to strike me!"

⁶The men close to Paul said to him, "You are insulting God's High Priest!"

⁷Paul answered, "I did not know, my brothers, that he was the High Priest. The scripture says, 'You must not speak evil of the ruler of your people.'"

⁸When Paul saw that some of the group were Sadducees and that others were Pharisees, he called out in the Council, "My brothers! I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees. I am on trial here because I hope that the dead will rise to life!"

⁹As soon as he said this, the Pharisees and Sadducees started to quarrel, and the group was divided. ¹⁰(For the Sadducees say that people will not rise from death, and that there are no angels or spirits; but the Pharisees believe in all three.)

¹¹The shouting became louder, and some of the teachers of the Law who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and protested strongly, "We cannot find a thing wrong with this man! Perhaps a spirit or an angel really did speak to him!"

wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!"

Those who were standing near Paul said, "You dare to insult God's high priest?" 4

Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'" 5

Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead." 6

When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 7

(The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.) 8

There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. "We find nothing wrong with this man," they said. "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" 9

indignant at this mockery of justice. "Whitewashed wall" means hypocrite (*compare note on Matt. 23:27*). What Paul says is a prediction, and this man Ananias was dragged from a sewer where he had hidden himself and killed by armed terrorists [Zealots] in 66 A.D. **I did not know.** Since the high priest would only wear his distinctive robes in the temple service, nothing would here identify him. Paul may never have seen this high priest before.

6-10. **When Paul saw.** The Council [Sanhedrin] was made up of both parties. The teachers of the Law were Pharisees, and the chief priests were usually Sadducees. It was the teaching about the raising from death that made the Sadducees so angry against the Gospel (*see Acts 4:2*). *Alford* (Greek Testament) says: "All prospect for a fair trial was hopeless. Paul well knew from experience that personal odium [hatred] would bias his judges, and violence prevail over justice. He therefore uses in the cause of truth the maxim [principle of action] so often perverted to the use of falsehood, *Divide and conquer.*" "*I am on trial here because I hope that the dead will rise to life!*" **And the group was divided.** This puts the Pharisees on Paul's side against the Sadducees. **We cannot find a thing wrong with this man!** They find they have more in common with Paul, than with the Sadducees. **Perhaps a spirit or an angel.** This is a "slap" at the Sadducees, who believed in neither (*verse 8*). **The argument became so violent.** They had argued this question many times, and there was no way one side could agree with the other. To protect Paul, he is taken into the Castle of Antonia (which was a fort).

¹⁰The argument became so violent that the commander was afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them. So he ordered his soldiers to go down into the group and get Paul away from them, and take him into the fort.

¹¹The following night the Lord stood by Paul and said, "Courage! You have given your witness to me here in Jerusalem, and you must do the same in Rome also."

The Plot against Paul's Life

¹²The next morning some Jews met together and made a plan. They took a vow that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul. ¹³There were more than forty of them who planned this together. ¹⁴Then they went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have taken a solemn vow together not to eat a thing until we kill Paul. ¹⁵Now then, you and the Council send word to the Roman commander to bring Paul down to you, pretending that you want to get more accurate information about him. But we will be ready to kill him before he ever gets here."

¹⁶But the son of Paul's sister heard of the plot; so he went and entered the fort and told it to Paul. ¹⁷Then Paul called one of the officers and said to him, "Take this young man to the com-

The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

The Plot to Kill Paul

The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. More than forty men were involved in this plot. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here."

But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul.

Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander; he has some-

11. **The following night.** We would say *that same night*. The Lord Jesus stood beside Paul and spoke words to give him courage. This was supernatural help. Paul needed it: he was a prisoner; even the Jerusalem church suspected him; his own race wanted to kill him; twice, in two days' time, he had narrowly escaped death. **In Rome also.** This said that Paul would survive, and that he would be allowed to go to Rome.

12-24. **They took a vow.** These Jews may have been some of his bitter enemies from Ephesus who had grabbed him in the temple. They may have been "armed terrorists" [Zealots - Assassins], who later played such an important part in the Jewish wars against Rome. [A vow was cancelled, if it was impossible to perform it.] *Verse 15* shows what their plot was. **But the son of Paul's sister.** This is the only mention in Acts of Paul's kin. The young man might be studying in Jerusalem, as Paul had done

mander; he has something to tell him." ¹⁸The officer took him, led him to the commander and said, "The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, because he has something to say to you."

¹⁹The commander took him by the hand, led him off by himself, and asked him, "What do you have to tell me?"

²⁰He said, "The Jewish authorities have agreed to ask you tomorrow to take Paul down to the Council, pretending that the Council wants to get more accurate information about him. ²¹But don't listen to them, because there are more than forty men who will be hiding and waiting for him. They have taken a vow not to eat or drink until they kill him. They are now ready to do it, and are waiting for your decision."

²²The commander said, "Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me." And he sent the young man away.

Paul Sent to Governor Felix

²³Then the commander called two of his officers and said, "Get two hundred soldiers ready to go to Caesarea, together with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, and be ready to leave by nine o'clock tonight. ²⁴Provide some horses for Paul to ride, and get him safely through to Governor Felix." ²⁵Then the commander wrote a letter that went like this:

²⁶"Claudius Lysias to his Excellency, the

thing to tell him." So he ¹⁸ took him to the commander.

The centurion said, "The prisoner Paul sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you."

The commander took the ¹⁹ young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, "What is it you want to tell me?"

He said: "The Jews have ²⁰ agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him. Don't ²¹ give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request."

The commander dismissed the young man and cautioned him, "Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me."

Paul Transferred to Caesarea

Then he called two of his ²³ centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea tonight at the third hour. Provide ²⁴ mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix."

He wrote a letter as follows: ²⁵

Claudius Lysias, ²⁶
To His Excellency, Governor Felix:

in his youth. We do not know whether he was a Christian, but he told Paul of the plot. He would have no trouble getting in to Paul, since both of them were Roman citizens. Compare *Acts 28:30*. Paul immediately sent his nephew to the commander with the story. **The commander took him by the hand.** To show how carefully he was listening to what he said. *Verses 20-21.* give the story of the plot. **Called two of his officers.** They are told to get 470 soldiers to guard Paul. This shows his estimate of the danger. **To Governor Felix.** Once Paul is there, the commander is rid of his problem.

25-30. Then the commander wrote a letter. Roman law said that when a prisoner was sent up the chain of command, a letter had to go along giving the charges against him. **Claudius Lysias** is the Roman

Governor Felix: Greetings. ²⁷The Jews seized this man and were about to kill him. I learned that he is a Roman citizen, so I went with my soldiers and rescued him. ²⁸I wanted to know what they were accusing him of, so I took him down to their Council. ²⁹I found out that he had not done a thing for which he deserved to die or be put in prison; the accusation against him had to do with questions about their own law. ³⁰And when I was informed that some Jews were making a plot against him, I decided to send him to you. I told his accusers to make their charges against him before you."

³¹The soldiers carried out their orders. They got Paul and took him that night as far as Antipatris. ³²The next day the foot soldiers returned to the fort and left the horsemen to go on with him. ³³They took him to Caesarea, delivered the letter to the Governor, and turned Paul over to him. ³⁴The Governor read the letter and asked Paul what province he was from. When he found out that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵he said, "I will hear you when your accusers arrive." Then he gave orders that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

Greetings.

This man was seized by ²⁷ the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. I wanted to ²⁸ know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin. I ²⁹ found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment. When I was ³⁰ informed of a plot to be carried out against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his accusers to present to you their case against him.

So the soldiers, carrying ³¹ out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. The next day ³² they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. When ³³ the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. ³⁴ The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, he said, ³⁵ "I will hear your case when your accusers get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

commander's name. I learned that he is a Roman citizen. He didn't find this out until after he had rescued Paul, but he wants to make himself look good. I found out. He had done nothing against Roman law. I decided to send him to you. If he had released Paul in Jerusalem, he would have been murdered. I told his accusers. He had not done this when he wrote the letter, but intended to do so when Paul was safely away from the city.

31-35. As far as Antipatris. They went at night to keep the Jews from finding out about it until the next day. Antipatris was about thirty-eight miles from Jerusalem, toward Caesarea. After daylight came, the foot soldiers went back to Jerusalem, and the seventy horsemen went on with Paul to Caesarea. The immediate danger was over. Asked Paul what province he was from. If he had been from another province, he would have been sent to that governor (compare Luke 23:6-7). Cilicia was a distant part of the Roman Province of Syria. Felix agrees to hear the case, and keeps Paul under guard.

Paul Accused by the Jews

24 Five days later the High Priest Ananias went to Caesarea with some elders and a lawyer named Tertullus. They appeared before Governor Felix and made their charges against Paul. ²Tertullus was called and began to accuse Paul as follows:

“Your Excellency! Your wise leadership has brought us a long period of peace, and many necessary reforms are being made for the good of our country. ³We welcome this everywhere at all times, and we are deeply grateful to you. ⁴I do not want to take up too much of your time, however, so I beg you to be kind and listen to our brief account. ⁵We found this man to be a dangerous nuisance; he starts riots among the Jews all over the world, and is a leader of the party of the Nazarenes. ⁶He also tried to defile the temple, and we arrested him. [We planned to judge him according to our own Law, ⁷but the commander Lysias came in and with great violence took him from us. ⁸Then Lysias gave

The Trial Before Felix

24 Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: 2

“We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly. 3

“We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him.* By examining 4

5

6

8

1-9. **Five days later.** Five days after Paul had escaped from Jerusalem. Roman justice moved swiftly. The deep hatred of the Jewish leaders is shown by the fact that the High Priest himself comes, with some elders [who were part of the Council]. **A lawyer named Tertullus.** He may not have been a Jew. He was a lawyer skilled in Roman law, and would be more able to present the case in the best way. In verses 2-4, Tertullus says flattering things about Felix to try to get an “upper hand” in the case. [He praises Felix for keeping peace and making needed reforms for the good of the country. The real truth is that Felix was so severe and cruel that he “fanned the flames of rebellion.” He used the “armed terrorists” to assassinate Jonathan the high priest, and he made the occasional uprisings of the people become permanent rebellion. He helped bring on the bloody conflict which ended in Jerusalem being destroyed.] **The party of the Nazarenes.** The Jews used this name for the Christians for hundreds of years, but not in a good sense. This was the real charge against Paul. He was a Christian leader. They were trying to show that Paul preached a religion which was illegal under Roman law (see Acts 18:13 and note). But they first charge Paul with starting riots (which was not true), because Felix was proud of the way he kept the peace. **He also tried to defile the temple.** Paul is charged with: (1) starting riots; (2) preaching an illegal religion; (3) defiling the temple. The Jewish Law passed the death penalty for defiling the temple, and the Romans usually allowed them to carry it out. **And we arrested him.** Tertullus shows this as a legal action of the Council, when it was actually the action of the mob. **But the commander Lysias came in.** He did not come and take Paul with great violence (see Acts 21:32), nor did they have any intention of trying Paul by their law (see Acts 21:31). **The Jews joined in.** They said all of it was true, when they knew it wasn't.

* Some MSS add *and wanted to judge him according to our law. ⁷But the commander, Lysias, came and with the use of much force snatched him from our hands ⁸and ordered his accusers to come before you.*

orders that his accusers should come before you.] If you question this man, you yourself will be able to learn from him all the things that we are accusing him of." ⁹The Jews joined in the accusation and said that all this was true.

Paul's Defense before Felix

¹⁰The Governor then motioned to Paul to speak, and Paul said,

"I know that you have been a judge over this nation for many years, and so I am happy to defend myself before you. ¹¹As you can find out for yourself, it was not more than twelve days ago that I went up to Jerusalem to worship. ¹²The Jews did not find me arguing with anyone in the temple, nor did they find me stirring up the people, either in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. ¹³Nor can they give you proof of the accusations they now bring against me. ¹⁴I do admit this to you: I worship the God of our ancestors by following that Way which they say is false. But I also believe in all the things written in the Law of Moses and the books of the prophets. ¹⁵I have the same hope in God that these themselves hold, that all men, both the good and the bad, will rise from death. ¹⁶And so I do my best always to have a clear conscience before God and men.

him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him."

The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true. 9

When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: 10

"I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense. You can easily verify that no 11
more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. My accusers did not 12
find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. And they cannot prove to 13
you the charges they are now making against me. How- 14
ever, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers, as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have 15
the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. So 16
I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

10-21. **Paul said.** Roman law condemned no one without allowing them to speak in their own defence. I know that you. The frequent turnover of Roman Governors makes Paul's statement accurate. Felix had been governor for from six to ten years at this time. Felix had first-hand knowledge of the people of Judea. It was no more than twelve days ago. It would be easy to find out the facts. The first day was when Paul met with James and the church elders; the second he entered the vow with the others; the seventh he was grabbed in the temple; the eighth he was tried by the Council; the eleventh he was sent to Felix; and the thirteenth he stands before this court. Nor did they find me. He had done nothing to agitate the people. In fact, he had been doing things to promote peace and harmony. I do admit this. He worships God by following the Way of Christ. Which they say is false. The language implies that Paul sees Christianity, not as a sect [false way] of Judaism, but as the fulfillment of God's promise to the ancestors (Acts 13:32). It is Judaism transformed into a Perfect Way, which supersedes Judaism. But I also believe. By becoming a Christian, he had not "turned traitor" to the faith of the fathers, as they claimed. I have the same hope in God. The common hope of Judaism (but not the Sadducees) and Christianity was that all the dead will be raised. Therefore, Paul was not preaching something new and illegal. And so I do my best always. Paul lived his life to honor God! This should free him of such suspicion that motivated these false charges. After being away from Jerusalem. His motives in coming

¹⁷“After being away from Jerusalem for several years, I went there to take some money to my own people and to offer sacrifices. ¹⁸It was while I was doing this that they found me in the temple, after I had completed the ceremony of purification. There was no crowd with me, and no disorder. ¹⁹But some Jews from the province of Asia were there; they themselves ought to come before you and make their accusations, if they have anything against me. ²⁰Or let these men here tell what crime they found me guilty of when I stood before the Council—²¹except for the one thing I called out when I stood before them: ‘I am being judged by you today for believing that the dead will rise to life.’ ”

²²Then Felix, who was well informed about the Way, brought the hearing to a close. “I will decide your case,” he told them, “when the commander Lysias arrives.” ²³He ordered the officer in charge of Paul to keep him under guard, but to give him some freedom and allow his friends to provide for his needs.

Paul before Felix and Drusilla

²⁴After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he talked about faith in Christ

“After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me, when I stood before the Sanhedrin—unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: ‘It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.’ ”

Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. “When Lysias the commander comes,” he said, “I will decide your case.” He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs.

Several days later Felix arrived with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in

were good. **To take some money.** Donations from the Gentile Christians (see *Rom. 15:25-31; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:1-9*). **To offer sacrifices.** The ordinary sacrifices of the Law. He was in the temple to do this when he was grabbed. **But some Jews.** They knew there had been no crowd and no disorder with Paul in the temple. They were the ones who accused him, yet none of them seemed to be at the court. **They themselves ought to come.** Roman custom required the accusers to face the accused. The High Priest and the members of the Council were not the ones who had accused Paul. **Or let these men here.** The Council had not really found him guilty (*Acts 23:9*). **Except for the one thing.** This was the real “crime” which the High Priest and his fellow Sadducees were accusing Paul of.

22-23. **Then Felix.** He understood both Jewish hatred and the Christian Way. He wants to hear what Lysias has to say, before he will decide. **He ordered the officer.** Two reasons caused him to keep Paul in custody: (1) He did not like to offend the Jews; (2) He hoped Paul and the Christians would pay him to release Paul.

24-27. **After some days.** Drusilla was the daughter of that Herod who died at Caesarea (*Acts 12:23*), sister of Bernice (*Acts 25:23*). She had been married at age fourteen to Azizus, king of Emeza; and because of her unhappy marriage, Felix had been able to “steal her away” and make her his own wife. Her father's strange death may have had something to do with her interest in Paul and Christianity.

Jesus. ²⁵But as Paul went on discussing about goodness, self-control, and the coming Day of Judgment, Felix was afraid and said, "You may leave now. I will call you again when I get the chance." ²⁶At the same time he was hoping that Paul would give him some money; and for this reason he would call for him often and talk with him.

²⁷After two years had passed, Porcius Festus took the place of Felix as Governor. Felix wanted to gain favor with the Jews, so he left Paul in prison.

Paul Appeals to the Emperor

25 Three days after Festus arrived in the province, he went from Caesarea to Jerusalem. ²There the chief priests and the Jewish leaders brought their charges against Paul. They begged Festus ³to do them the favor of having Paul come to Jerusalem, because they had made a plot to kill him on the way. ⁴Festus answered, "Paul is being kept a prisoner in Caesarea, and I myself will be going back there soon. ⁵Let your leaders go to Caesarea with me and accuse the man, if he has done anything wrong."

⁶Festus spent another eight or ten days with them, and then went to Caesarea. On the next day he sat down in the judgment court, and

Christ Jesus. As Paul discussed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Procius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.

The Trial Before Festus

25 Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, where the chief priests and Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul. They urgently requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon. Let some of your leaders come with me and press charges against the man there, if he has done anything wrong."

After spending eight or ten days with them, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul

But as Paul went on discussing. They may have expected him to argue doctrinal differences between the Law and the Way. Instead, he speaks of holy living and the coming Judgment. Felix made no attempt to live a holy life, or to control his passions. **Felix was afraid.** He is not resentful, but even though he is deeply stirred by all Paul is saying, he is not willing to think about it or respond to it. Many doom themselves by waiting. "Not to act, is to act!" **He was hoping.** He hoped Paul would buy his freedom. **After two years had passed.** Ramsay dates this autumn of 59 A.D. Luke's Gospel may have been written at this time with Paul's help.

1-6. **Three days after Festus arrived.** He was the new governor of Judea. He went to Jerusalem to confer with the Jewish leaders. **Brought their charges.** The Jewish leaders wanted Paul transferred to Jerusalem, so they could kill him. In fact, Paul would never have reached Jerusalem. **Festus answered.** He intends to keep Paul at Caesarea. They must come there to make their accusations. Of course, Festus knew nothing of the plot to kill Paul.

ordered Paul to be brought in. ⁷When Paul arrived, the Jews who had come from Jerusalem stood around him and started making many serious charges against him, which they were not able to prove. ⁸But Paul defended himself, "I have done nothing wrong against the Law of the Jews, or the temple, or the Roman Emperor."

⁹Festus wanted to gain favor with the Jews, so he asked Paul, "Would you be willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried on these charges before me there?"

¹⁰Paul said, "I am standing before the Emperor's own judgement court, where I should be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you yourself well know. ¹¹If I have broken the law and done something for which I deserve the death penalty, I do not ask to escape it. But if there is no truth in the charges they bring against me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to the Emperor."

¹²Then Festus, after conferring with his advisers, answered, "You have appealed to the Emperor, so to the Emperor you will go."

Paul before Agrippa and Bernice

¹³Some time later King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to pay a visit of welcome to

be brought before him. ⁷
When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.

Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar." ⁸

Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?" ⁹

Paul answered: "I am now ¹⁰ standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. If, ¹¹ however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!" ¹²

Festus Consults King Agrippa

A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their ¹³

7-12. **When Paul arrived.** The accused had to face his accusers. This was Roman law. **Many serious charges against him.** The Jewish leaders had probably come along with Festus back to Caesarea. Their accusations are about the same as those to Felix. (1) Teaching a new and illegal religion; (2) defiling the temple; (3) leading riots against the Roman authorities. We infer these from Paul's defence in verse 8. **To gain favor.** He was just beginning his rule as governor. Since Paul was a Roman, Festus could not send him to his enemies in Jerusalem unless Paul would agree to it. Festus may have thought, also, that Paul would appeal to Rome as he did, thus taking the whole matter off his hands. **Before the Emperor's own judgment court.** Paul uses his legal right to appeal as a Roman citizen. This law was to protect Romans against corrupt governors, etc. They could ask that their case be transferred to the Imperial Court in Rome. **After conferring with his advisers.** What Festus says, is probably an official legal statement. This appeal by Paul implies his mistrust of Festus.

13-22. **King Agrippa and Bernice.** This is Herod Agrippa II and his sister Bernice. Drusilla, the wife of Festus, was also their sister. This man became king when his father, Herod Agrippa I died (*Acts 12:23*). Bernice was beautiful, and had been married twice before Paul ever saw her. An incestuous relationship is implied between she and her brother; later she was to be the "mistress" of both

Festus. ¹⁴After they had been there several days, Festus explained Paul's situation to the king, "There is a man here who was left a prisoner by Felix; ¹⁵and when I went to Jerusalem, the Jewish chief priests and elders brought charges against him and asked me to condemn him. ¹⁶But I told them that the Romans are not in the habit of handing over any man accused of a crime before he has met his accusers face to face, and has the chance of defending himself against the accusation. ¹⁷When they came here, then, I lost no time, but on the very next day I sat in the judgment court and ordered the man to be brought in. ¹⁸His opponents stood up, but they did not accuse him of any of the evil crimes that I thought they would. ¹⁹All they had were some arguments with him about their own religion and about a man named Jesus, who has died; but Paul claims that he is alive. ²⁰I was undecided about how I could get information on these matters, so I asked Paul if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried there on these charges. ²¹But Paul appealed; he asked to be kept under guard and let the Emperor decide his case. So I gave orders for him to be kept under guard until I could send him to the Emperor."

²²Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself."

"You will hear him tomorrow," Festus answered.

²³The next day Agrippa and Bernice came

respects to Festus. Since ¹⁴ they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He said:

"There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner. When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned. ¹⁵

"I told them that it is not ¹⁶ the Roman custom to hand over any man before he has faced his accusers and has had an opportunity to defend himself against their charges. When they came ¹⁷ here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in. When his accusers got up ¹⁸ to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. Instead, they ¹⁹ had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. I was at ²⁰ a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges. When Paul made his appeal ²¹ to be held over for the Emperor's decision, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar."

Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself."

He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him."

Paul Before Agrippa

The next day Agrippa and ²³

Vespasian and Titus in turn. A visit of welcome to Festus. To greet the new governor. Festus explained Paul's situation to the King. He did this for advice. He knew little of Jewish customs, and he could see no guilt in Paul. King Agrippa was himself a Jew, and would understand the real cause of the problem. About their own religion. Festus had expected them to accuse Paul of crimes punishable by Roman law. But they were not able to prove anything (verse 7). But Paul appealed. Paul used his legal rights as a Roman to protect his life from those Jews who wanted to kill him. This appeal was a "blessing in disguise" (see Acts 28:16). Agrippa said to Festus. What he says in the Greek implies he had wanted to hear Paul for some time.

23-27. The next day. Luke writes as one who saw it all take place. Note who all is there, and compare

with great pomp and ceremony, and entered the audience hall with the military chiefs and the leading men of the city. Festus gave the order and Paul was brought in. ²⁴Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all who are here with us: You see this man against whom all the Jewish people, both here and in Jerusalem, have brought complaints to me. They scream that he should not live any longer. ²⁵But I could not find that he had done anything for which he deserved the death sentence. And since he himself made an appeal to the Emperor, I have decided to send him. ²⁶But I do not have anything definite about him to write to the Emperor. So I have brought him here before you—and especially before you, King Agrippa!—so that, after investigating his case, I may have something to write. ²⁷For it seems unreasonable to me to send a prisoner without clearly indicating the charges against him."

Paul Defends Himself before Agrippa

26 Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak on your own behalf." Paul stretched out his hand and defended himself as follows:

Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high ranking officers and the leading men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. Festus 24 said:

"King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. I found he 25 had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome. But I have nothing 26 definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. For I think it is un- 27 reasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him."

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense:

Acts 9:15. Paul was brought in. He is the preacher, and his congregation contains some of the most powerful and influential men and women of the whole area. This shows God's *providence* at work. We read Paul's sermon in the next chapter. *Festus said.* This is a court of law. Festus gives the charges against Paul: (1) You see this man; (2) the Jewish people . . . scream that he should not live; (3) I could not find . . . he deserved the death sentence; (4) he himself made an appeal to the Emperor; (5) I do not have anything . . . to write to the Emperor; (6) So I have brought him here before you. Festus and others like him found it very difficult to decide how to deal with Christians. They could find no real reason to oppose them, and their sense of "fair play" made them nervous about it all. Yet they wanted to keep the good will of all the people, which included these Jewish leaders and such men as Demetrius (*Acts 19*).

1. **You have permission to speak.** Festus was the one who had the authority in this province, but this session of the court was arranged to permit Agrippa to investigate the case and help him write something the Emperor would accept. **Paul stretched out his hand.** Not to gain silence, but as part of his style of speaking.

²“King Agrippa! I consider myself fortunate that today I am to defend myself before you from all the things the Jews accuse me of. ³This is especially true because you know so well all the Jewish customs and questions. I ask you, then, to listen to me with patience.

⁴“All the Jews know how I have lived ever since I was young. They know from the beginning how I have spent my whole life in my own country and in Jerusalem. ⁵They have always known, if they are willing to testify, that from the very first I have lived as a member of the strictest party of our religion, the Pharisees. ⁶And now I stand here to be tried because I hope in the promise that God made to our ancestors— ⁷the very promise that all twelve tribes of our people hope to receive, as they worship God day and night. And it is because of this hope, your Majesty, that I am being accused by the Jews! ⁸Why do you Jews find it impossible to believe that God raises the dead?

“King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

“The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. Your Majesty, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me. Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

2-3. **I consider myself fortunate.** Agrippa was a Jew, one who had been brought up in the Jewish religion. He claimed to live by the Jewish Law and traditions, and he was the legal guardian of the temple. Therefore, he is competent to judge whether Paul’s preaching contradicts the Law of Moses, or is the fulfillment of it.

4-8. **All the Jews know how I have lived.** His life had been lived in agreement with the Law. They knew about his education in Jerusalem, and that he lived as a Pharisee, the strictest of the Jewish sects [the Essenes were a quasi-Jewish sect, with some pagan elements]. **Because I hope in the promise.** Note how he presents Christ as the fulfillment of the promise that God made to the ancestors. He had not “turned traitor” to the Law, but had become a “fulfilled Jew” in Christ. Compare *Rom. 3:31*. Every Christian **BECOMES** a true descendant of Abraham (*Gal. 3:29*). The promise of the Messiah was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. **The very promise.** The twelve tribes worshiped God day and night motivated by the HOPE this promise brought them. [Twelve tribes: This is sometimes used to mean all God’s people. The ten northern tribes had vanished into captivity centuries before this. Yet descendants of all the tribes were mixed among those who lived in Christ’s time. That is, Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin; John the Baptist of Levi; Joseph and Mary of Judah; Anna of Asher (*Luke 2:36*). Compare *2 Chron. 11:14*.] Paul shows the strange fact that these Jewish leaders persecute him because he is identified with what forms their deepest and strongest hope!!! **Why do you Jews?** Agrippa is a Sadducee, and does not believe man will survive death. But Paul speaks to all those present, and is emphasizing the raising of Jesus from the dead. This was the FACT that both Sadducee and Pharisee alike refused to believe. [Paul probably gave more detail than Luke records here. This is the outline of what he said.]

"I myself thought that I should do everything I could against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰That is what I did in Jerusalem. I received authority from the chief priests and put many of God's people in prison; and when they were sentenced to death, I also voted for it. ¹¹Many times I had them punished in all the synagogues, and tried to make them deny their faith. I was so furious with them that I even went to foreign cities to persecute them."

Paul Tells of His Conversion

(Also Acts 9.1-19; 22.6-16)

¹²"It was for this purpose that I went to Damascus with the authority and orders from the chief priests. ¹³It was on the road at midday, your Majesty, that I saw a light much brighter than the sun shining from the sky around me and the men traveling with me. ¹⁴All of us fell to the ground, and I heard a voice say to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me? You hurt yourself by hitting back, like an ox kicking against its owner's stick.' ¹⁵'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. And the Lord said: 'I am Jesus, whom you persecute.

"I too was convinced that ⁹ I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in ¹⁰ Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went ¹¹ from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.

"On one of these journeys ¹² I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, Your Majesty, ¹³ as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ¹⁴ ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

"Then I asked, 'Who are ¹⁵ you, Lord?'"

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord

9-11. **I myself thought.** He shows his motivation as it had been when he persecuted the Christians. He did it, thinking that he honored God by doing it. **I also voted for it.** This may only mean that Paul approved of what was done (compare Acts 8:1). The literal meaning is that Paul was a member of the Council. But one of the requirements for membership was to be married and have a son. Some think that Paul's wife had died before he became a Christian. If Paul had been married, it would explain some of his insights in 1 Cor. 7. **Many times I had them punished.** Compare Matt. 10:17; 23:34. **Tried to make them deny their faith.** By the use of threats and torture. With such a history as this, no one could suspect him of "selling out" to a false ideology. All there must see that some amazing change had taken place in this man!!!

12-18. **It was for this purpose.** He had gone to Damascus with the idea of trying to crush the Christian movement. This is the third time he tells about his converting to Christ. See Acts 9:1-9 and notes. Here he points out the brilliance of the light (God's glory), and tells us he heard the voice speak in the Hebrew language. This would be in the archaic Hebrew of the Bible (remember the people spoke the Aramaic dialect). Paul had been trained in the theology of the Law by Gamaliel, and understood this form of Hebrew perfectly. This shocked Paul to the very depths of his "Jewishness." **You hurt yourself by kicking back.** This translation reconstructs the rest of the proverb for us: "like an ox kicking against its owner's stick." Paul's audience would add this automatically. The meaning is

¹⁶But get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant; you are to tell others what you have seen of me today, and what I will show you in the future.

¹⁷I will save you from the people of Israel and from the Gentiles, to whom I will send you.

¹⁸You are to open their eyes and turn them from the darkness to the light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that through their faith in me they will have their sins forgiven and receive their place among God's chosen people.' "

Paul Tells of His Work

¹⁹"And so, King Agrippa, I did not disobey the vision I had from heaven. ²⁰First in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and then in the whole country of the Jews and among the Gentiles, I preached that they must repent of their sins and turn to God, and do the things that would show they had repented. ²¹It was for this reason that the Jews seized me while I was in the temple, and tried to kill me. ²²But to this very day I have been helped by God, and so I stand here giving my witness to all, to the small and great alike. What I say is the very same thing the prophets and Moses said was going to happen: ²³that the Messiah must suffer and be the first one to rise from death, to announce the light of salvation to the Jews and to the Gentiles."

replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

that Paul was only hurting himself through his persecution of the messianic community. To appoint you as my servant. Paul was a devout man, even when he was persecuting the church of Christ. The Lord did not interfere with Paul's *free will*. Paul had already decided to serve God. All he needed was to be made aware of the facts. Paul had to see the Risen Lord to be qualified as an apostle. Paul was to be a *witness* to the Gentiles of God's act in Christ to set men free!

19-20. I did not disobey the vision. He could have disobeyed, as Judas did. But since he had already decided to serve God, this decision made him follow Jesus. First in Damascus. He had probably been a "missionary" for Judaism. Now he immediately begins to preach Jesus as the Messiah. See Acts 9:27-29; 11:30. Repent of their sins and turn to God. Compare Acts 3:19 and note. Paul preached a NEW LIFE!!!

21-23. It was for this reason. Because he both obeyed and preached Christ. But to this very day. God had helped him and showed his work to be genuine. What I say is the very same thing. The historical Christ was always the subject of Paul's preaching. The prophets and Moses had all predicted the things that did happen. They said that the Messiah would suffer and rise from death, to announce the light of salvation to both Jews and Gentiles. Compare Acts 15:15-18 and notes.

²⁴As Paul defended himself in this way, Festus shouted at him, "You are mad, Paul! Your great learning is driving you mad!"

²⁵Paul answered, "I am not mad, your Excellency! The words I speak are true and sober.

²⁶King Agrippa! I can speak to you with all boldness, because you know about these things. I am sure that you have taken notice of every one of them, for this thing has not happened hidden away in a corner. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do!"

²⁸Agrippa said to Paul, "In this short time do you think you will make me a Christian?"

²⁹"Whether a short time or a long time," Paul answered, "my prayer to God is that you and all the rest of you who are listening to me today might become what I am—except, of course, for these chains!"

³⁰Then the King, the Governor, Bernice, and all the others got up, ³¹and after leaving they said to each other, "This man has not done anything for which he should die or be put in prison."

At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted, "Your great learning is driving you insane."

"I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"

Paul replied, "Short time or long—I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. They left the room, and while talking with one another, they said, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment."

24-26. **You are mad, Paul!** Notice it is Festus, a Gentile, who breaks in on Paul and shouts that only a deranged brain could imagine such things. Compare this outburst with the reaction of the Athenians (*Acts 17:32*). **Your great learning** may refer to Paul's obvious religious education, since Festus and many others like him thought all religion was a delusion. Remember also, Festus had just become governor, and did not know Paul's history. **Paul answered.** He calmly points out that he is not "mad," but speaks the truth. He had full control of himself. **King Agrippa!** All the things that Paul had been talking about were well known to Agrippa. This had been "out in the open" where everyone could see, and Christianity had started in the very city where Christ had been killed, just fifty days after he raised from death.

27-30. **Do you believe the prophets?** Agrippa did believe the prophets, as all Jews did. Therefore he would not appraise the idea of the prophecies being fulfilled as mad and irrational. **Do you think you will make me a Christian?** *McGarvey* says there is strong evidence to take this expression as ironic, teasing Paul for thinking him such an easy convert to Christianity. However he prefers to take it as a genuine expression of interest, which is at least allowable from the text. **Whether a short time or a long time.** Paul's intense desire is to see people reach out through faith to seize Christ! **Except, of course.** He would not want any of them to be chained as he was.

31-32. **They said to each other.** They agree that Paul is not guilty of any crime. **This man could have**

³²And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been released if he had not appealed to the Emperor."

Agrippa said to Festus, 32
"This man could have been
set free, if he had not
appealed to Caesar."

Paul Sails for Rome

Paul Sails for Rome

27 When it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they handed Paul and some other prisoners over to Julius, an officer in the Roman army regiment called "The Emperor's Regiment." ²We went aboard a ship from Adramyttium, which was ready to leave for the seaports of the province of Asia, and sailed away. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us. ³The next day we arrived at Sidon. Julius was kind to Paul and allowed him to go and see his friends, to be given what he needed. ⁴We went on from there, and because the winds were blowing against us we sailed on the sheltered side of the island of Cyprus. ⁵We crossed over the sea off Cilicia and Pamphylia, and came to

27 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us. 2

The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs. From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. 3
4
5

been released. Paul would have been a free man, if he had not appealed to the Emperor. However, the Jews still wanted to kill him, and his freedom might not have lasted very long. But it is God's will that he go to Rome as a prisoner of the Roman Government (see Acts 28:16 and note).

1. **When it was decided.** "We" is Paul, Luke, and Aristarchus. God's promise to Paul (Acts 23:11) was being fulfilled, not by a miracle, but by a combination of ordinary human actions. **Over to Julius.** We know nothing about the other prisoners. All we learn about Julius is favorable. Paul seemed to always be respected by the Roman officials he met. Sergius Paulus, Gallio, Felix, Festus, and Julius are examples of this. **The Emperor's Regiment.** This could be an honorary title, but it can be taken literally. He was one of a group of Roman soldiers who did "detached duty," transporting prisoners, etc.

2. **We went aboard a ship from Adramyttium.** A town on the seacoast of the province of Asia, northeast of Pergamum. There were no regularly scheduled boats, and Paul had to use three to reach Rome. **Aristarchus.** See note on Col. 4:10. He and Luke seem to be the only Christians on the boat with Paul.

3. **The next day we arrived at Sidon.** About sixty-seven miles north of Caesarea. Note they allowed Paul to visit his friends there. Paul would never be *alone*, because all Christians were his *brothers and sisters* - a bond closer than blood-ties!

4-5. **We sailed on the sheltered side.** These boats depended on the wind for motive power. They would normally sail west of Cyprus to Patara, about thirty miles west of Myra on the coast of Lycia. But the winds force them to sail to the east of Cyprus, taking the long way around. The wind must have been from the northwest. They are forced to keep close to the coasts of Cilicia and Pamphylia, to use the local land-breezes to bring them to Myra.

Myra, in Lycia. ⁶There the officer found a ship from Alexandria that was going to sail for Italy, so he put us aboard.

⁷We sailed slowly for several days, and with great difficulty finally arrived off the town of Cnidus. The wind would not let us go any farther in that direction, so we sailed down the sheltered side of the island of Crete, passing by Cape Salmone. ⁸We kept close to the coast, and with great difficulty came to a place called Safe Harbors, not far from the town of Lasea.

⁹We spent a long time there, until it became dangerous to continue the voyage, because by now the day of Atonement was already past. So Paul gave them this advice, ¹⁰"Men, I see that our voyage from here on will be dangerous; there will be great damage to the cargo and to the ship, and loss of life as well." ¹¹But the army officer was convinced by what the captain and the owner of the ship said, and not by what Paul said. ¹²The harbor was not a good one to spend the winter in; so most of the men were in favor of putting out to sea and trying to reach Phoenix, if possible. It is a harbor in Crete that faces southwest and northwest, and they could spend the winter there.

There the centurion found ⁶
an Alexandrian ship sailing
for Italy and put us on
board. We made slow head- ⁷
way for many days and had
difficulty arriving off Cni-
dus. When the wind did not
allow us to hold our course,
we sailed to the lee of Crete,
opposite Salmone. ⁸
We moved along the coast with
difficulty and came to a
place called Fair Havens,
near the town of Lasea.

Much time had been lost, ⁹
and sailing had already be-
come dangerous because by
now it was after the Fast. So
Paul warned them, "Men, ¹⁰
I can see that our voyage is
going to be disastrous and
bring great loss to ship and
cargo, and to our own lives
also." But the centurion, ¹¹
instead of listening to what
Paul said, followed the ad-
vice of the pilot and of the
owner of the ship. Since the ¹²
harbor was unsuitable to
winter in, the majority de-
cided that we should sail on,
hoping to reach Phoenix and
winter there. This was a har-
bor in Crete, facing both
southwest and northwest.

6-8. **Found a ship from Alexandria.** Alexandria is on the northern coast of Africa. They are headed for Italy. The map shows what distances they were sailing. *Verse 38* shows they were carrying wheat. **Sail slowly.** It was 137 miles to Cnidus, on a narrow point of land sticking out from the southern corner of the Province of Asia. **Passing by Cape Salmone.** On the most eastern point of Crete. **Called Safe Harbors.** Also known as Fair Havens. **Lasea.** About four miles east of Safe Harbors. All this reads like the diary of a man who was making the trip, which of course Luke was.

9-13. **We spent a long time there.** They were weatherbound, since the wind would not take them the way they must go. **The day of Atonement.** Ramsay gives this as October 5, 59 A.D. Paul used the Jewish calendar (*I Cor. 16:8*). It would not be strange for Luke to do this also. The storms of winter made sailing dangerous. Since they navigated by the stars, the clouds and darkness of winter would be a real problem. **So Paul gave them this advice.** What Paul says is not a revelation from God, but practical experience. **But the army officer was convinced.** He would be expected to listen to the captain and the owner of the ship. Safe Harbors was not the best place to stay, and they decide to make an attempt

The Storm at Sea

¹³A soft wind from the south began to blow, and the men thought that they could carry out their plan; so they pulled up the anchor and sailed as close as possible along the coast of Crete. ¹⁴But soon a very strong wind—the one called “Northeaster”—blew down from the island. ¹⁵It hit the ship, and since it was impossible to keep the ship headed into the wind, we gave up trying and let it be carried along by the wind. ¹⁶We got some shelter when we passed to the south of the little island of Cauda. There, with some difficulty, we managed to make the ship’s boat secure. ¹⁷They pulled it aboard, and then fastened some ropes tight around the ship. They were afraid that they might run into the sandbanks off the coast of Libya; so they lowered the sail and let the ship be carried by the wind. ¹⁸The violent storm continued, so on the next day they began to throw the ship’s cargo overboard, ¹⁹and on the following day they threw the ship’s equipment overboard with their own hands. ²⁰For many days we could not see the sun or the stars, and the wind kept on blowing very hard. We finally gave up all hope of being saved.

The Storm

When a gentle south wind ¹³ began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. Before very ¹⁴ long, a wind of hurricane force, called the “Northeaster,” swept down from the island. The ship was ¹⁵ caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. As ¹⁶ we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure. When ¹⁷ the men had hoisted it aboard, they tied ropes around the ship itself to hold it together. Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. We took such a violent ¹⁸ battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. On the third ¹⁹ day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands. When neither ²⁰ sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

to reach Phoenix, less than forty miles along the coast to the west. **A soft wind from the south.** This makes them confident of success.

14-20. **But soon a very strong wind.** A “Northeaster,” blowing from the northeast, down from the island. It was a violent hurricane! They tried to keep the ship headed into it, to ride out the storm. But when this failed, they could do nothing to help themselves. **Cauda.** Nearly fifty miles out from Phoenix. **The ship’s boat.** They had been towing it. **And then fastened some ropes.** These were dropped under the ship and then pulled tight with levers to strengthen the wooden hull. **The sandbanks.** These were on the coast of Africa, southwest of Crete. The sailors were afraid of these. **So they lowered the sail.** The big main sail would have been lowered already. A small storm sail would still be up. If the ship were pointed north, the wind from the northeast would make it drift west. They were trying to avoid the sandbanks to the southwest of them. **So on the next day.** This shows how serious their condition is! **Lipscomb** thinks huge beams and timbers which would be used to repair the ship, were lying on the deck. These would be thrown overboard first. **The ship’s equipment.** Anything loose on the deck that could be thrown overboard, such as ropes, levers, tools, etc. **For many days.** They could not tell just where they were, because they could not see the sun or the stars, and there were no compasses. **Gave up all hope.** They know now that Paul’s prediction had been true.

²¹After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood before them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have sailed from Crete; then we would have avoided all this damage and loss. ²²But not I beg you, take courage! Not one of you will lose his life; only the ship will be lost. ²³For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship came to me ²⁴and said, 'Don't be afraid, Paul! You must stand before the Emperor; and God, in his goodness, has given you the lives of all those who are sailing with you.' ²⁵And so, men, take courage! For I trust in God that it will be just as I was told. ²⁶But we will be driven ashore on some island."

²⁷It was the fourteenth night, and we were being driven by the storm on the Mediterranean. About midnight the sailors suspected that we were getting close to land. ²⁸So they dropped a line with a weight tied to it and found that the water was one hundred and twenty feet deep; a little later they did the same and found that it was ninety feet deep. ²⁹They were afraid that our ship would go on the rocks, so they lowered four anchors from the back of the ship and prayed for

After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

The Shipwreck

On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. They took soundings and found that the water was one hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks,

21-26. **A long time without food.** The fires were out, the food watersoaked, the men too busy, and they were frightened out of their wits by the storm. **Paul stood before them.** He is calm and firm, as he finds a place where all can hear. **You should have listened to me.** He is not taunting them nor scolding them. He simply states this fact to help them believe what he is about to say. **Take courage.** He says the ship will be lost, but no lives. **An angel.** He has been given a special message direct from God. **To whom I belong.** Paul was honored to belong to God. He often spoke of himself as "God's slave." This was the key to all Paul's ministry. **Don't be afraid, Paul.** They are in a horrible storm, the ship is coming to pieces, but God has not forgotten his servant, Paul. **You must stand before the Emperor.** Paul would survive to carry out his mission. **Has given you the lives.** Paul had been praying for these people. Compare *Gen. 18:23-33*.

27-32. **It was the fourteenth night.** Since they sailed from Safe Harbors. The storm is still driving them. The area of the Mediterranean Sea to the south of Italy and Greece was once called the *Adria*. A look at the map shows that after being driven toward the coast of Africa, the wind carries them back north and west, eventually to land on Malta. **So they dropped a line.** The roar of the surf may have alerted them. They measure the depth of the water and find they are coming to land. **They were afraid.** In the light of day, they could steer through the rocks. They drop four anchors, because the ship

daylight. ³⁰The sailors tried to escape from the ship; they lowered the boat into the water and pretended that they were going to put out some anchors from the front of the ship. ³¹But Paul said to the army officer and soldiers, "If these sailors don't stay on board, you cannot be saved." ³²So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the boat and let it go.

³³Day was about to come, and Paul begged them all to eat some food, "You have been waiting for fourteen days now, and all this time you have not eaten a thing. ³⁴I beg you, then, eat some food; you need it in order to survive. Not even a hair of your heads will be lost." ³⁵After saying this, Paul took some bread, gave thanks to God before them all, broke it, and began to eat. ³⁶They took courage, and every one of them also ate some food. ³⁷There was a total of two hundred and seventy-six of us on board. ³⁸After everyone had eaten enough, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea.

The Shipwreck

³⁹When day came, the sailors did not recognize the coast, but they noticed a bay with a beach and decided that, if possible, they would run the

they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. Then ³¹ Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." ³² So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away.

Just before dawn Paul ³³ urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything. Now ³⁴ I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." ³⁵ After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. Altogether there ³⁷ were 276 of us on board. When they had eaten as ³⁸ much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

When daylight came, they ³⁹ did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship

is very heavy. **The sailors tried to escape.** They were willing to allow the others to drown. But for the safety of all, they had to stay on the ship. Paul calls this to the attention of the Roman soldiers, and they take direct action.

33-38. **Paul begged them all to eat some food.** He seems to have taken charge of things in this crisis. They had eaten nothing for a long time (*verse 21*), and were weak from hunger. **Not even a hair of your heads will be lost.** The angel had assured him of this. **After saying this.** Paul puts his words into action. He takes bread, gives thanks to God so that all can hear, broke off a piece, and began to eat. **They took courage.** Paul's calm example strengthens their belief of what he has told them. **Two hundred and seventy-six of us on board.** This shows how large the ship was. [*Josephus* says there were about 600 in the ship that took him to Italy.] **They lightened the ship.** In order to go as far up on the beach as possible, the cargo of wheat is taken out of the hold and thrown into the sea. In *verse 18* it was the cargo on deck, or at least only a part of the cargo. Egypt then exported much grain to Italy.

39-44. **A bay with a beach.** This would be the safest place to run aground. These sailors may have landed on Malta many times before, but did not recognize this part of the coast. **So they cut off the**

ship aground there. ⁴⁰So they cut off the anchors and let them sink in the sea, and at the same time they untied the ropes that held the steering oars. Then they raised the sail at the front of the ship so that the wind would blow the ship forward, and headed for shore. ⁴¹But the ship hit a sandbank and went aground; the front part of the ship got stuck and could not move, while the back part was being broken to pieces by the violence of the waves.

⁴²The soldiers made a plan to kill all the prisoners, so that none of them would swim ashore and escape. ⁴³But the army officer wanted to save Paul, so he stopped them from doing this. Instead, he ordered all the men who could swim to jump overboard first and swim ashore; ⁴⁴the rest were to follow, holding on to the planks or to some broken pieces of the ship. And this was how we all got safely ashore.

In Malta

28 When we were safely ashore, we learned that the island was called Malta. ²The natives there were very friendly to us. It had started to rain and was cold, so they built a fire

aground if they could. Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety.

Ashore on Malta

28 Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and

anchors. They wanted the ship to be as light as possible. **The steering oars.** The two paddle-rudders which these ships steered by. They had to use these to steer into the bay. **Then they raised the sail.** Only the small sail at the front of the ship would help in these circumstances. **But the ship hit a sandbank.** This is a bank or ridge washed up by two seas coming together. The bay turned out to be a narrow channel not more than 300 feet wide, between the island of Salmonetta and the coast of Malta. The ship stuck on the sandbar and the violence of the waves break the ship in pieces. **To kill all the prisoners.** Roman soldiers would rather kill a prisoner than allow him to escape. But guards who lost their prisoners were killed themselves (*see note on Acts 16:27*). This shows their attitude toward human life. **But the army officer.** This man shows a different character. He had treated Paul with respect, and he may now feel some sense of awe toward the one who said his God promised their lives would not be lost. He issues orders for them to abandon ship. They all reach shore safely. This was not Paul's first shipwreck (*2 Cor. 11:25*). Scholars say Luke's description of the storm and shipwreck accurately show conditions on the ancient sea.

1-6. **The island was called Malta.** Also called Melita, but not to be confused with the Melita on the coast of Illyricum. This is the island south of Sicily. It is about sixty miles in circumference. **The natives.** BARBAROI does not mean barbarians as we use the word today, but simply means they could not speak Greek (*compare note on Acts 21:37*). "Natives" is the more accurate translation. [The modern people of Malta speak an Arabic pidgin, which has elements of Italian and English.] **So they built a fire.** This shows they were kind and considerate people. **Paul gathered up.** He did not stand

and made us all welcome. ³Paul gathered up a bundle of sticks and was putting them on the fire when a snake came out, on account of the heat, and fastened itself to his hand. ⁴The natives saw the snake hanging on Paul's hand and said to one another, "This man must be a murderer, but Fate will not let him live, even though he escaped from the sea." ⁵But Paul shook the snake off into the fire without being harmed at all. ⁶They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after waiting for a long time and not seeing anything unusual happening to him, they changed their minds and said, "He is a god!"

⁷Not far from that place were some fields that belonged to Publius, the chief of the island. He welcomed us kindly and for three days we were his guests. ⁸Publius' father was in bed, sick with fever and dysentery. Paul went into his room, prayed, placed his hands on him, and healed him. ⁹When this happened, all the other sick people on the island came and were healed. ¹⁰They gave us many gifts, and when we sailed they put on board what we needed for the voyage.

cold. Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall over dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. They honored us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

and watch but helped. **A snake came out.** A poisonous snake, perhaps like the "stinging snakes" God sent among the Israelites (*Num. 21:6*). **This man must be a murderer.** They believed God used poisonous snakes to punish the guilty. Therefore, they believe Paul to be guilty of some horrible crime. **He is a god!** This is the opposite of what happened at Lystra (*Acts 14:18-19*). They expected Paul's hand to swell, and to see him fall dead. Paul had the special gifts from the Holy Spirit, and this showed his authority from God (*compare Mark 16:17-18*). Not every one was given the same gift (*see 1 Cor. 12:4-11*), and probably only a few had them (*Acts 8:15-18*).

7-10. The chief of the island. Publius is probably the Roman governor of the island. It would be his duty to take care of the Roman officer, soldiers, and their prisoners as well. He was kind and generous to them. **Publius' father was in bed.** Seriously ill. Paul uses his power to heal the man. [The apostles had the complete set of gifts from the Spirit. The power to heal the sick was one of these. Those not apostles received only one gift (*2 Tim. 1:6*).] **When this happened.** This brought all the people to Paul. He healed the sick, and certainly used this opportunity to preach Christ to them as well. They gave Paul and the others all the supplies they needed to continue on to Rome.

From Malta to Rome

¹¹After three months we sailed away on a ship from Alexandria, called "The Twin Gods," which had spent the winter in the island. ¹²We arrived in the city of Syracuse and stayed there for three days. ¹³From there we sailed on and arrived in the city of Rhegium. The next day a wind began to blow from the south, and in two days we came to the town of Puteoli. ¹⁴We found some believers there who asked us to stay with them a week. And so we came to Rome. ¹⁵The brothers in Rome heard about us and came as far as Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

In Rome

¹⁶When we arrived in Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself with a soldier guarding him.

Arrival at Rome

After three months we put 11
out to sea in a ship that had
wintered in the island. It
was an Alexandrian ship
with the figurehead of the
twin gods Castor and Pol-
lux. We put in at Syracuse 12
and stayed there three days.
From there we set sail and 13
arrived at Rhegium. The
next day the south wind
came up, and on the follow-
ing day we reached Puteoli.
There we found some broth- 14
ers who invited us to spend a
week with them. And so we
went to Rome. The brothers 15
there had heard that we
were coming, and they
traveled as far as the Forum
of Appius and the Three
Taverns to meet us. At the
sight of these men Paul
thanked God and was en-
couraged. When we got to 16
Rome, Paul was allowed to
live by himself, with a sol-
dier to guard him.

11-14. **After three months.** This would be either February or March. The worst weather would be over. **The Twin Gods.** This is the literal translation. Castor and Pollux were known as "The Twin Gods," and were favorite *sea-gods* of the sailors. Their carved figures or images were mounted on the bow of the ship as figureheads. **Syracuse.** About eighty miles north, on the island of Sicily. **Three days.** Alexandrian ship usually stopped here, but they may have been waiting for a good wind. **From there we sailed on.** Some Greek manuscripts imply a wandering route to catch the shifting winds, but the best manuscripts say they simply lifted anchor and sailed on. **Rhegium.** On the point of the "toe" of Italy. They stayed one day, and then a south wind blew. **Puteoli.** On the bay, near Naples. This, and Ostia, near Rome, were where the grain ships came in. **We found some believers there.** There was a church at Rome and many believers in Italy at this time (*compare Rom. 16*). This congregation is in a busy seaport on the route from Palestine to Rome. **Who asked us to stay.** To eat the Lord's Supper. Compare note on *Acts 21:4*. Julius permits this.

15-16. **The brothers in Rome heard about us.** They already had Paul's Letter to the Romans, and probably there were some of his own converts in this group. His week in Puteoli gives them time to hear and come to meet him on the road. **Market of Appius** is forty-three miles from Rome. **Three Inns** is thirty-three miles from Rome. From Puteoli to Rome is about 135 miles. **He thanked God.** Paul is a prisoner, traveling on the crowded Appian Way. He is happy to see the brothers from Rome. **Paul was allowed to live by himself.** He was not put in prison with the others. This was God's providence!!! It is not likely Paul expected to come to Rome as a prisoner of the Roman government. But look at the results! He was permitted to live in the city, and he had an armed guard with him at all times (something he could not have bought). He was chained to the guard with a light chain, but he could and did talk freely with all who came to him. He could preach and teach, and those Jews who were his enemies could not touch him!!!

¹⁷After three days Paul called the local Jewish leaders to a meeting. When they gathered, he said to them, "My brothers! Even though I did nothing against our people or the customs that we received from our ancestors, I was made a prisoner in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. ¹⁸They questioned me and wanted to release me, because they found that I had done nothing for which I deserved to die. ¹⁹But when the Jews opposed this, I was forced to appeal to the Emperor, even though I had no accusation to make against my own people. ²⁰That is why I asked to see you and talk with you; because I have this chain on me for the sake of him for whom the people of Israel hope."

²¹They said to him, "We have not received any letters from Judea about you, nor have any of our brothers come from there with any news, or to say anything bad about you. ²²But we would like to hear your ideas, because we know that everywhere people speak against this party that you belong to."

²³So they set a date with Paul, and a larger number of them came that day to where Paul was staying. From morning till night he explained

Paul Preaches at Rome Under Guard

Three days later he called ¹⁷ together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them:

"My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They examined me ¹⁸ and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. ¹⁹ But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—not that I had any charge to bring against my own people. For this reason ²⁰ I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."

They replied, "We have ²¹ not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. But we want ²² to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect."

They arranged to meet ²³ Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and

17-22. **After three days.** Notice he could not "sit still." Likely the first three days had been spent visiting with the believers. Now he gets down to work! **The local Jewish leaders.** About the time Christ was born, there were 8,000 Jews in Rome. Emperor Claudius had ejected them in 50 A.D. (*Acts 18:2*), but they had been allowed to return in a short time. Just now, Nero's wife Poppaea was a "Gentile converted to Judaism." The leaders would include synagogue elders, teachers of the Law, and the heads of the most important families. **My brothers!** Luke may give us a condensed version of what Paul says, or Paul may have said it just like this. He explains why he is a prisoner. **For the sake of him.** The hope if Israel was the Messiah! See note on *Acts 22:22*. **We have not received any letters.** That is, any *official word* about Paul. They certainly knew of him and the charges made against him. **But we would like to hear your ideas.** What they have heard makes them want to find out more about Paul's teaching. **People speak against.** Such people as those Jews who wanted to kill Paul. But the foundation was then being laid for the horrible things Emperor Nero would do to persecute the Christians in just a few years.

23-29. **So they set a date with Paul.** A large number came to hear what he would say. **He tried to convince them.** Paul used the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets to preach Christ to them.

and gave them his message about the Kingdom of God. He tried to convince them about Jesus by quoting from the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets. ²⁴Some of them were convinced by his words, but others would not believe. ²⁵So they left, disagreeing among themselves, after Paul had said this one thing, "How well the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophet Isaiah to your ancestors!" ²⁶For he said,

'Go and say to this people:
You will listen and listen, but not understand;

you will look and look, but not see.

²⁷Because this people's minds are dull,
they have stopped up their ears,
and have closed their eyes.

Otherwise, their eyes would see,
their ears would hear,
their minds would understand,
and they would turn to me, says God,
and I would heal them.' "

²⁸And Paul concluded, "You are to know, then, that God's message of salvation has been sent to the Gentiles. They will listen!" [²⁹After Paul said this, the Jews left, arguing violently among themselves.]

declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. Some ²⁴were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. They disagreed ²⁵among themselves and began to leave, after Paul had made this final statement:

"The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

'Go to this people and ²⁶say,

You will be ever hearing
but never understanding;

you will be ever seeing
but never perceiving.

For this people's heart ²⁷has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see
with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts

and turn and I would
heal them.'

"Therefore I want you to ²⁸know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"*

Some of them were convinced. Faith comes through the message about Christ (*Rom. 10:17*). Each of them responded - either to believe, or to disbelieve. After Paul had said this one thing. This seems to imply that most of them disbelieved. How well! This is from *Isa. 6:9-10*. This quotation is found six times in the Gospels, here in Acts, and once in Romans. It is a horrible prediction of God's judgment on those who refuse to believe. See notes on *Matt. 13:14-17*. These words are the one final thing Paul says to them before going to the Gentiles. The Jews left, arguing violently. Even those who disbelieved, could not put Christ out of their minds.

* Some MSS add verse 29: After he said this, the Jews left, arguing vigorously among themselves.

³⁰For two years Paul lived there in a place he rented for himself, and welcomed all who came to see him. ³¹He preached about the Kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking with all boldness and freedom.

For two whole years Paul ³⁰ stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hin- ³¹ drance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

30-31. **For two years Paul lived there.** Christians in Rome and other places supported Paul during this time (*compare Phil. 4:18 and note*). Paul was able to do a great work here at Rome! This was God's providence in action (*see note on verse 16*). Paul's career ends here in Acts. Traditional history says he was released from his imprisonment, and made tours of missions to Spain and to the East. But Scripture tells us nothing of this. Later he was again accused by his Jewish enemies, this time to be put in the common prison, during which time he wrote 2 Timothy. Just a few months after that, he was executed at Rome in 67 or 68 A.D. *Ramsay* says Paul had been a Christian for 35 years, and was sixty-eight years of age when he was executed.