

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES^a

Introduction

1 Dear Theophilus:^b

I wrote my first book about all the things that Jesus did and taught, ²up to the day when he was taken up. On that day, through the Holy Spirit, he gave instructions to the apostles that he had chosen. ³He had also presented himself to them after his suffering, and had given them lots of convincing proofs^c that he was alive. Over a period of forty days, he'd appeared to them and told them things about the kingdom of God. ⁴And he got them together and instructed them^d not to leave Jerusalem. "No," he told them, "wait for the Father's promise, which you've heard about from me. ⁵Because John baptized in water, but you're going to be baptized in the Holy Spirit just a few days^e from now."

Jesus Goes up to Heaven (Mk 16:19-20; Lk. 24:50-53)

⁶So when they'd gotten together, they asked him this question: "Lord,^f is this the time when you're going to give the kingdom back to Israel?" ⁷And he said to them, "The Father has set times and moments in history^g by his own authority, and it's not yours to know them. ⁸But you're going to receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. And you're going to be my witnesses—in Jerusalem and all of Judea^h and Samaria, and to the farthest reaches of the earth." ⁹And after he'd said those things, they watched as he was lifted up. And a cloud hid him from their sight.ⁱ ¹⁰And as they were staring towards heaven where he'd gone, suddenly two men were standing there with

^a This book does not have a title in the original—one could easily name it "The Good News According to Luke's Account, Vol. 2: The Birth of the Christian Community and the Missionary Journeys of Paul" (see Acts 1:1). Acts appears to be passed down through the centuries in two editions, the one apparently a slightly longer re-write of the other. Although it is not impossible that Luke himself is the one who did the re-write, I have followed the briefer, and probably earlier, of the two editions.

^b Theophilus (prn. *thiyy-offa-las*) appears to be a Roman noble or official who is a Christian. See also Luke 1:1-4. Theophilus may be a name the person took at baptism, because it means "lover of God."

^c Lit. "...his suffering, with many decisive proofs."

^d Or "And as he was eating with them, he instructed them."

^e Lit. "after these not many days."

^f This word can also mean "Master" or "Teacher." But Jesus' followers are now far more than students. To them, he is now confirmed to be their Messiah (see Lk 24:21-27), their Lord and King.

^g Lit. "times and seasons."

^h Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

ⁱ Lit. "eyes."

them, in white clothes. ¹¹And they said, “Why are you Galileans^a standing^b here looking^c towards heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, is going to come back just the same way as you watched him go into heaven.

The Apostles Choose Matthias to Replace Judas

¹²Then they went back to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives. It’s near Jerusalem—about a Sabbath day’s walk.^d ¹³And when they went into the city, they went up to the room where they were staying. There was Peter, John and James, Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew^e and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus,^f Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴They were all devoting themselves to prayer, with a single will. They were with the women, and Jesus’ mother Mary, and his brothers.

¹⁵And one time during those days, Peter stood up in the middle of the brothers to speak. (There was a gathering^g there of about a hundred and twenty people.^h)

¹⁶“Gentlemen, brothers!ⁱ Through the mouth of David, the Holy Spirit spoke ahead of time about Judas, who served as a guide to the people who arrested Jesus. That scripture had to be fulfilled:^j ¹⁷Because he was counted as one of us, and he was given his share in this ministry.”

(¹⁸Now, this Judas bought a field with the pay he got for his crime. And he fell on his face there and split open^k—and all his insides spilled out. ¹⁹And what happened to him became known to everyone living in Jerusalem. So that field got to be called Hakeldama^l in their language—which means “Blood Field.”)

²⁰“Because scripture says^m in the book of Psalms,

His property is to be empty—
Nobody is to live on it.ⁿ

And,

Somebody else is to take on his responsibility.^o

^a Prn. *gal-a-lee-ans*.

^b Lit. “Men of Galilee, why are you standing.”

^c Some mss have “staring.”

^d That is, about three-fourths of a mile.

^e Prn. *bar-tholl-o-mew*.

^f Prn. *al-fee-us* or *al-fee-us*.

^g Lit. “a crowd all together.”

^h Lit. “names.”

ⁱ Lit. “Brother men.” He is specifically addressing the males in the audience.

^j Ps. 41:9.

^k Or “And he fell on his face and split open down the middle.”

^l Prn. *hak-kell-da-ma*.

^m Lit. “it is written.”

ⁿ Ps. 69:25.

^o Lit. “oversight.” Ps. 109:8.

21 So somebody else has to become a witness with us of Jesus' resurrection. He should be one of the men who have been with us all the time that Jesus walked around with us^a—22 starting from the baptism of John, and right up to the day when Jesus was taken up from us.^b 23 And they put forward two people: Joseph Barsabbas^c (who was known as Justus), and Matthias.^d 24 And they prayed: "Lord, you're the one who knows everyone's heart. Point out the one of these two that you've chosen 25 to take this place^e of ministry and mission^f—which Judas turned away from and went to his own place." 26 And they drew lots^g for them, and Matthias was chosen.^h So he was added to the eleven apostles.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 When the Day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly a noise came from heaven, like the rushing of a strong wind. And it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And something like tongues of fire appeared to them. The tongues of fire separated and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak other languages, as the Spirit gave them the ability to speak.

5 Now, there were devout Jews living in Jerusalem from every country in the world.ⁱ 6 And when they heard this sound, a crowd gathered. And they were confused, because each one of them was hearing them speak in their own language. 7 They were shocked and amazed. They were saying, "Look, aren't all these people who are speaking Galileans?^j 8 So how are we each hearing them in our own language—the one we grew up with?^k 9 Wére Parthians, Medes, and Elamites.^l We have homes in Mesopotamia,^m Judea,ⁿ Cappadocia,^o Pontus, Asia, 10 Phrygia,^p Pamphylia,^q Egypt—even visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism.^r Wére Cretans and Arabs. They're telling the great deeds of God in our own languages." 12 And they were all shocked, and

^a Lit. "came and went among us."

^b Lit. "It is necessary, therefore, that one of the men who have gone along with us during all the time when Jesus came in and went out among us—starting from the baptism of John, and until the day on which he was taken up from us—that one of these should become a witness of his resurrection with us."

^c Prn. *bar-sobb-us*.

^d Prn. *ma-thye-us*.

^e Some mss have, "portion."

^f Or, more Traditionally: "this apostolic ministry." See Mk 3:14; Lk. 6:13; nt. on Gal. 1:1.

^g Lit. "they cast lots." Tokens were put into a container for each person, then drawn out without looking, to see whose was chosen.

^h Lit. "they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias."

ⁱ Lit. "every nation under the heavens."

^j Prn. *gal-a-lee-ans*. That is, people from Galilee in northern Israel.

^k Lit. "the dialect to which we were born."

^l Prn. *ee-la-mytes*.

^m Prn. *mess-o-po-tay-mee-a*.

ⁿ Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

^o Prn. *kap-pa-doe-sba*.

^p Prn. *fridge-ee-a*.

^q Prn. *pam-fill-ee-a*.

^r Traditionally: "proselytes."

stood there bewildered. They were saying to one another, “What can this mean?”¹³ But other people were scoffing at them. They were saying, “They’re drunk on cheap wine.”^a

Peter Preaches to the Crowd

¹⁴ But Peter stood together with the eleven and raised his voice. He shouted to them: “Fellow^b Jews!^c All of you who live in Jerusalem! Let me explain this to you—listen to what I have to say!^d
¹⁵ These people aren’t drunk like you think. After all, it’s nine o’clock in the morning. ¹⁶ No, this is what the prophet Joel talked about:^e

¹⁷ And in the last days, God says,
I’m going to pour out my Spirit on all people.^f
And your sons and daughters are going to prophesy;^g
And your young ones are going to see visions,
And your elders are going to dream dreams.
¹⁸ And in those days I’m going to pour out my Spirit on my servants, both men and women,
and they’re going to prophesy.^h
¹⁹ And I’m going to show wonders in heaven above,
And miraclesⁱ on the earth below:
Blood and fire and clouds of smoke.
²⁰ The sun is going to be turned dark,^j
And the moon is going to be turned the color of blood,
Before the great and glorious^k Day of the Sovereign One comes,
²¹ And everyone that calls on the name of the Sovereign One is going to be saved.

²² Fellow Israelites, listen to this!^l Jesus of Nazareth is a man whose genuineness was proven to you by God—by the miracles,^m wonders, and displays of power that God did in front of youⁿ through him. And you all know it.^o ²³ This man, in the specific will and foreknowledge of God, was given over to you by the hand of lawless people. And you killed him by hanging him on a cross. ²⁴ But

^a Lit. “sweet,” i.e. new, un-aged wine.

^b Lit. “Men.”

^c Or “Judeans.”

^d Lit. “Let this be known to you, and listen to my words.”

^e Lit. “This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel.” See Joel 2:28-32.

^f Lit. “all flesh.”

^g Prn. *proff-a-sye*.

^h Some mss lack the words “and they’re going to prophesy”—probably because they’re not in the original passage from Joel. Peter’s quotation is not completely word-for-word.

ⁱ Traditionally: “signs.”

^j Lit. “turned to darkness.”

^k Some mss lack the words “and glorious.”

^l Lit. “Men, Israelites, listen to these words.”

^m Traditionally: “signs.”

ⁿ Lit. “in the midst of you.”

^o Lit. “...through him, as you yourselves know.”

God has resurrected him! God freed him from the agony^a of death, because it wasn't possible for him remain in its power.^b ²⁵After all, David says, referring to Jesus,

I've always had the Sovereign One right in front of me:
 God is at my right side, so I'm not going to lose my confidence.^c
²⁶That's why my heart is glad and my tongue celebrates,
 And my body^d itself is still going to live in hope.
²⁷Because you're not going to leave my soul in Hades,^e
 And you're not going to give your holy one over to face decay:
²⁸You've shown me^f the paths of life, and
 You're going to fill me full of joy with your presence.^g

²⁹Gentlemen, brothers:^h I can tell you with confidence about our ancestor, David: he not only died and was buried, but his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰But he was a prophet. And he knew that God had sworn an oath to him: that his descendant, who would come from his own body, was going to sit on his throne.ⁱ ³¹And because he knew ahead of time about the resurrection of Messiah,^j he said,

He wasn't abandoned to Hades,
 And his flesh didn't experience decay.^k

³²This is Jesus: God has raised him. We're all witnesses of it: ³³he's been raised up to God's right side. And he has received the promised Holy Spirit from the Father, and has poured out what you're seeing and hearing. ³⁴After all, David didn't go up into heaven.^l Because^m he says himself:

The Sovereign One said to my Lord,
 Sit on my right,
³⁵Until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.ⁿ

³⁶So every family in Israel should know this for a fact:^o that God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah—the very Jesus^p that you hung on a cross.”

^a Lit. “pangs.”

^b Lit. “to be being held by it.”

^c Lit. “I'm not going to be shaken.”

^d Lit. “my flesh.”

^e See “Bible Words.”

^f Lit. “You've made known to me.”

^g Ps. 16:8-11.

^h Lit. “Brother men.”

ⁱ Lit. “that someone from the fruit of his loins was to sit on his throne.” Ps. 132:11; 2 Sam. 7:12-13.

^j See “Bible Words.”

^k Ps. 16:10.

^l Lit. “the heavens.”

^m Lit. “but.”

ⁿ Ps. 110:1.

^o Lit. “Therefore let every house/household in Israel know with certainty.”

^p Lit. “this Jesus.”

Many Become Believers and are Baptized; A Community is Born

37And when they heard that, they were devastated.^a And they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” 38And Peter said to them, “Change your hearts,^b and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus the Messiah, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you’ll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39Because the promise of the Spirit is for you, and for your children, and for everyone far away—whoever our Sovereign God invites.”

40And Peter said lots of other things as he testified; and he was appealing to them, saying, “Get saved^c from this perverse generation!”^d 41So those who accepted his message got baptized—and about three thousand people^e were added to Jesus’ followers that day. 42And they were faithfully committed to the teaching of the apostles, to getting together, to eating together, and to prayer.^f 43Everyone was in a state of awe.^g And God was doing lots of wonders and miracles^h through the apostles.ⁱ 44And all the believers^j were together, and were sharing everything they had. 45And they were selling their property and possessions, and were handing out the proceeds^k to everyone, as people had need. 46And every day they all faithfully attended the Temple together,^l and they would eat together in people’s homes.^m They’d share meals with joyful and sincere hearts. 47They were praising God, and were in good favor with everyone.ⁿ And day by day, the Lord was adding more people to their number who were being saved.^o

Peter Heals a Paralyzed Man in the Temple

3 One day, Peter and John went up to the Temple for the three o’clock prayers. 2And a man was being carried along. He had been unable to walk from birth, and every day they used to put him in front of the Temple gate called “Beautiful.” That way, he could ask for donations from people going into the Temple. 3When he saw Peter and John about to go into the Temple, he asked them for a donation. 4And Peter looked straight at him, and so did John. Peter said, “Look at us.” 5And he started paying attention to them. (He was expecting to get a donation from them).

^a Lit. “stabbed to the heart.”

^b Traditionally: “Repent” (see “Bible Words”).

^c Or “Save yourselves.”

^d See “Bible Words” under “generation.”

^e Lit. “souls.”

^f Lit. “And they were devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles, and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers.”

^g Lit. “And awe/fear/reverence was being on every soul.”

^h Lit. “And lots of wonders and signs were being done,” i.e. being done by God. This is known as a “divine passive.”

ⁱ The ancient mss have a number of variations at this place, such as adding the words “in Jerusalem” here, and then indicating in various ways that the people of Jerusalem (not just the believers) were in a continuous state of awe. It seems possible that copyists stumbled over the idea that Christians, as opposed to non-Christians, should be awe-struck by these happenings.

^j Some mss have, “those who had believed.”

^k Lit. “and were distributing them” (i.e. distributing the money gained by selling them).

^l Or “Every day they devoted themselves to worship in the Temple, in total unity.”

^m Lit. “...in the Temple, breaking bread house to house.”

ⁿ Lit. “with the whole people.”

^o Many copyists seem to have tripped over the expression “to their number,” resulting in different small variations, such as replacing this phrase with “to the community.”

6But Peter said, “I don’t have any money.^a But I’ll give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus the Messiah of Nazareth, walk!”^b 7And grabbing him by the right hand, Peter raised him up. And all at once his feet and ankles were strengthened, and he leaped to his feet and began walking. And he went into the Temple with them—walking and leaping, and praising God. 8And all the people saw him walking and praising God, 9and people were recognizing him as the same person who had been sitting at the Temple’s Beautiful Gate asking for donations. And they were completely amazed^c and in awe over what had happened to him.

Peter Preaches in the Temple

11And while he was holding onto Peter and John, all the people ran up to them in total amazement.^d They were at the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. 12And when Peter saw what was happening, he spoke out to the people: “Fellow Israelites, why are you amazed at this? Why are you staring at us as though we’ve made this man walk by our own power or religiousness?^e 13The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of all our ancestors,^f has glorified Jesus, God’s Son—the man you betrayed and denounced^g in front of Pilate. Pilate’s verdict was to release him! 14But you denounced^h the Holy and Just One, and you demanded for a murderer to be given to you. 15And you killed the Founderⁱ of Life. But God has raised him from among the dead, and we’re witnesses to that fact.^j 16And do you see this man? You know him. The name of Jesus has made him strong—he was healed by faith in Jesus’ name.^k And the faith that comes through Jesus has given him this complete health right in front of you all. 17Now brothers, I also know that you acted in ignorance, just like your leaders did, too. 18But that’s how God fulfilled the things about the Messiah’s^l sufferings that had been announced ahead of time through all^m of the prophets. 19So change your hearts,ⁿ and turn to God to have your sins wiped away. 20That way, times of refreshment^o can come from the presence of the Sovereign One. And God will send Jesus, the Messiah chosen for you. 21He has to remain in heaven until the time when everything will be restored.^p God has spoken about that time from the beginning of the world, through the mouths of God’s holy prophets. 22For example, Moses said:

^a Lit. “Silver and gold I don’t possess.”

^b A number of ancient mss have, “get up and walk.” Did copyists take the words out because Peter then lifts him to his feet (v. 7), or did they add them because “get up and walk” is familiar from the Gospels (e.g. Mt. 9:5; Mk 2:9; Lk. 5:23; Jn 5:8)? The probabilities are pretty evenly divided.

^c Lit. “filled with amazement.”

^d One important early ms has this part happening as Peter, John and the man go *out* of the Temple.

^e Or “reverence for God,” or “piety.”

^f Exod. 3:6, 15.

^g Or “denied,” or “disowned.”

^h Or “denied,” or “disowned.”

ⁱ Or “Prince,” or “Author,” or “Champion.”

^j Lit. “...dead, of which we are witnesses.”

^k Lit. “And on the basis of faith in his name, his name has strengthened this one whom you are looking at and know.”

See “Bible Words” under “name.”

^l See “Bible Words.”

^m Lit. “through the mouths of all.”

ⁿ Traditionally: “repent” (see “Bible Words”).

^o Or “relief.”

^p Lit. “...for you, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration.”

The Sovereign One, your God, is going to raise up a prophet like me from among your brothers. Listen to him, to everything that he says to you. ²³And whoever doesn't^a listen to that prophet is going to be completely cut off from the people.^b

²⁴And all the prophets, from Samuel onwards—all those who have said anything—have predicted these days. ²⁵And you are their heirs! And you're heirs of the covenant^c that God made with your^d ancestors. God said to Abraham,

...and all the families of the earth are going to be blessed by your offspring.^e

²⁶The blessing is for you first! God has raised up^f God's Servant,^g and has sent him to bless you by turning each of you from the evil things that you do.^h

Peter and John are Arrested and Brought in Front of the High Council

4 Now, as they were speaking to the people, the priestsⁱ and the Temple Guard and the Sadducees^j came up to them. ²They were all upset—because Peter and John were teaching the people, and because they were proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from among the dead. ³They grabbed Peter and John and threw them in prison until the next day—because it was already evening. ⁴But lots of people who heard their message became believers.^k And the number of the men who believed got to be about five thousand.

⁵The next morning, the leaders, elders and scripture experts got together in Jerusalem. ⁶Annas the high priest was there; so were Caiaphas^l and John and Alexander—everyone in the high priest's family.^m ⁷And they stood Peter and John in front of them allⁿ and started asking them, "By what power, or by what name, have you done this?" ⁸Then Peter got filled with the Holy Spirit. He said to them, "Priests and elders of the people,^o ⁹are we being questioned today about a good deed done for a sick man—about how he was healed? ¹⁰If so, you—and all the people of Israel—should know^p that it was in the name of Jesus the Messiah, from Nazareth. He's the one you hung on a cross, but God raised him from among the dead. It is in *his* name that this man is standing^q in front of you as a healthy person. ¹¹Jesus is

^a Lit. "And it's going to be that every soul that doesn't."

^b Deut. 18:19; Lev. 23:29.

^c Lit. "You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant." See "Bible Words" under "covenant."

^d Some mss have, "our."

^e Or "seed." Gen. 22:18; 26:4.

^f Or "God has resurrected."

^g Or "Child" or "Son."

^h Lit. "from your evils/wickednesses."

ⁱ Some mss have, "chief priests."

^j Prn. *sadd-yoo-seez*.

^k Or simply, "believed."

^l Prn. *kay-a-fuss*.

^m Lit. "—and whoever was of high-priestly descent."

ⁿ Lit. "in the middle."

^o Some mss have "Priests of the people and elders of Israel."

^p Lit. "let it be known to all of you and to the whole people of Israel."

^q Lit. "has come to be standing."

The stone that was rejected by you, the builders,
Which has become the cornerstone.^a

¹²There's no salvation in anyone else—in all the world, God has given no other name to humanity for the salvation we need.^b ¹³The leaders saw Peter and John's boldness, and they realized that they were uneducated, ordinary men. They were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. ¹⁴But^c since they saw the man who had been healed standing there with them, they had nothing to say back to them. ¹⁵They ordered them to leave the Council, and they started discussing it together. ¹⁶They were saying, "What shall we do with these people? After all, it's obvious to everybody who lives in Jerusalem that a famous miracle has happened through them. We can't deny it. ¹⁷But let's make sure that it isn't spread even further in the population^d—let's warn them that from now on they're not to say anything to anybody in this name." ¹⁸So^e they called Peter and John, and they ordered them that they were not ever^f to speak or teach in Jesus' name. ¹⁹But Peter and John said back to them, "You can decide whether it's right in God's eyes to listen to you instead of God. ²⁰Because we can't keep from talking^g about the things that we've seen and heard." ²¹And when they'd threatened them further, they let them go. They couldn't find any way to punish them, because of the people. They were all glorifying^h God over what happened—²²after all, the man who received this miraculous healingⁱ was over forty years old.

The Believers Praise God and Pray for Boldness

²³When Peter and John were released, they went to their own people and told them about all the things the chief priests and elders had said. ²⁴When they heard the story, they all started praising God at once! They said, "Sovereign One! You're the One

who made the sky and the earth and the sea, and everything in them!^k

²⁵You spoke through the mouth of your servant, our ancestor David. Through the Holy Spirit, you said,^l

Why were the nations enraged?
Why did the peoples plan foolish things?
²⁶Earth's rulers took their stand,

^a Lit. "the head of the corner." Ps. 118:22. Peter has added the word "you" to the quotation.

^b Lit. "And there is salvation in no one else, for neither is there a different name under heaven which is given among human beings in which we must be saved."

^c Lit. "And."

^d Lit. "into the people (sg)."

^e Lit. "And."

^f Or "under any circumstances."

^g Lit. "Because we can't not talk."

^h See "Bible Words" under "glory, glorify."

ⁱ Lit. "the man upon whom this miracle of healing occurred."

^j Lit. "all together they lifted up a voice to God."

^k Exod. 20:11; Ps. 146:6.

^l The earliest available text here is too clumsy to have been written this way by Luke. It seems to have too many words. But what is the extra material? Is it "Through the Holy Spirit," "the mouth of," "our ancestor," or "your servant"? There's no way of deciding with any confidence.

And the leaders gathered all together,
Against the Sovereign God, and against God's Messiah.^a

27And^b it's true: in this city, Herod^c and Pontius Pilate^d got together with the other nations and with the peoples of Israel. They came against your holy servant^e Jesus, the One you anointed—and they did what your hand and your will had foreordained would happen. 29So^f now, Sovereign One, notice their threats. Give your servants the gift of speaking your message with total boldness. 30Help us by reaching out your hand to heal. And let miracles and wonders happen through the name of your holy servant^e Jesus.” 31And when they'd prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began boldly speaking God's message.

The Believers Share their Possessions

32The whole group of those who had become believers^h was of one heart and one soul.ⁱ And no one was claiming^j that any of their things was private property—just the opposite. They were holding everything in common. 33And the apostles were testifying with great power to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Powerful grace was on them all. 34And there wasn't anyone needy among them. Because those who owned pieces of property or houses would sell them, and they would bring the proceeds of the sales 35and lay them at the feet of the apostles. The proceeds would then be distributed to individuals according to their needs.^k 36For example, there was Joseph, who was named Barnabas by the apostles. (That name means Son of Encouragement). He was a Levite^l from Cyprus, 37and owned a piece of property. He sold it, and he brought the money and laid it at the feet of the apostles.

A Couple Lies about a Gift of Land—And Both Die Suddenly

5 Now a certain man named Ananias,^m together with his wife Sapphira,ⁿ also sold some property. 2And he secretly held back the money for himself—and his wife was in on it.^o And he brought part of the money and laid it at the feet of the apostles. 3But Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has made you dare^p to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to hold back some of the value of the

^a See “Bible Words.”

^b Lit. “For.”

^c Prn. *herr-edd*.

^d Prn. *ponsh-us pye-lit*.

^e Or “child.”

^f Lit. “And.”

^g Or “child.”

^h Or simply, “of those who believed.”

ⁱ Some mss add here, “and there was no division at all between them.”

^j Lit. “saying.”

^k Lit. “...feet, and they would be distributed to each, as anyone would have a need.”

^l Prn. *lee-vyte*.

^m Prn. *ann-a-nye-us*.

ⁿ Prn. *saff-eye-ra*.

^o Or “And with the connivance of his wife, he embezzled some of the proceeds.”

^p Or, literally, “why has Satan filled your heart.” “Fill the heart” is a Hebraism meaning “to dare”: see Eccl. 8:11 and Est. 7:5. Some copyists, tripping over this language, appear to have changed it to “why has Satan maimed your heart,” and “why has Satan tempted your heart.”

property for yourself? ⁴When it was still there, wasn't it still yours?^a And when it had been sold, wasn't it still up to you^b what to do with the proceeds? Why have you set your heart on doing this? You haven't lied to human beings, but to God!" ⁵When Ananias heard those words, he collapsed and died. And everyone who heard about it was deeply frightened.^c ⁶But the younger men got up and covered him up, carried him out, and buried him.

⁷Now about three hours went by, and his wife came in. She didn't know what had happened. ⁸Peter said to her, "Tell me, is this how much the property was sold for?" And she said, "Yes, that's the amount." ⁹Peter said to her, "How could you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Sovereign One? Look—the people^d who buried your husband are at the door, and they're going to carry you out too." ¹⁰And she immediately collapsed at his feet and died. When the young men came in, they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her with her husband. ¹¹And the whole community was deeply frightened, and so was everybody who heard about it.^e

The Apostles Heal Lots of People

¹²The apostles were doing lots of miracles and wonders in public.^f They'd all get together at Solomon's Colonnade,^g ¹³and none of the other people dared to join them. All the same, the public thought very highly of them. ¹⁴And even larger numbers of men—and women—were believing and coming over to the Lord.^h ¹⁵It even got to the point that people carried their sick folks out into the streets and laid them on cots and sleeping mats. That way, when Peter came, at least his shadow might fall on some of them. ¹⁶And a crowd also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem. They were bringing sick people, and people disturbed by uncleanⁱ spirits, and all of them were getting healed.

The Jewish Leaders Persecute the Apostles

¹⁷But the high priest, and all the people with him—that is, the Sadducee^j party—got full of jealousy. ¹⁸They arrested^k the apostles and put them in the public jail. ¹⁹But an angel of the Sovereign One opened the doors of the jail at night and led them out. The angel said, ²⁰"Go stand in the Temple, and tell the people everything about this Life." ²¹When they heard that, they went into the Temple at dawn and began to teach. Then the high priest arrived, together with his people. They called together the High Council and all the elders of Israel, and they sent people to the jail to get the apostles. ²²But when the officers arrived, they didn't find them in the jail, so they went back. ²³They reported: "We found the jail locked and all secure, and the guards were standing

^a Or, just possibly, "Surely that property used to be yours!" (This reading sees a Hebraism in which the repetition of the verb expresses emphasis.)

^b Lit. "did it not remain in your authority."

^c Lit. "and great fear came to be on all the hearers."

^d Lit. "the feet of those."

^e Lit. "and great fear was on the community and on all those who heard these things."

^f Lit. "And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were happening amidst the people [sg.]."

^g This is a place in front of the Temple (see 3:11-12). No doubt it's talking about the people who believed that Jesus was the Messiah—not just the apostles.

^h Lit. "were being added, believing, to the Lord." By "the Lord," he means Jesus.

ⁱ See "Bible Words."

^j Prn. *sad-yoo-see*.

^k Lit. "They put their hands on."

in front of the doors. But when we opened them, we didn't find anyone." 24 When the captain of the Temple Guard and the chief priests heard that, they didn't know *what* to think. What could this be? 25 But then someone arrived and reported to them, "Look, the men you put in jail are standing there in the Temple and teaching the people!" 26 Then the captain went off with his officers and brought them. They didn't use force, because they were afraid of the public. They were worried about getting stoned.^a

27 So they brought them and stood them in the Council. And the high priest asked them, 28 "We've given you a formal order not to teach in this name, and look!^b You've filled Jerusalem with your teaching. You even want to make us responsible for this man's death!"^c 29 Peter and the other apostles said back to him, "We have to obey^d God, rather than human beings. 30 The God of our ancestors has raised Jesus, whom you murdered by hanging him on a stake.^e 31 God has lifted him up to God's right side as Leader and Savior, to give Israel a change of heart^f and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we're witnesses^g of these things. And so is the Holy Spirit, whom^h God has given to those who obey God."

33 When they heard that, they were totally furious, and wantedⁱ to kill them. 34 But a certain Pharisee^j in the Council, named Gamaliel,^k stood up. He was a teacher of the Law respected by all the people. He ordered the men to be put outside for a moment. 35 He said to the Council, "Fellow Israelites,^l be cautious about what you're wanting to do to these people. 36 After all, some time ago Theudas^m got up and was claiming he was something or other, and about four hundred men joined him—but he was killed, and all the people that believed in him were scattered and died out.ⁿ 37 After that, Judas the Galilean^o got up, at the time of the census. He led a group of people off after him in a rebellion, and he died too. And all the people that believed in him were scattered. 38 So in this case I'm saying to you, have nothing to do with these people. Let them go. Because if this plan or intention of theirs is from human beings, it'll fizzle out. 39 But if it's from God, you won't be able to destroy them—and you'll even find yourself fighting against God."^p And they were persuaded by Gamaliel.

^a Lit. "...the people [sg.] that they not be stoned."

^b Some mss have, "Haven't we given you a formal order not to teach in this name? And look!"

^c Lit. "...teaching, and you want to bring this man's blood on us."

^d Lit. "It's necessary to obey."

^e Or "on a tree" (see Deut. 21:23). For Jews as well as Romans, execution by hanging on a stake or a tree was the most disgraceful manner of death.

^f Traditionally: "repentance" (see "Bible Words").

^g Some mss have, "And we're his witnesses," probably an addition based on the wording Acts 1:8.

^h Or "which."

ⁱ Some mss have, "and were deciding to kill them."

^j Prn. *ferr-a-see*.

^k Prn. *gam-may-lee-ell*.

^l Lit. "Israelite men."

^m Prn. *thyoo-das*.

ⁿ Lit. "became into nothing."

^o Prn. *gal-a-lee-an*.

^p Lit. "—lest you be found God-fighters."

40They called in the apostles, and when they'd given them a beating, they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41So the apostles were celebrating as they went out from the High Council. Because they'd been considered worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus. 42And every day in the Temple, and from house to house, they kept on teaching and proclaiming the good news of the Messiah, Jesus.

The Believers Choose Seven Managers for the Food Distribution Work

6 Around that time,^a as the number of followers was growing, a grievance arose. The Greek-speaking Jews complained to the Hebrew speakers that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. 2So the Twelve^b called together the whole group of the followers and said, "It's not good for us to neglect preaching God's word to handle the food distribution.^c 3So brothers and sisters, choose from among you seven men known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We'll put them in charge of this responsibility. 4Then we'll devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of preaching."^d 5And that idea pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus,^e Nicanor,^f Timon,^g Parmenas,^h and Nicolaus,ⁱ a proselyte^j from Antioch.^k 6 They presented these men to the apostles, and the apostles prayed and laid their hands on them.^l

7Now, the word of God was spreading, and the number of followers of Jesus in Jerusalem was growing quickly. A large number of the priests had also accepted the faith.^m

Stephen is Arrested and Brought in Front of the High Council

8Stephen was full of grace and power, and used to do great wonders and miraclesⁿ in public.^o 9But some people from the "Synagogue^p of Freedmen" stood against him. And so did some Cyrenians^q and Alexandrians, and people from Cilicia^r and Asia Minor. They used to argue with Stephen. 10But^s they wouldn't be able to resist his wisdom, and he would speak with the power of the

^a Lit. "And in these days."

^b That is, the twelve apostles.

^c Or "to administrate finances."

^d Lit. "to the ministry of the word."

^e Prn. *prok-o-ras*.

^f Prn. *nik-kay-nor*.

^g Prn. *tye-man*.

^h Prn. *par-men-as*.

ⁱ Prn. *nik-ko-lay-as*.

^j Prn. *pross-a-lyte*.

^k Prn. *ant-ee-okk*.

^l Laying hands on a person in prayer seems to be a way of conferring the Holy Spirit on them (see Acts 8:17). Since Stephen already is "filled with the Holy Spirit," perhaps in this case the Spirit is being invoked to empower the seven for this particular ministry.

^m Or "were also obeying the faith."

ⁿ Traditionally: "signs."

^o Lit. "amidst the people [sg.]."

^p Prn. *sinn-a-gogg*.

^q Prn. *sye-ree-nee-ans*.

^r Prn. *sil-liss-ee-ans*.

^s Lit. "and."

Spirit.^a 11 Then they got some men to tell lies about him. They said, “We have heard him saying blasphemous things towards Moses and God. 12 And they stirred up the people and the elders and scripture experts. They came up and violently grabbed him. And they dragged him in front of the High Council. 13 Then they put forward false witnesses who said, “This man never stops staying things against this Temple^b and against the Law of Moses. 14 For example, we’ve heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth is going to tear down this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us.” 15 And when all the people sitting on the Council looked hard at Stephen, they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Stephen’s Speech to the High Council

7 The high priest said, “Is all this true?” And Stephen said,
2 Gentlemen—brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia.^c This was before he settled in Haran.^d 3 God said to him,

Leave your land and your people, and come to the land that I’m going to show you.^e

4 Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans^f and settled in Haran. He moved from there after the death of his father, and came to this land—where you now live. 5 And God didn’t give him any inheritance^g in it—not even one square yard.^h Yet God promised

to give it to him as a possession—to him and his descendants,ⁱ

even though Abraham was childless. 6 And God put it this way:

Your^j descendants are going to live as foreigners in a foreign land. They’re going to enslave your descendants and mistreat them for four hundred years.^k

And God said,

7 And I’m going to judge the nation that they are going to serve as slaves. After that they’re going to leave, and they’re going to serve me in this place.^l

8 And God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision.^m And so Abraham had Isaac, and circumcised^a him on the eighth day. And Isaac circumcised Jacob, and Jacob circumcised the twelve patriarchs.

^a Lit. “...the wisdom and the power of the Spirit with which he spoke.”

^b Lit. “against this holy place.” The High Council (the Sanhedrin) met in the Temple.

^c Prn. *mess-o-po-tay-mee-a*.

^d Prn. *har-an*.

^e Gen. 12:1.

^f Prn. *kal-dee-ans*.

^g In the ancient Middle East, inheritance was chiefly in the form of land to live on and cultivate for food.

^h Lit. “not even a footstep,” which is to say, not even a single pace’s worth. See Deut. 2:5 for this expression.

ⁱ Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:2, 18; 17:8; 24:7; 48:4.

^j Lit. “His.”

^k Gen. 15:13-14.

^l Gen. 15:13-14; Exod. 3:12.

^m Prn. *sir-kum-sizz-yen*.

9Now, the patriarchs were envious of Joseph, and sold him into slavery in Egypt. But^b God was with him, 10and rescued him from all his troubles. And

God gave Joseph favor and wisdom in the eyes of Pharaoh, the king of the Egyptians. And Pharaoh appointed him governor of Egypt and of his whole estate. 11Then there came a famine over all of Egypt and Canaan.^c

There was great suffering,^d and our ancestors couldn't find anything to eat. 12Then Jacob heard that there was food^e in Egypt. He sent off our twelve ancestors on their first visit. 13On their second visit, Joseph was recognized by his brothers, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family.^f 14Then Joseph sent for his father Jacob, and for his whole extended family of seventy-five people. 15So Jacob came down to Egypt. And he died, as did our ancestors the patriarchs. 16And they were transported to Shechem^g and buried there, in the tomb that Abraham had purchased^h from the sons of Hamorⁱ at Shechem.

17As the time was getting close for the fulfillment of God's solemn promise to Abraham, our people grew very numerous^k in Egypt. 18Then^l came a different king, who hadn't known Joseph. 19This king took advantage of our clan, and forced our ancestors to leave their babies outdoors to die.^m 20At that time, Moses was born. And he was a child beautiful to God. For three months he was cared for in his father's house, 21and then he was left outdoors. When that happened, Pharaoh's daughter rescued him,ⁿ and raised him as her own son. 22And so Moses became trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. He was powerful in speech and in action.^o

23When he got to be forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his Israelite brothers and sisters. 24He saw somebody being treated unjustly, and defended the person by killing the Egyptian.^p 25He was hoping his own people would understand that God was rescuing them through him.^q But they didn't. 26The next day he showed up when they were fighting, and he tried to reconcile them

^a Prn. *sir-kum-sized*.

^b Lit. "And."

^c Prn. *kay-nen*. Gen. 41:37-39; 41:40-44; 54; 42:5.

^d Lit. "...Canaan, and great trouble/affliction."

^e Or "grain."

^f Lit. "and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh."

^g Prn. *shee-ken*.

^h Lit. "bought for a price of silver."

ⁱ Prn. *hay-mer*.

^j Some mss have, "of Shechem."

^k Lit. "As the time of the promise about which God had committed himself to Abraham drew near, the people [sg.] grew and multiplied"; see vv. 6-7 above and Gen. 15.

^l Lit. "...Egypt, until."

^m Lit. "he evilly forced the [some mss: "our"] ancestors to make their babies abandoned outdoors so they wouldn't survive."

ⁿ Lit. "picked him up."

^o Lit. "in his words and actions."

^p Lit. "took vengeance for the person being unjustly treated by striking down the Egyptian."

^q Lit. "And he was supposing that his brothers would understand that God was giving salvation through his hand."

and make peace. He said, “Men, you’re brothers! Why are you doing each other wrong?”²⁷ But the one who was mistreating his fellow Israelite^a shoved him away and said,

Who set you up as a leader and judge over us?²⁸ Do you want to kill me,^b just like you killed that Egyptian yesterday?^c

²⁹ When he said that, Moses went into exile,^d and ended up living as a foreigner in Midian.^e He had two sons there.

³⁰ After forty years had gone by,

an angel appeared to him in the desert of Mount Sinai,^f in the flame of a burning bush.^g

³¹ Moses was amazed at the sight of it, and when he went nearer to look more closely, he heard^h the voice of the Sovereign One:

³¹ I am the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.ⁱ

Moses started shaking, and didn’t dare to look.

³³ And the Sovereign One said to him, “Take the sandals off your feet! The place where you’re standing is holy ground. ³⁴ I’ve truly seen the mistreatment of my people in Egypt; I’ve heard their groaning, and I’ve gone down there to rescue them out of there. So now come along! I’m going to send you to Egypt.^j

³⁵ This is the same Moses that they’d rejected^k when they said,

Who set you up as a leader and judge?^l

This is the person God sent as a leader and rescuer,^m by means ofⁿ the angel who had appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶ This is the one who led them out, and did wonders and miracles in the land of Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the desert for forty years.

³⁷ This is the Moses who said to the Israelites,

God’s going to give you a prophet like me, who comes from your own people.^o

^a Lit. “his neighbor,” i.e. his fellow Israelite, not his next-door neighbor.

^b Or “Are you going to try to kill me.”

^c Exod. 2:14.

^d Lit. “And Moses fled upon this word.”

^e Prn. *mid-ee-an*.

^f Prn. *sy-nye*.

^g Exod. 3:2-3. Exodus does not name the mountain as Sinai in that passage.

^h Lit. “there was.”

ⁱ Exod. 3:6.

^j Exod. 3:7-10 (somewhat condensed).

^k Or “denied.”

^l Exod. 2:14.

^m Lit. “redeemer” or “ransomer.”

ⁿ Lit. “by the hand of.”

^o Lit. “God will raise up for you a prophet from among your brothers, like God raised me up.” Deut. 18:15.

38 This Moses is the one who was in the Israelite community in the desert—with our ancestors—and with the angel that spoke to him on Mount Sinai. He received revelations from God^a to give to us. 39 But our ancestors wouldn't listen to him^b—just the opposite. They shoved him aside and turned back to Egypt in their hearts. 40 They said to Aaron,

Make us gods that will go along in front of us! After all, this Moses, who led us out from the land of Egypt—we don't know what happened to him.^c

41 And at that time^d they made a calf idol. They sacrificed to it, and were celebrating^e the object that they'd made.^f 42 And God turned away, and left them to worship the stars in the sky.^g Just as scripture says^h in the Book of the Prophets,

Family of Israel,ⁱ did you bring me offerings^j and sacrifices for forty years in the desert? No!
 43 Instead,^k you carried along the tent of Moloch,^l
 And the star of your god Rephan^m—
 The images that you made so you could worship them.
 Well,ⁿ I'm going to move you beyond Babylon!^o

44 Our ancestors had the tent of witness in the desert. The One who talked with Moses had instructed him just how to make it, using the pattern that he'd seen.^p 45 Our ancestors who were with Joshua inherited it, and they brought it into the Promised Land. They took over those nations—God drove them out right in front of them.^q That went on until David's time.^r 46 David “found favor in God's eyes,” and he asked if he could find a dwelling place for God^s in Jacob's family. 47 But Solomon built God a house. 48 Of course, the Most High doesn't live in buildings built by human hands. Just like the prophet says,

^a Lit. “like the oracles of God.”

^b Or “obey him”; lit. “to whom our ancestors didn't want to become obedient.”

^c Exod. 32:1, 23.

^d Lit. “in those days.”

^e Or “and they were happy with.”

^f Lit. “the works of their hands.”

^g Lit. “the host of heaven.”

^h Lit. “just as it is written.”

ⁱ Lit. “House of Israel.”

^j Lit. “things slain,” that is, animals slaughtered and ready to lay on the altar.

^k Lit. “And.”

^l Prn. *moe-luck*.

^m Prn. *ree-fan*.

ⁿ Lit. “And.”

^o Amos 5:25-27.

^p Lit. “...the desert, just as the one speaking with Moses instructed/commanded him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen.”

^q Lit. “...they brought it in, in the possession of the nations that God drove out from before their face/presence.” “The possession” appears to mean “the Conquest” (Josh. 1–12).

^r Lit. “days.”

^s Some mss have “a dwelling place for the God of Jacob,” but they are not the oldest ones. In view of the words that follow, we have to understand that the house being built *for God*—not for the family/house of Jacob.

49Heaven is my throne,
 And the earth is the footstool under my feet.
 What kind of house are you going to build for me, says the Sovereign One.
 Where am I going to lie down and rest?^a
 50Didn't my hands make all of this?^b

51You're stiff-necked! Your hearts are uncircumcised, and so are your ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit, just like your ancestors! 52Which of the prophets *didn't* your ancestors persecute? They killed those who predicted the coming of the Just One—and you've become his betrayers and murderers!^c 53You received the Law through the instructions of angels, and you didn't obey it!^d

The High Council Stones Stephen to Death

54When they heard that, they were totally enraged,^e and ground their teeth at Stephen. 55But he was full of the Holy Spirit. He stared into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at God's right side. 56And he said, "Look! I see the heavens opened wide, and the Human One standing at God's right side! 57But they shouted with a loud voice and covered their ears. Then they rushed at him all together, 58and threw him out of the city. And they began to stone him. And the witnesses took their coats off and laid them at the feet of a young man called Saul. 59As he was being stoned, Stephen called out, "Lord Jesus, accept my spirit!" 60Then he fell to his knees and shouted out with a loud voice, "Lord, don't hold this sin against them!" And he died^f saying that.

Saul Persecutes the Community of Believers

8 Now, Saul was in agreement with Stephen's murder. And a huge persecution started that day in Jerusalem against the community. And everyone but the apostles got scattered throughout the countryside^g of Judea^h and Samaria.ⁱ 2Meanwhile,^j some devout men buried Stephen, crying loudly as they mourned for him.^k 3And Saul was devastating the community. He was going house to house, dragging out men and women, and putting them in prison.

Philip Preaches in Samaria

4Meanwhile, those who had been scattered went here and there preaching the good news. 5For example, Philip went^l to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. 6And the crowds were paying complete attention to the things Philip was saying.^m They listened and they

^a Lit. "Or what is the place of my rest."

^b Lit. "all these things," Isa. 66:1-2.

^c Lit. "...the Just One, whose betrayers and murderers you became."

^d I think Stephen is talking in particular about the command, "You shall not commit murder" (Exod. 20:13).

^e Lit. "they were enraged in their hearts."

^f Lit. "fell asleep," a euphemism like "passed away."

^g Lit. "amongst the regions."

^h Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

ⁱ Prn. *sam-merr-ee-a*.

^j Lit. "And."

^k Lit. "...buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him."

^l Lit. "went down." In Israel, the direction to Jerusalem is "up," and everything else (including things northwards, like Samaria) is "down."

^m Lit. "the things being said by Philip."

watched the miracles he was doing. ⁷For example, lots of people had unclean spirits, and the spirits would come out, screaming. And lots of people who were paralyzed and unable to walk got healed. ⁸There was a lot of joy in that city.

⁹Now, a certain man named Simon had been practicing sorcery in the city before Philip came. He'd astonished the people of Samaria, and was claiming to be somebody big. ¹⁰Everybody used to pay attention to him, from the weakest to the most powerful.^a They'd say, "This man is what's called the Great Power of God!"^b ¹¹And they paid attention to him, because he'd been astonishing them with his magic arts for a good while. ¹²But then they believed Philip as he preached the good news about the Reign of God and about Jesus Christ.^c And both men and women were getting baptized. ¹³And Simon became a believer^d too, and got baptized. He was listening carefully to Philip, and he was astonished, watching the miracles and the massive displays of power that were happening.

¹⁴Then the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria^e had accepted God's message.^f So they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵Those two went down and prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶(Because the Spirit hadn't come on any of them yet. They'd only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) ¹⁷Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸And Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given when the apostles laid their hands on people.^g He brought them money, and ¹⁹was saying, "Give me that authority, too, so that if I lay my hands on somebody, they'll receive the Holy Spirit." ²⁰But Peter said to him, "Your money could go to hell, and you with it! You thought you would buy the gift of God with money?^h" ²¹You don't have any part or place in this ministry! Your heart is not right withⁱ God. ²²So renounce^j this awful intention of yours, and plead with the Lord—just maybe you'll be forgiven for having that intention in your heart.^k ²³Because I can see that you're in a state^l of bitterness, and you're tied up in wrongdoing." ²⁴Simon said back to him, "Please pray for me to the Lord yourselves—pray that nothing you said will happen to me."

²⁵When they'd stated their testimony, and had spoken the message about the Lord,^m they started back to Jerusalem. And they were preaching the good news to lots of Samaritan^a villages on the way.

^a Lit. "from the small to the great."

^b Lit. "This man is the power of God that is called great."

^c Lit. "and about the name of Jesus Christ."

^d Or simply, "believed."

^e Prn. *sam-merr-ee-a*.

^f Or "the word of God."

^g Lit. "given through the laying on of the hands of the apostles."

^h Lit. "Your money, with you, can/could go to destruction, because/that you thought you could buy the gift of God for money!" Peter is outraged.

ⁱ Lit. "before."

^j Traditionally: "repent of."

^k Lit. "So repent from this, your nastiness/baseness, and beg the Lord if somehow the intention of your heart might be forgiven."

^l Lit. "gall."

^m Lit. "the word of the Lord."

Philip Tells the Good News to a High Official from Ethiopia

26And an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go south on that deserted road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”^b 27And he got up and went. And he saw an Ethiopian man—an influential official^c of the Candace,^d the queen of Ethiopia. He was in charge of her whole treasury. He’d come to Jerusalem to worship, 28and now he was returning. And he was sitting in his carriage, reading the prophet Isaiah. 29And the Spirit said to Philip, go over and join that carriage. 30And when he ran up to it, Philip heard him reading Isaiah the prophet. And he said, “Do you understand what you’re reading?” 31And the man said, “Well, how could I, unless somebody’s going to guide me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32And this is the scripture passage that he was reading:

He was led like a sheep to slaughter,
 And just like a lamb in the hands of a sheep-shearer,^e he was silent,
 And he didn’t open his mouth.
 33He was humiliated—his trial was hijacked.^f
 Who’s going to tell the story of his descendants?
 Because his life has been taken^g from the earth.^h

34When he’d read that, the official saidⁱ to Peter, “Can I ask you: who’s the prophet saying this about? Is it about himself, or about somebody else?” 35And Philip began to speak. Starting from this scripture,^j he told him the good news about Jesus. 36And as they were going along the road, they came to some water. And the official^k said, “Look, water! Is there anything to keep me from being baptized?” 38And he ordered the carriage to stop, and the two of them—Philip and the official^m—went down into the water. And Philip baptized him. 39And when Philip came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched him away, and the officialⁿ didn’t see him anymore. He

^a Prn. *sam-merr-a-ten*.

^b Prn. *gay-za*.

^c Lit. “eunuch” (prn. *yoo-nek*), which means someone who has been castrated. In ancient times, kings and queens used to castrate their administrative officials so that they wouldn’t have to worry about them taking sexual advantage of their position. But “eunuch” eventually came to refer to the official position, and did not always imply that the person was literally a eunuch.

^d Prn. *kan-day-see*.

^e Lit. “like a lamb right in front of the one who shears him.”

^f Lit. “In humiliation his justice was taken away.” Some mss have “In his humiliation.”

^g Lit. “is taken.”

^h Isa. 53:7-8.

ⁱ Lit. “And responding, the eunuch said.”

^j Lit. “And Philip, opening his mouth, and starting from this scripture...”

^k Lit. “the eunuch.”

^l Certain later mss include v. 37: And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, it’s allowed.” And he answered, “I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” It’s certain that this verse was not original.

^m Lit. “the eunuch.”

ⁿ Lit. “the eunuch.”

simply went on his way, celebrating. ⁴⁰Meanwhile, Philip found himself in Azotus.^a And he went through all the towns preaching the good news until he came to Caesarea.^b

Jesus Stops Saul in his Tracks—And he Becomes a Believer

9 But Saul was still fuming with murderous threats^c against the Lord's followers. He went to the high priest and asked him for authorization letters to the synagogues^d in Damascus.^e That way, if he found people from the Way^f—men or women—he could bring them to Jerusalem in chains. ³As he was getting near Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light shone on him out of heaven. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice speaking to him: "Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" ⁵And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" He said, "I am Jesus. I'm the one you're persecuting. ⁶Now get up and go into the city, and you'll be told what you have to do." ⁷Meanwhile, the men traveling with Saul had been standing there speechless. They'd heard the voice,^g but they couldn't see anyone. ⁸Saul got up off the ground. But when he opened his eyes, he couldn't see anything. So they led him by the hand as they went into Damascus. ⁹And for three days he couldn't see, and he didn't eat or drink anything.

¹⁰Now, there was a certain follower of Jesus in Damascus named Ananias,^h and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias!" And he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹And the Lord said to him, "Goⁱ over to Straight Street, to Judas's house. Go in and ask for a man named Saul, from Tarsus. Because he's praying, ¹²and he's seen a man named Ananias come and lay hands on him so that he'll see again." ¹³But Ananias said back to him, "Lord, I've heard about this man from lots of people—what harmful things he's done to your holy ones in Jerusalem. ¹⁴And here in Damascus he has authority from the chief priests to arrest everyone who prays to you."^j ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, "Go, because he belongs to me. I've chosen him^k to bring my name to nations and rulers, and to the people^l of Israel. ¹⁶I'm going to show him how much he has to suffer for my sake."^m ¹⁷So Ananias went off to Judas's house, and laid his hands on Saul. He said, "Brother Saul, the Lord sent me—the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road asⁿ you were coming here. He sent me so that you'll be able to see again, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸And right away something like fish scales fell off of Saul's eyes, and he could see again. And Saul got up and got baptized. ¹⁹And when he'd eaten some food, his strength came back.

^a Prn. *a-zoe-tas*. Formerly known as Ashdod, this is a city north of Gaza near the coast. It's about 50 miles south of Caesarea.

^b Prn. *sezz-a-ree-a*.

^c Lit. "But Saul, still breathing threats and murder."

^d Prn. *sinn-a-goggz*.

^e Prn. *dam-mass-kas*.

^f This is what the earliest Jewish followers of Jesus called their movement.

^g Or "they heard the sound." The Greek does not imply that they understood what was said.

^h Prn. *ann-a-nye-us*.

ⁱ Lit. "Get up and go."

^j Lit. "to bind all who call on your name."

^k Lit. "because he's a chosen instrument of mine."

^l Lit. "children."

^m Lit. "for the sake of my name."

ⁿ Lit. "on which."

Saul Preaches Jesus in the Synagogues of Damascus

Saul was with the followers of Jesus in Damascus for several days. 20And right away, in the synagogues,^a he started proclaiming that Jesus was the Son of God. 21And everybody that heard him was astonished. They were saying, “Isn’t this the man who tried to wipe out the people in Jerusalem that pray to this Jesus?^b And didn’t he come here to arrest them and bring them^c to the chief priests?” 22And Saul got more and more powerful. He would completely out-argue the Jews^d in Damascus, and was proving that this was the Messiah.

Paul Escapes from Damascus

23After quite a few days of this, the Jews of Damascus formed a plan to assassinate him. 24But Saul found out about their plan.^e They were actually watching the gates of the city day and night, waiting for an opportunity so they could assassinate him. 25But his followers got him through the wall one night by lowering him down in a basket.

Saul Visits the Believers and Apostles in Jerusalem

26When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he began trying to join the followers of Jesus. But they were all afraid of him. They didn’t believe he was a follower. 27But Barnabas took charge of him and led him to meet the apostles. Barnabas told them the story of how Saul had seen the Lord on the road, and the Lord had spoken to him. And he told about how he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus in Damascus. 28And he was with them for some time, walking around in Jerusalem and speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. 29He was also talking and arguing with the people who spoke Greek.^f But they started trying to assassinate him. 30When the brothers and sisters learned about it, they took him down to Caesarea^g and sent him off to Tarsus.

31So the community all over Judea^h and Galilee and Samaria had peace, and was growing stronger. The community was livingⁱ in reverence for the Lord and growing, thanks to the Holy Spirit’s encouragement.

Peter’s Miracles in Lydda and Joppa

32Now, Peter was traveling around to^j all the communities. At one point he happened to visit the holy ones who lived in Lydda.^k 33There he found a man named Aeneas,^l who had been lying in bed for eight years. 34Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ is healing you! Get up and make your

^a Prn. *sinn-a-goggz*.

^b Lit. “Isn’t this the one who destroyed in Jerusalem those who call upon this name?”

^c Lit. “to bring them bound.”

^d Lit. “he would confound/stump the Jews.” The idea is that they didn’t want to accept Paul’s arguments, but they couldn’t figure out how to refute them either, so they’d be left in a state of mental confusion.

^e Lit. “But their plan was made known to Saul.”

^f This probably refers to Greek-speaking Jews (see Acts 6:1, where it refers to Greek-speaking Jewish followers of Jesus).

^g Prn. *sezz-a-ree-a*.

^h Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

ⁱ Lit. “walking.”

^j Lit. “through.”

^k Prn. *lidd-a*.

^l Prn. *an-nee-us*.

bed.” And right away he stood up. ³⁵Everyone in Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they all turned to the Lord.

³⁶And in Joppa there was a follower of Jesus named Tabitha. That name means “Dorcas.”^a She was always doing kind things and helping poor people.^b ³⁷But around that time, she got sick^c and died. And they washed her body and laid her in an upstairs room. ³⁸Now, Lydda was near Joppa. And when the followers heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him. They pleaded with him, “Please come over to us right away!” ³⁹So Peter got up and went with them. When he got there, they led him to the upstairs room. And all the widows crowded around him, crying. And they were showing him shirts and clothes Dorcas had made when she was still with them. ⁴⁰But Peter made them all leave the room,^d and got on his knees and prayed. Then^e he turned to the body and said, “Tabitha, get up!” And she opened her eyes! And when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹And he offered her his hand, and helped her stand up. Then^f he called to the holy ones and the widows, and gave her back to them alive.^g ⁴²That miracle became well known throughout Joppa, and lots of people became believers^h in the Lord. ⁴³And Peter eventually spent quite a few days in Joppa with a tannerⁱ named Simon.

The Spirit Draws Peter Together with Cornelius—A Gentile

10 There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius.^j He was a Roman officer^k from what was called “the Italian Regiment.” ²He was very devout towards God,^l along with his whole family.^m He used to do lots of things to help poor people,ⁿ and he prayed to God all the time.^o ³In a vision, at about three o’clock one afternoon, he clearly saw an angel of God coming to him. The angel said to him, “Cornelius!” ⁴He stared at the angel, and was very frightened. He said, “What is it, sir?” And the angel said to him, “Your prayers and the things you do for the poor have gone up as a memorial offering to God. ⁵Now, send some men to Joppa to get Simon, who’s called Peter. ⁶He’s staying as a guest with Simon the tanner, whose house is next to the sea.”^p ⁷As soon as the angel speaking to him went away, Cornelius called two household servants, and one of his attendant soldiers who was devout towards God. ⁸He explained everything to them and sent them to Joppa.

^a Tabitha is Hebrew, and Dorcas is Greek, for “gazelle.”

^b Lit. “She was full of good works and the acts of mercy that she did.” The expression “acts of mercy” refers to helping the poor.

^c Lit. “But it happened in those days that she got sick.”

^d Lit. “But he put them all out.” See Mk 5:40-41.

^e Lit. “And.”

^f Lit. “And.”

^g Lit. “and presented her to them alive.”

^h Or simply, “believed.”

ⁱ That is, a person who prepares leather from cowhide.

^j Prn. *kor-nee-lee-us*.

^k He’s a centurion, captain of a hundred soldiers.

^l Lit. “devout and revering God.”

^m Lit. “household.”

ⁿ Lit. “He was doing lots of acts of mercy for the [Jewish] people.” “Acts of mercy” refers specifically to charitable gifts and assistance for the poor.

^o Or “in all circumstances.”

^p Joppa is on the Mediterranean Sea.

⁹Now, the next day, they were still on the way. About noon, as they were getting near the city, Peter went up onto the roof to pray. ¹⁰And he got hungry, and was wanting to eat. While they were making something for him, he went into a dream state.^a ¹¹And he saw heaven opened up, and a thing like a huge sheet coming down. He watched it being lowered down onto the ground by its four corners.^b ¹²In it were all the various kinds of animals, reptiles and birds.^c ¹³And a voice came to him: “Get up, Peter—kill something and eat it.” ¹⁴But Peter said, “Absolutely not, Lord! I’ve never eaten anything unholy^d or unclean!” ¹⁵And a voice came to him a second time: “Stop calling things God has cleansed unholy!”^e ¹⁶And this happened three times. Then^f the thing was lifted up into heaven. ¹⁷Peter was all confused inside. What did his vision mean?

Then suddenly,^g there were the men sent by Cornelius. They’d asked for directions to Simon’s house, and were standing at the gate. ¹⁸They asked, “Is Simon, who’s also called Peter, staying here?” ¹⁹Peter was thinking about the vision when the Spirit said to him,^h “Threeⁱ men are looking for you. ²⁰Get up and go downstairs, and go with them without any hesitation.^j I’ve sent them.” ²¹So Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. What brings you here?” ²²And they said, “Cornelius the Roman officer^k is a person of integrity^l and reverence for God. He’s well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation. He was told by a holy angel to invite you to his house and hear what you have to say.”^m ²³So he invited them in and made them his guests.

The next day he got up and left with them. Some of the followersⁿ from Joppa went with him too. ²⁴They^o arrived in Caesarea the next morning. Cornelius was expecting them, and had gotten together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵At the moment Peter arrived, Cornelius met him and bowed down to the ground at his feet.^p ²⁶But Peter raised him up. He said, “Stand up. I’m a human being, just like you.”^q ²⁷And Peter went inside, talking with him, and found lots of people gathered together. ²⁸Peter said to them, “You know very well that it’s forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with a Gentile or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me not to call any human being unholy or unclean. ²⁹That’s why I came without objection when I was invited. So may I ask you, why have you invited me here?” ³⁰And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, at about three o’clock in the afternoon,

^a This is often rendered, “he fell into a trance.”

^b Some ancient mss have slightly different descriptions, such as “down onto the ground, tied by the four corners.”

^c Lit. “...corners, in which were all the four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth, and birds of the sky.”

^d Lit. “common,” which is the antonym of “holy.”

^e Lit. “Things God has cleansed you are not to be regarding as unholy.”

^f Lit. “And.” Many mss have, “And suddenly.”

^g Lit. “And behold.” Many mss have just “Behold.”

^h Some mss just have, “the Spirit said.”

ⁱ Some mss have “two men” or just “men.” Two men may be original, if Luke is assuming that his readers will understand that the Roman soldier just provides security on the road for the two servants.

^j Or “without making a distinction between yourself and them.”

^k Lit. “centurion.”

^l Traditionally: “a righteous man.”

^m Lit. “hear words/things from you.”

ⁿ Lit. “brothers.”

^o Some mss have, “He.”

^p Lit. “fell at his feet and did obeisance.”

^q Lit. “I myself am also a human being.”

I was in my house praying.^a And suddenly a man in shining clothes stood in front of me.³¹ He said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and the things you do for the poor have gone up as a memorial offering right to^b God. ³²So send to Joppa and invite Simon, who's called Peter. He's staying as a guest in Simon the tanner's house, next to the sea.^c ³³So I sent people to you right away, and you've been kind enough to come. So now, we're all here in God's^d presence to hear everything the Sovereign One^e has told you to say."

Peter Preaches to the People in Cornelius's House

³⁴So Peter began to speak. He said,^f

"I really^g understand that God doesn't regard some people as better than others.^h ³⁵No—in every nation, the person who reveres God and does what is right is acceptable to God. ³⁶You know the message that God sent to the peopleⁱ of Israel, bringing the good news of peace^j through Jesus the Messiah. He is Lord of all people! ³⁷You know what happened throughout Judea,^k starting from^l Galilee—after the baptism that John announced. ³⁸You know how God anointed^m Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He traveled around doing good and healing everyone who was oppressed by the devil, because God was with him. ³⁹We're witnesses of all the things he did—in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem. And they murdered him by hanging him on a stake.ⁿ ⁴⁰God raised him on the third day, and let him show himself to us^o—⁴¹not to all the people, but only to the witnesses God had chosen beforehand. We're the ones who ate and drank with him after his resurrection^p from among the dead. ⁴²And God has commanded us to announce to the people and testify: God has appointed this man as judge of the living and of the dead! ⁴³This is the testimony of all the prophets:^q that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

The Holy Spirit Falls on Gentiles

⁴⁴While Peter was still saying these words, the Holy Spirit fell on everyone who was listening to the message. ⁴⁵And the Jewish believers^r who had come with Peter were astounded—because^s the

^a Some mss add that he had been fasting.

^b Lit. "in front of."

^c Some mss add, "When he comes, he's going to say some things to you."

^d Some mss have "your presence" or "the Sovereign One's presence."

^e Some mss, instead of "the Sovereign One, have "God."

^f Lit. "So Peter, opening his mouth, said."

^g Lit. "truly."

^h Traditionally: "God is no respecter of persons." See Deut. 10:17; 2 Chron. 19:7.

ⁱ Lit. "children."

^j See Isa. 52:7; Nah. 1:15.

^k Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

^l Lit. "after it started from."

^m See "Bible Words."

ⁿ See Acts 5:30 and the nt. there.

^o Lit. "granted him to become visible to us."

^p Or "after he rose." It's expressed more as a doing on his part than as an event.

^q Lit. "This all the prophets testify to."

^r Lit. "the faithful who were of the circumcision."

^s Or "that."

gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles too.⁴⁶ After all, they were hearing them speaking in other languages and praising the greatness of God. Then Peter said,⁴⁷ “Surely nobody can refuse to let these people go into the water and be baptized! Haven’t they received the Holy Spirit just like we did?”⁴⁸ And Peter gave instructions for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay with them for a few days.

Peter Reports Back to the Apostles and Believers in Jerusalem

11 Then^b the apostles and the brothers and sisters throughout Judea^c heard that the Gentiles had accepted God’s message^d too. ²And when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the Jewish believers^e started arguing with him. ³They were saying, “You paid a visit to uncircumcised men, and ate with them!”^f ⁴But Peter began explaining it to them step by step from the beginning. He said, ⁵“I was in the city of Joppa praying, when I saw a vision in a dream state: a thing like a huge sheet was coming down out of heaven, being lowered by its four corners. And it landed right next to me.^g ⁶I looked closely at it, and began to examine it. And I saw four-footed animals, wild animals, reptiles and birds.^h ⁷And then I heard a voice saying to me, “Get up, Peter—kill something and eat it.” ⁸But I said, “Absolutely not, Lord! Nothing unholyⁱ or unclean has ever gone in my mouth!” ⁹But the voice said back to me again from heaven, “Stop calling things God has cleansed unholy!”^j ¹⁰And that happened three times, then it was all lifted back up into heaven. ¹¹Then suddenly^k at that moment three men were there at the house where I was staying. They’d been sent to me from Caesarea. ¹²And the Spirit told me to go with them without any hesitation.^l These six brothers also went with me, and we went to the man’s house. ¹³And he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, who said, ‘Send to Joppa to get Simon, who’s called Peter. ¹⁴He’s going to say some things to you, and you and your whole family are going to be saved by his message.’^m ¹⁵And as I was just starting to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as it did on us in the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the Lord’s words—how he used to say, John baptized with water, but you are going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷So if God gave them the same gift

^a Lit. “Can someone really refuse water, so that these folks won’t be baptized—who received the Holy Spirit as we also did?”

^b Lit. “And.”

^c Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

^d Or “the word of God.”

^e Lit. “those from the circumcision.”

^f Or “Why did you pay a visit to uncircumcised men, and eat with them?” As you can see from Peter’s story in Acts 10, Jewish people at that time regarded social contact with non-Jews as strictly out of the question (see Acts 10:14 and context).

^g Lit. “And it came near me.”

^h Lit. “the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild animals and the reptiles, and the birds of the sky.”

ⁱ Lit. “common,” which is the antonym of “holy.”

^j Lit. “Things God has cleansed you are not to be regarding as unholy.”

^k Lit. “And behold.”

^l Or “without making a distinction between myself and them.”

^m Lit. “He’s going to tell you things by which you and your whole household will be saved.”

as God gave us when we became believers^a in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think I could stand in God's way?^b

¹⁸When they heard that, they quit complaining and glorified God. They were saying, "Well then, God has also given the Gentiles the change of heart^c that leads to eternal life."

The Community of Believers in Antioch, Syria

¹⁹Now, as for the people who had gotten scattered because of the persecution to do with Stephen, they traveled all the way to Phoenicia^d and Cyprus and Antioch. But they weren't telling the message to anyone except Jews. ²⁰Some of them were from Cyprus and Cyrene.^e When these folks came to Antioch, they started talking to the people who spoke Greek^f as well, and were telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹And the Lord's power^g was with them, and a great number of people became believers^h and turned to the Lord. ²²Then the news about them came toⁱ the community in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. ²³He was very glad when he arrived and saw the grace of God. And he was encouraging them all to stay true to the Lord with sincere hearts.^j ²⁴Because Barnabas was a good man, and he was full of the Holy Spirit and faith. And a good sized crowd of people were brought over to the Lord. ²⁵Then Barnabas went off to Tarsus to look for Saul. ²⁶And when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. And so it worked out^k that they stayed in^l that community for a whole year, and taught a good sized crowd. And it was in Antioch that the followers of Jesus first got to be known as "Christians."

²⁷Now, during that time,^m some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸And one of them, named Agabus,ⁿ got up and predicted, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that a huge famine was about to take place throughout the whole world. (That famine happened during the reign of Claudius Caesar.^o) ²⁹So the followers made a decision. In line with their financial condition, each of them would send something to help the brothers and sisters in Judea.^p ³⁰And they did that. They sent the money to the elders with^q Barnabas and Saul.

^a Or simply, "when we believed."

^b Lit. "who was I? Was I strong enough to hinder God?"

^c Traditionally: "repentance" (see "Bible Words").

^d Prn. *fee-nee-sha*.

^e Prn. *sy-ree-nee*.

^f Some mss have, "the Greeks," which is a way of talking about non-Jews. Greek-speaking people could easily be Jewish, but then why is this group being contrasted with Jews? Are they people in some stage of conversion to Judaism (e.g. proselytes)? It seems possible (but not certain) that Luke is telling us that the followers from Cyprus and Cyrene were independently led by the Spirit to cross the line between Jews and Gentiles.

^g Lit. "hand," a standard biblical metaphor.

^h Or simply, "believed."

ⁱ Lit. "was heard in the ears of."

^j Lit. "with purpose of the heart."

^k Lit. "And it came about for them."

^l Or "joined with."

^m Lit. "And in these days."

ⁿ Prn. *a-ga-bus*.

^o Prn. *see-zer*.

^p Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

^q Lit. "through the hand of."

Herod Arrests and Executes James, and Peter is Thrown in Prison

12 At that time, King Herod^a arrested some people from the community, determined to mistreat them. ²And he executed James the brother of John.^b ³And when he saw that that pleased the Jewish leaders,^c he went on to arrest Peter too. (It was during the festival of Unleavened Bread.^d) ⁴And when he had arrested him, he put him in prison. And he posted four squads of soldiers^e to guard him. He wanted to bring him out to the people for a trial after the Passover.^f ⁵So while Peter was kept under guard in prison, the communities were praying all the time to God for him.^g

Peter Miraculously Escapes from Prison

⁶When Herod was just about to bring him out in public, that night Peter was asleep between two soldiers. He was shackled with two chains, and guards were in front of the door, guarding the cell.^h ⁷Then suddenly the Lord's angel stood there, and a light shone in the cell. He tappedⁱ Peter on the side and woke him up. He was saying, "Quickly—get up!" And Peter's chains fell off his hands. ⁸And the angel said to him, "Get dressed, and put on your sandals." And Peter did so. Then the angel said to him, "Throw on your coat and come with me."^j ⁹As Peter followed him outside, he didn't know that what the angel was doing was really happening. He just thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰They passed through the first and second guard stations, then they came to the iron gate that leads to the city. And it opened for them all by itself. They came out and walked for a block,^k then suddenly the angel left him. ¹¹And Peter came to his senses and said, "Now I really know the Lord sent his angel and rescued me—from Herod's grasp,^l and from everything the Jewish public has been expecting." ¹²When he realized that, he went to the home of Mary, John Mark's mother. There were a good number of people gathered there praying. ¹³Peter knocked on the door to the courtyard, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so happy that she didn't open the door, but ran in and told everyone that Peter was standing right outside the courtyard.^m ¹⁵But they said, "You're crazy." But she insisted that it was true. Then they were saying, "It's his angel." ¹⁶Meanwhile, Peter kept on knocking. And when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. ¹⁷When Peter had signaled for quiet with his

^a Prn. *herr-edd*.

^b Lit. "And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."

^c Or "Jews," or "Judeans."

^d This is bread that has no yeast in it, so it doesn't rise. Matzo cracker bread is an example. See Exod. 12 (esp. vv. 14-15) for the story behind the custom. This was the festival during which Jesus had been arrested and executed by hanging on a cross.

^e That is, sixteen men.

^f See "Bible Words."

^g Lit. "prayer was constantly being made for him by the churches."

^h Or "the prison."

ⁱ Lit. "struck."

^j Lit. "follow me."

^k Lit. "went forward one street."

^l Lit. "hand."

^m Lit. "standing in front of the courtyard."

hand,^a he told them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. And he said, “Report all this to James and to the brothers and sisters.” Then he left and went to a different place.

¹⁸When morning came, there was quite a bit of upset^b among the soldiers: what had become of Peter? ¹⁹Herod had him searched for, and he wasn’t found. When he’d questioned the guards, he ordered for them to be executed. Then he went down from Judea^c to Caesarea and stayed there a while.

Herod Dies

²⁰One time^d Herod was furious with the people of Tyre and Sidon.^e And they came to him all together, after they had won over Blastus, Herod’s personal assistant.^f They were pleading for peace, because their region got its food from Herod’s country. ²¹On the day of the meeting,^g Herod put on his royal robes and sat on his throne. And he began to give a speech to them. ²²But the people were shouting, “This is the voice of a god, not a human being!” ²³And right away an angel of the Sovereign One struck him down—because he hadn’t given God the glory. And he was eaten by worms and died.

²⁴But the preaching of God’s message flourished^h and increased. And Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch when they had finished their work of serviceⁱ in Jerusalem.^j And they brought John Mark^k along with them.

The Antioch Community Sends Paul and Barnabas to Preach the Good News

13 In Antioch, in the Christian community there, there were prophets and teachers. There was Barnabas, and Simon (known as Niger^l), Lucius^m of Cyrene,ⁿ Manaen^o (who was brought up with Herod^p the tetrarch), and Saul. ²And as they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set aside Barnabas and Saul for me, for the work that I’ve called them to do.” ³So^q when they’d fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them off.

^a Lit. “And having signaled them with his hand to be quiet.”

^b Lit. “there was no small stir.”

^c Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

^d Lit. “And.”

^e Prn. *sye-din*.

^f Lit. “the king’s chamberlain.”

^g Lit. “On the appointed day.”

^h Or “grew up.”

ⁱ Or “their ministry.”

^j See Acts 11:29-30. Many copyists seem to have stumbled over the exact wording here, but the intent seems clear enough—they came back to Antioch when they had finished their task.

^k John, known as Mark, seems to have lived in Jerusalem: see Acts 12:12.

^l Prn. *nye-je-r*. His nickname is “Black,” in Latin. He was very probably an African, and may even be the “Simon of Cyrene” (Mt. 27:32; Mk 15:21; Lk. 23:26) who was forced to carry Jesus’ cross. Interestingly, Lucius, the next person mentioned here, is from Cyrene, a city on the eastern Mediterranean coast of what is now Libya in North Africa.

^m Prn. *loosh-us*.

ⁿ Prn. *sye-ree-nee*.

^o Prn. *man-ee-n*.

^p Prn. *herr-edd*.

^q Lit. “Then.”

Paul and Barnabas Preach the Good News in Cyprus

4Those two, sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia.^a From there they sailed off to Cyprus, and were announcing God's message in Salamis^b in the Jewish synagogues.^c They also had John^d with them as a helper. 5When they'd gone through the whole island as far as Paphos,^e they discovered a man who was a sorcerer. He was a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. 6He was with the governor,^f Sergius Paulus, who was a smart man. The governor sent for Barnabas and Saul, and asked them if he could hear God's message. 7But Elymas^g the sorcerer opposed them. (Elymas actually *means* "sorcerer.")^h He was trying to turn the governorⁱ away from the faith. 8But Saul (who is also known as Paul) was filled with the Holy Spirit, and looked intently at him. 9He said, "You're full of every kind of deception and trickery, you son of the devil! You're an enemy of everything right. Do you never stop trying to twist the straight paths of the Sovereign One? 10And now, look! The Sovereign One's hand is on you. You're going to be blind—unable to see the sun for a while." And right away a fog and a darkness came over him. And he was wandering around and searching for people to lead him by the hand. 11When the governor^j saw what happened, he became a believer.^k He was astounded at Lord's teaching.

Paul and Barnabas Preach in Antioch of Pisidia

12From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia.^l John then left them and returned to Jerusalem. 13But they went on from Perga and arrived at Antioch in Pisidia.^m And they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. 14After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent a message to them. It said, "Brothers, if one of you has an encouraging message for the people, speak to us." 15So Paul got up and signaled for quiet with his hand. He said,

Fellow Israelites, and people who revere God,ⁿ listen. 16The God of this people, Israel, chose our ancestors. And God made our people^o prosper during their stay in Egypt, and led them out of there with great power.^p 17Then,^q for a period of about forty years, God put up with them^a in the

^a Prn. *sel-loo-shee-a*.

^b Prn. *sal-a-miss*.

^c Prn. *sinn-a-goggz*.

^d That is, John Mark (see Acts 12:5).

^e Prn. *pay-fuss*.

^f Lit. "proconsul," a Roman official in charge of a province—in this case, the island of Cyprus.

^g Prn. *ell-a-mas*.

^h Or, less likely, "Elymas is what Bar-Jesus means." Lit. "But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is how his name is interpreted)."

ⁱ Lit. "proconsul."

^j Lit. "proconsul."

^k Or simply, "believed."

^l Prn. *pam-fill-ee-a*.

^m Prn. *pis-sidd-ee-a*. They're now in what is modern day Turkey (Asia Minor). This is a different Antioch from the one they started from, which is Antioch in Syria.

ⁿ These are people who worship God but have not gone the whole way to becoming Jews (e.g. by being circumcised).

^o Lit. "the people (sg)."

^p Lit. "with arm lifted up." See Exod. 6:1, 6: 12:51.

^q Lit. "And."

wilderness. ¹⁹Then^b God destroyed seven nations in Canaan,^c and gave them their land as an inheritance. ²⁰All of that took about four hundred and fifty years. After that, God gave them judges^d until Samuel the prophet. ²¹At that point they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish for forty years. He was a man from the tribe of Benjamin. ²²Then God removed him and raised up David as a king for them. It was about David that God testified:

I've found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He's going to do all the things I want him to do.^e

²³From this man's descendants,^f in line with the promise, God brought Israel a Savior: Jesus.^g ²⁴Before his coming, John had announced to all the people of Israel a baptism for^h a change of heart.ⁱ ²⁵And when John was finishing his work,^j he used to say,

I'm not what^k you think I am! I'm not the One.^l Far from it! He's coming after me, and I'm not even worthy to untie one of his sandals.^m

²⁶Gentlemen, brothers,ⁿ children of the family of Abraham—and those among you who revere God: the message of this salvation has been sent to us.^o ²⁷Because the people living in Jerusalem and their leaders didn't recognize him. They condemned him, fulfilling^p the very statements^q of the prophets that are read aloud every Sabbath!^r ²⁸Without finding any basis for a death sentence, they asked Pilate for him to be executed. ²⁹And when they'd fulfilled all the things that have been written about him, they took him down from the stake and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised him from among the dead!^s ³¹He appeared, over a period of days, to the people who had gone up with him to Jerusalem from Galilee. These people are now his public witnesses.^s ³²So^t we're

^a Or, following other mss, "took care of them." See Deut. 1:31, which is being alluded to here.

^b Lit. "And."

^c Prn. *kay-nan*.

^d In many mss v. 20 reads, "And after that, God gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years."

^e See Ps. 89:20; 1 Sam. 13:14; Isa. 44:28.

^f Lit. "From this man's seed, according to the promise."

^g See 2 Sam. 7:12; Isa. 11:1.

^h Lit. "of."

ⁱ Traditionally: "repentance" (see "Bible Words").

^j Lit. "his race."

^k Some mss, "who." This may also be understood as a question: "What/who is it that you think I am? I'm not!"

^l That is, the Messiah. Lit. "I'm not he."

^m Lit. "On the contrary—behold, he comes after me, whose sandal of his feet I am not worthy to untie." See Mt. 3:11; Mk 1:7; Lk. 3:16; Jn 1:27.

ⁿ Lit. "Brother men."

^o Some mss: "you."

^p Lit. "And condemning him, they fulfilled."

^q Lit. "voices."

^r That is, in the synagogues during worship.

^s Lit. "...dead, who are [many mss add, "now"] his witnesses to the people [sg.]." The "people" is implicitly the people of Israel.

^t Lit. "And."

bringing you the good news: that God's promise to our ancestors has come true! ³³God has fulfilled it for us, their children,^a by resurrecting Jesus.^b Just as scripture says^c in the second Psalm,

You're my Son—
I've become your Father today!^d

³⁴Because God has raised him from among the dead, and he's never going back to decay. Just as it says,

I'm going to give you the holy and sure blessings I promised to David.^e

³⁵And^f it also says in another place,

You're not going to allow your holy one to experience decay.^g

³⁶Now David, after serving God's purpose in his own generation, did die. And he was laid beside his ancestors and experienced decay.^h ³⁷But the One that God has raised has not experienced decay.ⁱ ³⁸So, gentlemen, brothers, you should know that^j forgiveness of sins is being announced to you through Jesus^k—forgiveness for all the things you couldn't get forgiven^l under the Law of Moses. Through^m him, everyone who believes is found innocent. ⁴⁰So make sure that what the prophets have said doesn't happen toⁿ you:

⁴¹Look, you scoffers—
Be amazed, and disappear.
Because I myself am doing something in your time—
Something you wouldn't even believe if somebody told you.^o

⁴²When Paul and Barnabas left, the people invited them to talk about these things^p on the next Sabbath. ⁴³As the synagogue let out, lots of the Jews and the devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas. They spoke to them and were urging them to stay in God's grace.

⁴⁴On the next Sabbath, practically the whole city had gathered to hear the message about the Lord.^q ⁴⁵When the Jews saw the crowds, they got full of jealousy. And they were contradicting the

^a Or "for our children," following the oldest mss.

^b Or "by raising up Jesus," a possible reference to Deut. 18:15, 18.

^c Lit. "just as it is written."

^d Ps. 2:7.

^e Isa. 55:3.

^f Lit. "Because."

^g Lit. "see decay." Ps. 16:10.

^h Lit. "saw decay." Ps. 16:10.

ⁱ Lit. "saw decay." Ps. 16:10.

^j Lit. "be it known to you, brother men, that."

^k Lit. "this One."

^l Lit. "get found innocent of."

^m Or "In him," or "By him."

ⁿ Lit. "come upon."

^o Hab. 1:5.

^p Lit. "they asked that these things be spoken about to them on the next Sabbath."

^q Or, following different mss, "to hear the word of God."

things Paul was saying^a and insulting him. ⁴⁶But Paul and Barnabas were very bold. They said, “It was important to tell you God’s message first. Since you’re refusing it,^b and you consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we’re turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷After all, the Lord has commanded us to do so:

I have appointed you as a light to the Gentiles:
You’re to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.^c

⁴⁸When the Gentiles heard that, they were very happy, and were praising^d the message about the Lord.^e And those who were chosen^f for eternal life became believers.^g ⁴⁹And the message about the Lord spread through the whole region. ⁵⁰But the Jews stirred up the well-respected religious women and the important men of the city. They instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and kicked them out of their area. ⁵¹So^h they shook the dust off their feetⁱ in protest against them and went to Iconium.^j ⁵²And the followers of Jesus continued to be full of joy and the Holy Spirit.

Paul and Barnabas Preach in Iconium

14 The same thing happened in Iconium.^k They went in the Jewish synagogue^l and spoke, and^m a large number of Jews and of Gentilesⁿ became believers.^o ²But the Jews who didn’t believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned them^p against the brothers and sisters. ³Nonetheless,^q Paul and Barnabas stayed there quite some time, and were very courageous for the Lord.^r And the Lord was testifying to the message about his grace by giving grace for miracles^s and wonders to happen through the touch of their hands. ⁴But the people of the city were divided. Some people sided with the Jews, and others sided with the apostles. ⁵Finally there was a move from both the Gentiles and the Jews, together with their leaders, to treat them shamefully and stone them.

^a Lit. “the things being said by Paul.”

^b Lit. “Since you shove it away.”

^c Isa. 49:6.

^d Lit. “glorifying.”

^e Lit. “the word of the Lord”; some mss have, “God’s message” (lit. “the word of God”).

^f Lit. “placed” or “appointed.”

^g Or simply, “believed.”

^h Lit. “But.”

ⁱ This action symbolizes having no more to do with a place and its people (see Mt. 10:14; Mk 6:11; Lk 9:5; 10:11; Acts 18:6).

^j Prn. *eye-koe-nec-am*.

^k Prn. *eye-koe-nec-am*.

^l Prn. *sinn-a-gogg*.

^m Lit. “with the result that.”

ⁿ Lit. “Greeks.” It’s just a way of talking about the Gentiles.

^o Or simply, “believed.”

^p Lit. “turned their souls bad.”

^q Lit. “So on the one hand,” looking forward to v. 4, which begins literally “But on the other hand.” The length of their stay, their courage, and the good results of their preaching (vv. 1, 3) are being contrasted with the hostile reaction of some of the people in the city (vv. 2, 4).

^r Or “They were bold, depending on the Lord.”

^s Traditionally: “signs.”

6When Paul and Barnabas learned about it, they escaped to the towns of Lystra^a and Derbe^b in Lycaonia,^c and the area around there. 7And they were preaching the good news there.

Paul and Barnabas Preach in Lystra and Derbe

8A certain man with paralyzed feet used to sit outdoors in Lystra. He had been crippled from birth, and had never walked. 9This man listened to Paul talking. When Paul looked closely at him, he saw that he had faith to be healed.^d 10Paul said in a loud voice, “Stand straight up on your feet!” And he jumped up and started walking around. 11When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted in their local^e language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!”^f 12And they started calling Barnabas “Zeus^g” and Paul “Hermes^h” (because Paul was the main speaker). 13And the priest of the temple of Zeus, which was right outside the city, brought bulls and flower necklaces to the gates. Together with the crowds, he was getting ready to offer a sacrifice. 14When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard about it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd. They were shouting, 15“Men, why are you doing this? We’re human beings just the same as you! We’re bringing you the good news, so that you’ll turn away from useless idols like these to the Living God—

the God who made heaven,ⁱ earth and sea, and everything in them!^j

16In times past,^k God allowed all the nations to go their own ways. 17All the same, God has certainly provided proof of being real^l—by doing good things like giving you the rains from heaven, and the harvest seasons. God satisfies your hearts with food and with happiness.” 18Even when they said all that, Paul and Barnabas barely stopped the crowds from sacrificing to them.

Paul is Nearly Stoned to Death

19Later,^m Jews came over from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. They stoned Paul and started dragging him out of the city—they thought he was dead. 20But the followers of Jesus got in a circle around him, and he got up and went into the city. The next day, he left with Barnabas for Derbe.

^a Prn. *liss-tra*.

^b Prn. *der-bee*.

^c Prn. *lik-kay-oe-nec-a*.

^d Or “to be saved.” The same word can mean both.

^e Lit. “in their Lycaonian [prn. *lik-kay-oe-nec-an*] language.”

^f Lit. “The gods, having become/having made themselves like human beings, have come down to us.”

^g Prn. *zyoose*.

^h Prn. *her-meez*.

ⁱ Or “sky.”

^j Exod. 20:11; Ps. 146:6.

^k Lit. “In past generations.”

^l Lit. “On the other hand, he has not left himself without witness.” The double negative makes the statement stronger.

^m Lit. “And.” This is a sudden change of scene, and some mss add a transition phrase and other details to smooth out the abruptness.

Paul and Barnabas Return to Antioch in Syria

21 After they'd brought the good news to that city, and had made quite a few converts, they went back to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. 22 They were strengthening the followers,^a encouraging them to stay in the faith. And they were saying, "We have to go through lots of sufferings^b to enter God's reign." 23 They also appointed elders for them in each community. When they'd prayed and fasted,^c they handed them over into the care of the Lord they had come to trust.

24 And when they'd gone through Pisidia,^d they came to Pamphylia.^e 25 When they'd preached the good news^f in Perga, they went down to the coast at Attalia.^g 26 From there they sailed off to Antioch,^h the place where they had first been entrusted to the grace of God for this work. They were finished.ⁱ 27 When they arrived, they got the community together. And they began telling them about all the things God had done with them—how^j God had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they stayed with the followers for quite a long time.

A Conference in Jerusalem about the Status of Gentile Believers

15 Then^k some people came down from Judea^l and were teaching the brothers and sisters that "Unless you're circumcised according to the custom handed down from Moses,^m you can't be saved." 2 And there was a big disagreementⁿ and debate between Paul and Barnabas and the people visiting from Jerusalem.^o So the brothers and sisters appointed^p Paul and Barnabas, and certain other members of the community,^q to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. 3 So when they'd been sent on their journey by the community, they went through Phoenicia^r and Samaria. As they went, they were telling the story of the conversion of the Gentiles, and they gave^s a lot of joy to all the brothers and sisters. 4 When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the community and by the apostles and elders. And they told^t them all the things God had done with them. 5 But certain believers, who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees,^u

^a Lit. "strengthening the souls of the followers."

^b Lit. "through many troubles." Paul and Barnabas are warning them that persecution is unavoidable.

^c Lit. "prayed with fasting."

^d Prn. *pis-sidd-ee-a*.

^e Prn. *pam-fill-ee-a*.

^f Lit. "When they'd spoken the word."

^g Prn. *at-ta-lye-a*.

^h That is, Antioch in Syria.

ⁱ Lit. "...Antioch, whence they had been entrusted to the grace of God for the work that they had completed."

^j Or "...them, and how."

^k Lit. "And."

^l Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

^m Lit. "in the custom of Moses"; see Lev. 12:3.

ⁿ Lit. "no small disagreement/dissentment."

^o Lit. "and them."

^p Lit. "they appointed."

^q Lit. "and certain others from them."

^r Prn. *fee-nee-sha*.

^s Lit. "made."

^t Lit. "reported."

^u Prn. *ferr-a-seez*.

got up and were saying, “You have to circumcise^a them, and command them to keep the Law of Moses.”

6So^b the apostles and elders got together to look into this question. 7And after much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Gentlemen, brothers:^c You know what happened with us^d back in the early days: God chose to have the Gentiles hear the message of the good news from my mouth—and to become believers.^e 8And God, who knows people’s hearts, testified on their behalf, by giving them the Holy Spirit, just like us. 9And God didn’t make any distinction between us and them: God cleansed their hearts by faith. 10So why are you testing God now? Why are you trying to put a yoke on the necks of the followers—one that neither our ancestors nor ourselves have been strong enough to bear? 11No, we believe that it’s through the grace of the Lord Jesus that we’re saved, just the same way they are.”

12Then the whole crowd got quiet, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul. They were describing all the miracles^f and wonders God had done through them while they were with the Gentiles.^g 13When they’d finished, James responded, “Gentlemen, brothers:^h Listen to me. 14Simonⁱ has described how God first visited the Gentiles, and accepted^j from them a people for God’s name. 15And the words of the prophets are in agreement with this. Just as scripture says:^k

16After this I’m going to come back,
And I’m going to rebuild David’s tent that’s fallen down.
I’m going to rebuild its ruins and restore it,
17So that the rest^l of humanity^m will search for the Sovereign One—
All the Gentilesⁿ who are called by my name.^o
The Sovereign One, who is doing all this, says so.^p

18These things have been known forever.^q 19So my judgment is that we shouldn’t make things more difficult for people who are turning to God from among the Gentiles. 20We should just instruct them to stay away from things that have been polluted by idols, from sexual immorality,

^a Prn. *sir-kum-size*.

^b Lit. “And.”

^c Lit. “Brother men.”

^d Lit. “among you.” Some mss have “among us.”

^e Or simply, “believe.”

^f Traditionally: “signs.”

^g Lit. “through them among the Gentiles.”

^h Lit. “Brother men.”

ⁱ Lit. “Simeon,” a variant of “Simon,” i.e. Peter.

^j Lit. “took” or “received.”

^k Lit. “Just as it is written.”

^l Or “the remnant.”

^m Lit. “of human beings.”

ⁿ Or “the nations.”

^o Or “on whom my name has been bestowed.”

^p Amos 9:11-12.

^q Many mss round out this compressed phrase in one way or another, to make it an independent sentence.

^r Lit. “So I judge/reckon not to.”

from things that have been strangled, and from blood.^a 21 After all, Moses has had people to preach him in every city from ancient times.^b He's read aloud in the synagogues^c every Sabbath."

The Apostles and Elders of Jerusalem Send a Letter to the Gentile Believers

22 Then it seemed appropriate to the apostles and elders, together with the whole community, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (known as Barsabbas^d) and Silas, both leaders among the brothers and sisters. 23 Then they sent them with this letter:^e

From the apostles and elders, your brothers. Greetings to the Gentile brothers and sisters in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia.^f

24 We've heard that certain ones of us have gone up^g and upset you with their teaching,^h and have disturbed your peace of mind.ⁱ 25 So we've all agreed to send men to you with our dear friends Paul and Barnabas—26 men who have risked their lives on behalf of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We've sent Judas and Silas. They will give you^j the same message by word of mouth.

28 It has seemed appropriate to us and to the Holy Spirit not to put any further burden on you than just these necessary items:

29 Stay away from foods sacrificed to idols, from eating blood, from eating what is strangled, and from sexual immorality.

If you keep away from these things, you'll do fine. Stay well!

30 So then they were sent on their way, and went up^k to Antioch. And they gathered the community together and delivered the letter. 31 And when they had read it, they were very happy with the encouragement^l in it. 32 Judas and Silas, who were prophets, also said a lot of things to strengthen and encourage the brothers and sisters. 33 And when they had spent some time with them, they left the brothers and sisters and returned in peace to Jerusalem.^m 35 But Paul and Barnabas stayed on in Antioch. They were teaching and preaching the good news of the Lord along with lots of other people.

^a Some mss leave out "from sexual immorality" and/or "from things that have been strangled."

^b Lit. "generations."

^c Prn. *sinn-a-goggz*.

^d Prn. *bar-sob-us*.

^e Lit. "writing through their hand."

^f Prn. *sil-liss-ee-a*.

^g Lit. "gone off."

^h Lit. "with words."

ⁱ Lit. "your souls."

^j Lit. "report to you."

^k Lit. "down." Antioch is north from Jerusalem.

^l Or "advice."

^m Lit. "to those who had sent them." Verse 34 (see the KJV) says that Silas stayed in Antioch, but it is only found in later mss and some versions. The addition tries to help explain why Silas appears to be there in Antioch for Paul to take with him (v. 40).

After an Argument, Paul Goes with Silas and Barnabas Goes with Mark

36After some time,^a Paul said to Barnabas, “Let’s go back and visit the brothers and sisters in each city where we preached the message of the Lord, and see how they’re doing.” 37Now, Barnabas wanted to take John along (known as Mark). 38But Paul thought it was best not to take him along, because he had left^b them in Pamphylia,^c and hadn’t been with them for the work. 39This got to be such a painful dispute that they ended up going their separate ways. Barnabas took Mark and set sail for Cyprus. 40And Paul chose Silas, and after the brothers and sisters had entrusted them to the grace of the Lord, 41they went off through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas in Lystra

16 Paul also came to Derbe^d and to Lystra.^e In Lystra, there was a follower^f named Timothy. He was the son of a believing Jewish woman and a non-Jewish^g father. 2He was well-recommended by the brothers and sisters in Lystra and Iconium.^h 3Paul wanted Timothy to go with him. So he took him and had him circumcised,ⁱ because of the Jews that were in that place^j—they all knew that his father was a non-Jew.^k 4And as they were going from town to town, they were passing on to them the rules that had been decided on by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, for people to follow. 5And so the communities were being strengthened in their faith, and their numbers were getting bigger every day.

Paul Sees a Vision: “Come Over to Macedonia and Help us Out!”

6Next they traveled through the area of Phrygia^l and Galatia,^m because they’d been forbidden by the Holy Spirit from preachingⁿ in Asia. 7And after going along the borders of Mysia,^o they were trying to go into Bithynia,^p but the Spirit of Jesus wouldn’t let them. 8So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.^q 9And during the night, a vision came^r to Paul. A Macedonian^s man was standing there and pleading with him. He was saying, “Come over to Macedonia^t and help us out!”

^a Lit. “days.”

^b Lit. “not to take along him who had deserted them.”

^c Prn. *pam-fill-ee-a*.

^d Prn. *der-bee*.

^e Prn. *liss-tra*.

^f Lit. “...Lystra. And behold, there was a certain disciple there.”

^g Lit. “Greek.” See nt. on Acts 14:1.

^h Prn. *eye-koe-nee-am*.

ⁱ Prn. *sir-kum-sized*. Lit. “And taking him, he circumcised him.”

^j Lit. “in those places.”

^k Lit. “a Greek.”

^l Prn. *fridg-ee-a*.

^m Prn. *ga-lay-sha*.

ⁿ Lit. “speaking the word.”

^o Prn. *mis-ee-a*. Or “Going along opposite Mysia.”

^p Prn. *bi-thinn-ee-a*.

^q Prn. *troe-azz*.

^r Lit. “appeared.”

^s Prn. *mass-a-doe-nee-an*.

^t Prn. *mass-a-doe-nee-a*.

¹⁰When he saw that vision, we tried right away to leave for Macedonia. We were convinced God had invited us^a to preach the good news to the Macedonians.

Lydia Becomes a Believer in Philippi, Macedonia

¹¹So we set out from Troas and sailed straight to Samothrace,^b and the next day we got to Neapolis.^c ¹²From there we went to Philippi,^d which is a leading city^e in the district of Macedonia. It's a Roman colony.^f ¹³And on the Sabbath day, we went outside the gate and along the river. We thought there was supposed to be prayer going on there.^g So we sat down and were talking with the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴One of them was a devout woman of God named Lydia, a seller of purple cloth who came from the city of Thyatira.^h She was listening, and the Lord opened her heart to pay close attention to the things Paul was saying. ¹⁵When she and the people in her household had gotten baptized, she invited us home. She was saying, "If you've foundⁱ me to be faithful to the Lord, come stay at my house." And she made us go home with her.

Paul and Silas are Arrested and Imprisoned at Philippi

¹⁶Once when we were on our way to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of demonic prophecy. She used to make a lot of money^j for her owners by telling fortunes. ¹⁷This girl used to follow along behind Paul and the rest of us and shout, "These people are servants of the highest God!^k They're telling you^l about the path of salvation!" ¹⁸And she kept on doing that for several days. Finally Paul got so irritated that he turned around and said to the spirit,^m "I'm telling you in the name of Jesus Christ, come out of her!" And it came out right away.ⁿ ¹⁹But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. ²⁰They brought them in front of the Roman officials^o and said, "These people are Jews, and they're totally upsetting our city! ²¹They're telling^p people to observe religious customs that we are not allowed to accept or practice as Romans." ²²And the crowd joined in the attack against them. Then the Roman officials^q had them stripped, and gave the order for them to be beaten with wooden rods. ²³And when they had

^a Or "had called us over."

^b Prn. *sam-o-thrace*.

^c Prn. *nee-app-o-liss*.

^d Prn. *fil-lipp-eye*.

^e Lit. "a first city."

^f It's possible that this sentence originally read, "...Philippi, which is in the first district of Macedonia."

^g Lit. "...river, where we supposed prayer to be." The ancient mss have a number of slight variations here, such as "...river, where prayer was customarily held."

^h Prn. *thye-a-tye-ra*.

ⁱ Lit. "judged."

^j Lit. "She used to bring in a lot of business."

^k Or "the Most High God."

^l Some mss have, "us."

^m Lit. "And Paul, having become very irritated, and having turned around to the spirit, said."

ⁿ Lit. "in the same hour."

^o Lit. "the magistrates."

^p Or "commanding," or "advocating."

^q Lit. "the magistrates."

given them a severe beating;^a they threw them in prison. And they gave orders to the prison warden to guard them carefully. ²⁴Since he had that sort of order, he put them in the innermost part of the prison and clamped their ankles between wooden boards.^b

²⁵About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶And suddenly there was a big earthquake. It was so big that the foundations of the prison got shifted. And immediately all the doors came open, and everyone's restraints came loose. ²⁷And when the warden woke up and saw all the doors of the prison open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself.^c (He was assuming that the prisoners had escaped.) ²⁸But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Don't do yourself any harm! We're all in here!" ²⁹And the warden called for lights and rushed in. Trembling, he threw himself down in front of Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he led them outside and said, "Gentlemen,^d what do I have to do to be saved?" ³¹And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you and your household will be saved." ³²And they told him the message about the Lord, together with everyone in his household.^e ³³And while it was still the middle of the night,^f he took them and washed their wounds, and he immediately got baptized—he and all his people.^g ³⁴Then he led them back to the house and fixed them a meal.^h And he was overjoyed—together with his entire household—that he had come to believe in God.

³⁵When morning came, the Roman officialsⁱ sent their officers^j with the message, "Release those people." ³⁶And the warden reported all this to Paul: "The Roman officials^k have sent their officers^l to have you released. So now be released, and go on your way in peace."^m ³⁷But Paul said to them, "They've beaten us—Roman citizens—in public without a trial, and have thrown us in prison. And now they're going to toss us out quietly? Oh, no—definitely not. Let them come personally and show us out of the prison." ³⁸So the officersⁿ sent this message to the Roman officials.^o They were afraid when they heard that Paul and his companions were Roman citizens,³⁹ and they came and begged them to accept their apology. And when the Roman officials^p had shown them out of the prison, they kept asking them to leave the city. ⁴⁰But when they had gotten out of prison they went to Lydia's house. And after they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters, they left Philippi.

^a Lit. "when they had laid many blows on them."

^b This used to be called putting a person "in the stocks." Stocks are two heavy boards that have gaps between them just big enough for people's ankles, so when they are locked together the people can't pull their feet out.

^c Roman officers who failed in their duty were expected to punish themselves by committing suicide.

^d Or "Sirs."

^e Lit. "and they spoke to him the word of the Lord [a few mss: "the word of God"], with all those in his household."

^f Lit. "And at that very hour of the night."

^g This includes not only relatives, but also household servants.

^h Lit. "and set a table before them."

ⁱ Lit. "the magistrates."

^j Lit. "the lictors"—perhaps the very men who had given Paul and his companions the beating.

^k Lit. "The magistrates."

^l Lit. "the lictors."

^m "So now come out and go on your way in peace."

ⁿ Lit. "the lictors"—perhaps the very men who had given Paul and his companions the beating.

^o Lit. "the magistrates."

^p Lit. "the magistrates."

A Riot in Thessalonica

17 When they had gone through Amphipolis^a and Apollonia,^b they came to Thessalonica.^c There was a Jewish synagogue there. ²And as usual, Paul went to it.^d And over three Sabbaths he discussed things out of the scriptures with them. ³He was explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and be raised from among the dead. And he was saying, “This Jesus that I’m proclaiming to you is the Messiah!” ⁴Some of the Jews were persuaded, and they joined Paul and Silas, and so did a large number of devout Gentiles,^e and quite a few important women. ⁵But the Jews got jealous. They recruited some nasty characters^f from the marketplace, got a mob together, and set about disrupting the whole city. They even besieged Jason’s house, intending to bring Paul and Silas in front of the city assembly.^g ⁶When they didn’t find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers^h in front of the city authorities. They were shouting, “These people have been disrupting the whole world, and now they’re here, too! ⁷Jason has taken them in. These people are all acting against Caesar’s laws. They’re saying there’s another king, Jesus.” ⁸And they stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who were listening to all this. ⁹Finallyⁱ they got bail from Jason and the others and let them go.

Paul and Silas Preach in Berea

¹⁰And the brothers and sisters sent Paul and Silas off that very night^j to Berea.^k When they arrived, they went into the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹And those folks were more fair-minded^l than the folks in Thessalonica. They accepted the message with total enthusiasm. Every day they were studying the scriptures to see if Paul’s claims were true.^m ¹²And lots of them became believers,ⁿ including quite a few well-respected women and men. ¹³But then^o the Jews from Thessalonica found out that Paul was announcing God’s message in Berea too. And they came and stirred up the crowds there as well. ¹⁴But the brothers and sisters quickly sent Paul away to the coast. (Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea.) ¹⁵The people who were responsible for protecting Paul on his journey brought him as far as Athens. Then they headed back, with instructions for Silas and Timothy: come to Paul as quickly as they could.^p

^a Prn. *am-fipp-o-liss*.

^b Prn. *app-o-loe-nee-a*.

^c Prn. *thess-a-lo-nye-ka*.

^d Lit. “And according to the custom with Paul, he went inside to them.”

^e Lit. “Greeks.” It’s just a way of talking about the Gentiles.

^f Lit. “evil men.”

^g Lit. “...seeking to lead them forward to the people.” Or possibly, “...demanding for him to lead them forward to the people.”

^h Lit. “brothers,” or “brothers and sisters.”

ⁱ Lit. “And.”

^j Lit. “immediately at night.”

^k Prn. *ber-ree-a*.

^l Lit. “well-bred.”

^m Lit. “They received the word with great eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things might be so.”

ⁿ Or simply, “believed.”

^o Lit. “But when.”

^p Lit. “And those conducting Paul led him as far as Athens, and, receiving a command to Silas and Timothy that they should come to him as quickly as possible, they left.”

Paul Stays in Athens—And Gets an Opportunity to Preach

16Meanwhile, Paul stayed in Athens waiting for them. And his spirit kept getting provoked in him, seeing the city so full of idols. 17But he was having discussions in the Jewish synagogue,^a and would also talk with the devout Gentiles.^b And every day in the marketplace, he'd talk with whoever happened to be there. 18Even some Epicurean^c and Stoic philosophers would have deep discussions with him. And some people would say, "What is this quack philosopher^d trying to say?" Others would say, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign gods"—because he was telling the good news of Jesus and the resurrection. 19So they took him and led him to the Athens education council.^e They said, "We'd like to hear about this new teaching you've been talking about."^f 20The ideas we're hearing from you are a bit unfamiliar to us, so we'd like to know what they're about."^g 21(All Athenians^h and their foreign visitors—spend their time doing nothing but telling or hearing something new.)

22So Paul stood up in front of the education councilⁱ and said,

Gentlemen of Athens, I see that you are extremely religious in every way. 23Because as I've been going through your city and looking at your objects of worship, I've even found an altar with these words carved on it: "To an Unknown God." So what you're worshiping without knowledge, I'm going to proclaim to you. 24God, who made the world and everything in it, is the Sovereign of heaven and earth. God doesn't live in temples made by human hands, 25and God isn't served by human hands—as if God needed something. No, it is God who gives^k life, breath, and everything else to everyone. 26And God made every human nation from one person,^l so that they'd live across^m the whole face of the earth. God had already decided their set times, and the limits on the places they would live. 27They were to search for God, and perhaps even reach outⁿ and find God.

And in fact, God isn't far away from any^o one of us. 28After all, it's in God that we live and move and exist.^p As some of your poets have put it,

We are God's children.^a

^a Prn. *sinn-a-gogg*.

^b Lit. "and with the God-fearing Greeks."

^c Prn. *ep-ik-yoo-ree-an*.

^d Or "this blabbermouth."

^e Lit. "the Areopagus" (prn. *err-ee-o-pa-gas*).

^f Lit. "Can we know what this new teaching is, which is being talked about by you?"

^g Lit. "You're bringing somewhat/some unfamiliar ideas to our ears, so we'd like to know what these things are wanting to be."

^h Prn. *a-theen-ee-ans*.

ⁱ Lit. "the Areopagus."

^j Lit. "an altar on which is inscribed."

^k Lit. "...something, himself giving."

^l He's thinking of Adam (Gen. 2). Some mss have, "from one blood."

^m Lit. "on."

ⁿ Or "feel around."

^o Lit. "each."

^p This may be a quotation from Greek wisdom.

²⁹So, since we're God's children, we shouldn't suppose that divinity is like gold or silver or stone—like a sculpture produced by human skill and imagination. ³⁰So although God has overlooked human ignorance in the past, God is now telling all people everywhere to change their hearts.^b

³¹Because God has set a day to judge the world with justice, through a man that God has appointed. And God has given assurance of this to everyone by raising him from among the dead.

³²Now, when they heard about resurrection of dead people, some people started sneering. But others said, "We'd like to hear from you about this again." ³³Paul then left the council.^c ³⁴And some men stuck with him and became believers,^d for example Dionysius^e the Areopagite. There was also a woman named Damaris,^f and some other people as well.

Paul Goes to Corinth

18 Later, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²There^g he met a Jew named Aquila,^h who was from Pontus. Aquila had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla. They had had to move because of the emperor Claudius's order that all the Jews had to leave Rome. Paul visited Aquila and Priscilla, ³and because he had the same trade, he was staying with them and working. (They were tentmakers by trade.) ⁴And he used to have discussions with people in the synagogueⁱ every Sabbath, and he was persuading both Jews and Gentiles.^j

⁵Then, when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia,^k Paul began to give all of his attention to preaching the good news.^l He kept testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.^m ⁶But when they opposed him and insulted him, he tore his clothes and said to them, "Your blood is on your own heads—it's not on my hands." From now on I'm going to the Gentiles."ⁿ ⁷And he left there and went to the house of a person named Titius Justus, whose house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸Crispus the synagogue leader also became a believer in the Lord, together with his whole household. And lots of Corinthians were becoming believers when they heard the message, and were getting baptized.

^a Lit. "whose offspring, after all, we are also." This is a quotation from a poem by the Stoic philosopher Aratus (*Phaenomena*, 5).

^b More literally: "So then, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God in the present commands all people everywhere to repent" (see "Bible Words" under "repent").

^c Lit. "Paul thus went out from their midst."

^d Or simply, "believed."

^e Prn. *dye-a-niss-ee-us*.

^f Prn. *damm-a-riss*.

^g Lit. "And."

^h Prn. *a-kwill-a*.

ⁱ Prn. *sinn-a-gogg*.

^j Lit. "Greeks."

^k Prn. *mass-a-doe-nee-a*.

^l Lit. "Paul concentrated on the word." Apparently they came with financial support that allowed him to do that. See Phil. 3:15; 1 Cor. 9:8-18; 2 Cor. 12:12-13.

^m Or "that the Messiah was Jesus."

ⁿ Lit. "I'm clean." His perspective is that he has warned them to repent and believe in Jesus, and they have refused to listen. He uses a Jewish way of talking to indicate that he has tried to warn them in this life-or-death matter (see e.g. Ezek. 33:1-9). Now they're responsible for whatever happens to them.

⁹And in a vision one night, the Lord said to Paul, “Don’t be afraid at all—keep speaking out, and don’t be quiet! ¹⁰I’m with you, and no one’s going to attack you and harm you.^a I have many people in this city.” ¹¹And Paul stayed there a year and six months, teaching them^b God’s message.

¹²Now, while Gallio was the governor^c of Achaia,^d the Jews all got together and attacked Paul. And they brought him up to the governor’s judgment bench. ¹³They were claiming that “This man is persuading people to worship God in a way that’s against the law!” ¹⁴And just as Paul was about to open his mouth to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, “If this were about some injustice or evil crime, you Jews, it would be reasonable to hear your case. ¹⁵But since it’s about disputes about words and names and your own law, deal with that^e yourselves. I have no desire to be a judge of those things.” ¹⁶And he dismissed them from the judgment bench. ¹⁷Then they all took hold of Sosthenes^f the leader of the synagogue, and started beating him up right in front of the judgment bench. But none of that^g made any difference to Gallio.

Paul Returns a Second Time to Antioch in Syria

¹⁸Despite that trouble, Paul stayed with the brothers and sisters in Corinth quite a few more days. Then he said goodbye to them and sailed to Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila went with him. Paul cut his hair in Cenchreae,^h because he was keeping a vow. ¹⁹They came ashore at Ephesus,ⁱ and Paul parted company with them there. Then he went to the synagogue by himself and had discussions with the Jews. ²⁰And they were asking him to stay longer in Ephesus, but he wouldn’t. ²¹He said his goodbyes, and was saying, “I’ll come back to you again if God wills.”^j Then he sailed from Ephesus ²²and came ashore at Caesarea.^k After he had gone up and said hello to the community in Jerusalem, he traveled^l to Antioch in Syria. ²³And after spending some time there, he left and went town by town^m through Galatiaⁿ and Phrygia,^o strengthening all the followers.

Apollos Preaches and Teaches in Ephesus and Corinth

²⁴A Jew named Apollos^p—an educated^q man from Alexandria—arrived in Ephesus.^a He was a powerful teacher of^b the scriptures. ²⁵Apollos had been taught the Way of the Lord,^c and was on

^a Lit. “attack you to harm you.”

^b Lit. “among them.”

^c Lit. “proconsul,” a Roman official in charge of a province—in this case, Achaia, which comprises the southern end of the Greek peninsula, including the Peloponnesus.

^d Prn. *a-kay-ya*.

^e Lit. “see to that.”

^f Prn. *soos-tha-nee-z*.

^g Lit. “none of these things.”

^h Prn. *senn-kree-ay*.

ⁱ Prn. *efja-siss*.

^j Later mss explain Paul’s refusal to stay by having him begin by saying, “I absolutely have to make the coming festival in Jerusalem.” That makes sense, but it’s probably not what Luke wrote.

^k Prn. *sezz-a-ree-a*.

^l Lit. “went down.” To NT writers, towards Jerusalem is always “up,” and away from Jerusalem is always “down.”

^m Or “went systematically.”

ⁿ Prn. *ga-lay-sha*.

^o Prn. *fridg-ee-a*.

^p Prn. *a-poll-us*.

^q Or “eloquent.”

fire^d with the Spirit. He used to speak and teach accurately about Jesus, but only knew about the baptism of John. ²He had begun talking openly in the synagogue^e about Jesus, and Priscilla and Aquila heard him. So they took him aside and explained the Way^f to him more accurately. ³He also wanted to go over to Achaia,^g and the brothers and sisters in Ephesus encouraged him to do it. They wrote to the followers that they should welcome him. When he got there, he was a great help to those who had become believers by God's grace. ⁴Because he thoroughly^h refuted the Jews in public, and demonstrated with the scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.ⁱ

Paul Preaches and Teaches in Ephesus

19 While Apollos^j was in Corinth, Paul traveled through places far inland from the sea, and came to Ephesus^k. He found some followers there ²and said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?"^l And they told him, "No—we haven't even heard there is a Holy Spirit." ³And he said, "So what baptism did you receive?"^m And they told him, "John's baptism." ⁴So Paul said, "John baptized people with a baptism for a change of heart."ⁿ He used to tell the people to believe in the One who was coming after him—which is to say, he wanted them to believe in Jesus. ⁵When they heard that, they got baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶Then Paul laid his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came over them, and they began to speak in other languages^o and prophesy. ⁷Altogether they were about twelve men.

⁸Paul also went into the synagogue, and was speaking openly over a period of about three months. He was having discussions and trying to persuade people about God's reign. ⁹But then^p some people started getting stubborn and disobedient. They were insulting the Way in front of the congregation. So Paul split off from them and kept the followers separate. He was teaching^q every day in the school of Tyrannus.^r ¹⁰This went on over a period of two years, until everyone in Asia had heard the Lord's message—Jews and Gentiles alike. ¹¹And God was bringing about extraordinary displays of power through Paul's hands. ¹²It even got to the point that handkerchiefs and towels^s that had touched his skin were taken to the sick, and their illnesses left them. Evil

^a Prn. *efja-siss*.

^b Lit. "He was powerful in."

^c The "Lord" is Jesus. See Acts 9:2. This very probably means that Apollo was a follower of Jesus who had gone through a "catechism," a formal process of learning and induction into the community of believers in Jesus.

^d Lit. "boiling."

^e Prn. *sinn-a-gogg*.

^f Or "the Way of God," following other reliable ancient mss.

^g Prn. *a-kay-ya*.

^h Lit. "powerfully."

ⁱ Or "that the Messiah was Jesus."

^j Prn. *a-poll-us*.

^k Prn. *efja-siss*.

^l Or simply, "when you believed."

^m Lit. "So what have you been baptized into?"

ⁿ Traditionally: "repentance" (see "Bible Words").

^o Traditionally: "to speak in tongues."

^p Lit. "when."

^q Or "having discussions."

^r Prn. *tye-rann-us*.

^s Or "aprons."

spirits would leave too. ¹³And some of the traveling Jewish exorcists even tried naming the name of the Lord Jesus over people who had evil spirits. They'd say, "I command you, by the Jesus that Paul preaches!" ¹⁴For example,^a there were seven sons of a Jewish chief priest who were doing that. ¹⁵But the evil spirit said back to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know Paul—but who are you?" ¹⁶And the man that the evil spirit was in pounced on them, and he defeated^b and overpowered all of them. They finally ran away from his house naked^c and wounded. ¹⁷This story became known to everyone in Ephesus—Jews and Gentiles alike. And it frightened them all,^d and the name of the Lord Jesus began to be a lot more respected.^e ¹⁸And lots of the people who had become believers started publicly confessing and revealing their magic rituals. ¹⁹Quite a few of those who practiced magic gathered their books together and burned them in front of everyone. (They calculated their value and found they had been worth fifty thousand silver coins.^f ²⁰In those ways^g the Lord's message^h advanced powerfully and got stronger.

A Riot in Ephesus

²¹After all of this had happened, Paul decided in the Spiritⁱ to travel through Macedonia^j and Achaia,^k and go to Jerusalem. He was saying, "After I get there, I have to see Rome, too." ²²And he sent two of his assistants, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia. But he stayed a while in Asia.^l

²³And during that time there was a major disturbance^m about the Way. ²⁴There was a silversmith named Demetrius,ⁿ who used to make silver shrines for the goddess Artemis. He used to bring in quite a bit of business^o for the craftspeople that way. ²⁵He got them together with the people in related trades and said, "Gentlemen, you know that our wealth^p comes from this business. ²⁶And you're seeing and hearing that this Paul has converted and led astray a large crowd—not just in Ephesus, but in practically all of Asia. He's been saying that hand-crafted gods^q aren't real gods. ²⁷Now, this not only threatens to bring our trade a bad reputation—it also threatens to make people despise the temple of our great goddess Artemis.^r The goddess that all of Asia and the whole world worships is about to be brought down from her position of greatness!"

^a Lit. "And."

^b Lit. "mastered."

^c Or "in rags."

^d Lit. "and fear came to be on them all."

^e Or "was being exalted."

^f Each silver coin was worth a laborer's daily wage. The monetary value is huge.

^g Lit. "Thus."

^h Some mss have, "God's message," or "belief in God."

ⁱ Or "Paul decided," or "Paul decided in his spirit."

^j Prn. *mass-a-doe-nee-a*.

^k Prn. *a-kay-ya*.

^l In other words, he stayed in and around the city of Ephesus.

^m Lit. "there was no little disturbance."

ⁿ Prn. *da-mee-tree-us*.

^o Lit. "no little business."

^p Or "prosperity."

^q Lit. "gods that come into being by means of hands."

^r Lit. "And not only does this threaten for our trade to come into disrepute, but also for the temple of our great goddess Artemis to be considered as nothing."

²⁸Now, when they heard that, they got completely furious. And they started shouting, “Artemis of the Ephesians is great!” ²⁹And the whole city was filled with confusion. They all rushed to the stadium, kidnapping Gaius^a and Aristarchus^b of Macedonia, Paul’s traveling companions. ³⁰And Paul wanted to go in and talk to the people of the city, but the followers wouldn’t let him. ³¹And even some of the officials of the region^c who were friendly towards him sent messages to him, begging him not to go into the stadium. ³²Because the city meeting was in confusion—with some people shouting one thing, and some other people shouting something else. The majority of them didn’t even know the reason why they’d been brought together. ³³When the Jews pushed Alexander up to the front, some people from the crowd told him what to say.^d Alexander motioned with his hand for quiet, and began trying to give an explanation to the crowd. ³⁴But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single chant came from all of them for about two hours. They were shouting, “Artemis of the Ephesians is great!” ³⁵Finally^e the secretary of the city quieted the crowd and said, “Men of Ephesus, who^f is there that doesn’t know the city of Ephesus—temple-guardian of the great Artemis, and of her image that fell from heaven? ³⁶So since this is all undeniable, you need to settle down and not be doing anything rash. ³⁷After all, you’ve brought these men here, who aren’t temple robbers, nor have they insulted our goddess.^g ³⁸So if Demetrius and his fellow craftspeople have a complaint against somebody, the courts are open and there are governors.^h They can settle it between themselves.ⁱ ³⁹And if you’re wanting anything further, it will be settled in a lawful city meeting. ⁴⁰After all, we’re actually in danger of being charged with rioting over today’s affair. Because there’s no real reason we can give as an explanation^j for this disorderly gathering.” And after saying all that,^k he closed the meeting.

Paul Goes to Macedonia and Greece

20 After the commotion died down, Paul sent for the followers and encouraged them. Then he said goodbye and left to go to Macedonia. ²And he went through those regions and gave many encouraging messages to the followers.¹ Then he arrived in Greece, ³and spent three months there. Then there was a secret plan against him by the Jews, just as he was about to set sail for Syria. So he decided to go back through Macedonia. ⁴Sopater^m the son of Pyrrhus,ⁿ from

^a Prn. *gay-us*.

^b Prn. *err-i-stark-us*.

^c Lit. “And even some of the Asiarchs.”

^d Or, more literally, “And some people from the crowd gave instructions to Alexander, the Jews having put him forward.”

^e Lit. “But.”

^f Lit. “who of human beings.”

^g Lit. “...temple robbers nor insulters of our goddess.” Some mss have “your goddess.”

^h Lit. “proconsuls,” Roman officials in charge of a province—in this case, Asia.

ⁱ Lit. “Let them bring charges against one another.”

^j Some mss have, “Since there’s no real reason, we can’t give an explanation.” It’s possible that the author or an early copyist got tangled up in the double negatives here.

^k Lit. “And having said these things.”

^l Lit. “and encouraged them by much word.”

^m Prn. *sop-pat-ter*.

ⁿ Prn. *pirr-us*.

Berea,^a Aristarchus^b and Secundus^c from Thessalonica, Gaius^d and Timothy from Derbe,^e and Tychicus^f and Trophimus^g from Asia, all went with him. ⁵These men went on ahead and were waiting for us in Troas.^h ⁶Then we sailed out of Philippiⁱ after the festival^j of Unleavened Bread,^k and came to them in Troas after five days. We stayed there for seven days.

Paul Visits the Community at Troas

⁷On the first day of the week we got together for a meal,^l and Paul was teaching^m them. He was going to leave the next day, and he kept on talking into the middle of the night. ⁸And there were quite a few lamps in the upstairs room where we'd gotten together. ⁹And there was a young man named Eutychusⁿ sitting on the window sill. He was falling into a deep sleep as Paul went on teaching at length. When he'd fallen asleep, he fell down from the third floor. They picked him up, and he was dead.^o ¹⁰But Paul went downstairs, threw himself on top of him, and hugged him. Then he said, "Don't be upset—he's still with us."^p ¹¹And when Paul had gone back upstairs, he had a meal.^q When he had finished eating, he talked quite a bit more, until sunrise. After that he left.^r ¹²And they brought the boy home alive, and were extremely relieved.

Sailing from Troas to Miletus

¹³We got on board ship and sailed for Assos. At that point^s we were going to take Paul on board: that's how he had arranged it. He himself was going to go by land. ¹⁴So when he met us in Assos, we took him aboard and went to Mitylene.^t ¹⁵Then we sailed off from there, and the next day we came opposite Chios,^u and the day after that we came over to Samos,^v and the next day we went to

^a Prn. *ber-ree-a*.

^b Prn. *err-i-stark-us*.

^c Prn. *sa-kund-us*.

^d Prn. *gay-us*.

^e Prn. *der-bee*. Some mss have, "Gaius of Doverius [a town in Macedonia] and Timothy," probably because in 19:29 Gaius of Macedonia is mentioned. Something seems to have gone slightly wrong. It could be that there were two people named Gaius, or perhaps in 19:29 Luke originally wrote that only Aristarchus was from Macedonia.

^f Prn. *tikk-ik-us*.

^g Prn. *troff-eeem-us*.

^h Prn. *troe-azz*.

ⁱ Prn. *fil-lip-pye*.

^j Lit. "days."

^k This is bread that has no yeast in it, so it doesn't rise. Matzo cracker bread is an example. See Exod. 12 (esp. vv.14-15) for the story behind the custom.

^l Lit. "to break bread."

^m Or "discussing things with."

ⁿ Prn. *yoo-tik-us*.

^o Lit. "And he was picked up dead."

^p Lit. "his soul is in him."

^q Lit. "he broke bread."

^r Lit. "Thus he left."

^s Lit. "From there."

^t Prn. *mit-til-lee-nee*.

^u Prn. *kye-oss*.

^v Prn. *say-moss*. Some mss add here, "and stayed at Trogyllium" (prn. *troe-gill-ee-am*).

Miletus.^a ¹⁶Paul, by the way, had decided that we should sail past Ephesus, so that he wouldn't lose time in Asia. Because he was hurrying^b to be in Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost, if possible.

Paul's Farewell Speech to the Elders of the Ephesian Community

¹⁷So from Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus, and asked the elders of the community to come to him.

¹⁸When they got to him, he said to them,

You all know what I was like the whole time I was with you—from the first day I set foot in Asia. ¹⁹I was serving the Lord with complete humility and tears. And you know the pressures I experienced because of the secret plans that the Jews made against me.^c ²⁰You know that I never held back anything that was to your advantage: I always preached to you and taught you, both in public and in all your houses.^d ²¹I testified to Jews and Gentiles^e alike about a change of heart^f and turning towards God,^g and about faith in our Lord Jesus.^h ²²And now I've been bound by the Spirit to goⁱ to Jerusalem—I don't know what will happen to me there. ²³But I do know^j that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city and says that imprisonment^k and troubles are waiting for me. ²⁴But I don't regard my life as precious to me at all—as long as I finish my race, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus: to testify to the good news of the grace of God.

²⁵And now I know that none of you is going to see my face again. I have gone around preaching God's reign in your presence.^l ²⁶So I testify to you on this day: my hands are free^m from everyone's blood. ²⁷Because I never held back from telling youⁿ all of God's will. ²⁸Watch out for yourselves, and for the whole flock that the Holy Spirit has placed you in as pastors.^o Shepherd the community of God, which God acquired with the blood of God's own Son.^p ²⁹I know that after I leave vicious wolves are going to come in among you, and they're not going to spare^q the flock. ³⁰And even some of you will start teaching distorted things to draw followers to themselves.^r ³¹So keep watch! Remember: day and night for three years I never stopped warning^s each one of you^t

^a Prn. *mye-leet-us*.

^b Or "Because he was trying as hard as he could."

^c Lit. "...and tears, and the trials that befell me in the plots of the Jews."

^d Lit. "and house by house."

^e Lit. "Greeks."

^f Traditionally: "repentance" (see "Bible Words").

^g Traditionally: "about repentance towards God."

^h Some mss have, "our Lord Jesus Christ."

ⁱ Lit. "And now, see, bound by the Spirit, I am going."

^j Lit. "Except."

^k Lit. "bonds."

^l Lit. "Now behold, I know that you [pl.] will no longer see my face, all those among whom I went around preaching the kingdom."

^m Lit. "that I am clean." See the nt. on Acts 18:6.

ⁿ Or "announcing to you."

^o Or "overseers"; Traditionally: "bishops."

^p Many mss have "of the Lord, which he acquired with his own blood."

^q Lit. "...among you, not sparing."

^r Lit. "And from among you men will stand up speaking perverse things in order to draw the disciples after them."

^s Or "counseling."

^t This probably means everyone in Ephesus, not everyone in the room.

with tears. ³²And now I'm entrusting you to God,^a and to the message of God's grace. That message has the power to build you up and to give you your inheritance with all the holy ones. ³³I haven't schemed to get my hands on^b anybody's silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴You yourselves know that these hands of mine have provided for my needs and the needs of those who were with me. ³⁵I've always demonstrated to you that we should help the weak by working hard like that. And we should remember the Lord Jesus' words, how he himself said, "It's a bigger blessing^c to give than to receive."

³⁶When Paul had said all that, he got down on his knees with them all and prayed. ³⁷And everyone cried a good deal, and they were hugging Paul and kissing him.^d ³⁸They were saddest about his statement^e that they were never going to see his face again. Then they went with him to the ship.

Paul Travels to Jerusalem

21 Eventually we set sail, after a very reluctant parting.^f We did a straight run and came to Cos,^g and on the next day we got to Rhodes. From there we sailed to Patara.^h ²When we found a ship crossing to Phoeniciaⁱ we got on board and set sail. ³After sighting Cyprus and leaving it behind us on the left, we began sailing for Syria, and landed at Tyre—the ship was unloading its cargo there. ⁴We tracked down the followers of Jesus and stayed seven days there. And they were saying to Paul by the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem. ⁵When our days with them were over, we left and started walking to the ship, and they all escorted us out from the city, with their wives and children. And when we'd knelt down on the beach and prayed, ⁶we said goodbye to each other. Then we got on board the ship and they went back home.

⁷When we'd finished the voyage from Tyre and arrived at Ptolemais,^j we said hello to the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day. ⁸The next day we left and came to Caesarea.^k There^l we went to Philip the evangelist's house, and stayed with him. (He was one of the seven.)^m ⁹Philip had four unmarriedⁿ daughters who were prophets. ¹⁰When we had stayed there quite a few days,^o a prophet named Agabus^p came over^q from Judea.^r ¹¹He came up to us and took Paul's belt, and tied

^a Some mss have, "to the Lord," i.e. to Jesus.

^b Lit. "I haven't coveted."

^c Lit. "It is more blessed."

^d Lit. "and throwing themselves on Paul's neck, they were kissing him."

^e Lit. "...kissing him, grieving the most over the word in which he had said."

^f Lit. "And as it turned out, we set sail, having torn ourselves away from them." But the expression means that both parties were reluctant to part.

^g Prn. *kose*.

^h Prn. *pat-tar-ra*. Some mss add, "and Myra."

ⁱ Prn. *fee-nee-sha*.

^j Prn. *ptol-a-may-us*.

^k Prn. *sezz-a-ree-a*.

^l Lit. "And."

^m Acts 6:5.

ⁿ Or "virgin."

^o Lit. "many days."

^p Prn. *ag-a-bus*.

^q Lit. "down."

^r Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

up his own hands and feet. Then he said, “This is what the Holy Spirit says: “This is how the Jewish leaders^a are going to tie up the man who owns this belt in Jerusalem—and they’re going to betray him to Gentile authorities.”^b 12 When we heard that, both we and our hosts^c started begging Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul said back to us, “What are you doing, crying and breaking my heart? After all, I’m not just prepared to be imprisoned,^d but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” 14 Since he couldn’t be persuaded, we gave it up and said, “Let the Lord’s will be done.”

15 After some^e days there, we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem. 16 The followers from Caesarea went with us too, and led us to a man named Mnason’s^f house to stay. He was a long-time follower from Cyprus.

Paul Visits James, the Lord’s Brother in Jerusalem

17 When we got to Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters gave us a warm welcome. 18 The next day Paul went with us to visit James, and all the elders were there. 19 Paul said hello to them all, and spent time giving them a detailed report of everything^g God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20 When they heard his report, they started praising God. They said to him, “Brother, you can see how many tens of thousands of Jewish believers there are.^h And they’re all passionate the law. 21 They’ve been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses. They say you tell people not to circumciseⁱ their children or to practice the Jewish customs. 22 What should we do? They’re certainly going to hear that you’ve come.^j 23 So here’s what we advise you to do.^k There are four men with us who are keeping a vow.^l 24 Take them with you and get purified with them. And pay for them so they can get their hair cut. Then^m everybody will know that there’s nothing in what they’ve been told about you. They’ll know that you’re personally committed to keeping the Law.” 25 And as for the Gentiles who have become believers,^o we’ve sent off a letter with our decision that they should keep away from foods sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what’s been strangled,^p and from sexual immorality.”

^a Or “Judeans,” or “Jews.”

^b Lit. “—and they’re going to hand him over/betray him into Gentile hands.”

^c Lit. “the locals.”

^d Or “tied up.”

^e Lit. “these.”

^f Prn. *mnay-son’s*.

^g Lit. “he related to them each one by each one the things.”

^h Some mss have, “...of believers there are in Judea,” or “...of believers there are among the Jews.”

ⁱ Prn. *sir-kum-size*.

^j Some mss have, “A large crowd is bound to gather when they hear.”

^k Lit. “So do this thing which we say to you.”

^l Some mss have, “who are keeping a vow on their own.” In the next verse, Paul is going to be encouraged to support them as they finish it up—he’s going to pay some of their Temple fees.

^m Lit. “And.”

ⁿ Lit. “...about you; on the contrary, you yourself also hold to keeping the Law.”

^o Some mss have, “But as for the Gentiles who have become believers, they [i.e. the Jewish believers] have nothing to say to you, because.”

^p Some mss leave out “and from what’s been strangled.” See Acts 15:20 and the nt. there.

26 The next day Paul took the men and got purified with them. Then he went into the Temple, and told the priests when the period of purification would be finished.^a (At that time the offering would be made for each them.)

Paul is Arrested in the Temple

27 But when the seven days were almost finished, the Jews from Asia saw him in the Temple and stirred up the whole crowd. They grabbed him^b 28 and were shouting, “Brother^c Israelites, help us! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere things against this people, the Law, and the Temple!^d He has even brought Gentiles^e into the Temple! He has made this holy place unholy!” 29 (They said this because they had seen Trophimus^f the Ephesian with Paul in the city. They were assuming that Paul had brought him into the Temple.) 30 The whole city was upset, and the people all rushed together and grabbed Paul. They started dragging him out of the Temple, and immediately the doors were shut behind them. 31 And they were demanding Paul’s death. But word got to the Roman military commander^g that Jerusalem was rioting. 32 Right away he took a band of soldiers and officers with him and ran down to where they were. When the people saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. 33 Then the commander came up and took hold of Paul, and ordered him shackled with two chains. And he started asking, “Who is this, and what has he done?” 34 And various people in the crowd were shouting one thing and another. And he couldn’t get a definite answer because of the commotion. So he ordered for Paul to be brought to the fortress. 35 And when Paul was on the steps, he had to be carried by the soldiers due to the violence of the crowd. 36 Because the mob of people was following them and shouting, “Execute him!” 37 As they were about to go into the fortress, Paul said to the commander, “May I say something to you?” And the commander said, “Do you know Greek? 38 So I guess you’re not that Egyptian—the one who started a riot recently, and led those four thousand assassins off into the wilderness?” 39 And Paul said, “I’m a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia^h—I’m a citizen of quite a major city.ⁱ And I’m asking you, please give me permission to speak to the people.” 40 And he gave him permission. Paul stood on the steps and got things to quiet down by gesturing to the people with his hand. When it was pretty^j quiet, he addressed them in the Hebrew language:^k

Paul Defends his Faith and Ministry

22 “Brothers, fathers! Listen to my defense, which I’m now going to present to you.” 2 Now when they heard that Paul was addressing them in the Hebrew language,^l they got even

^a Lit. “Then he took the men. The next day he was purified with them and was going into the Temple, notifying them as to the completion of the days of purification.”

^b Lit. “...crowd, and cast their hands upon him.”

^c Lit. “Men.”

^d Lit. “this place.”

^e Lit. “Greeks.” It’s just a way of talking about the Gentiles.

^f Prn. *troff-im-us*.

^g Lit. “And as they were seeking to kill him, word went up to the commander of the cohort.”

^h Prn. *sil-liss-ee-a*.

ⁱ Lit. “a citizen of no insignificant city.”

^j Or “very.”

^k This may well mean Aramaic, the everyday language of Jews in Israel.

^l Or “in Aramaic.”

quieter. And he said, ³“I’m a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia. But I was brought up here in this city, and studied with^a Gamaliel.^b I’ve been thoroughly^c trained in the Law of our ancestors. I was a person passionate for God, just like all of you are today. ⁴I persecuted this Way, and killed its followers.^d I was arresting men and women and putting them in prison.^e ⁵The high priest and whole high council^f will testify to what I’m saying.^g I had received letters from them to our brothers in Damascus, and was going up there. I was going to bring those who were in prison^h there to Jerusalem, so they could be punished.”

Paul Tells of his Conversion (Acts 9:1-19a; 26:12-18)

⁶Now, I was traveling along and getting near Damascus—it was about noon. Suddenly, a bright light flashed around me from heaven. ⁷I fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to me, “Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me?” ⁸And I answered, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said to me, “I am Jesus of Nazareth. I’m the one you’re persecuting.” ⁹Now, the people with me saw the light. But they didn’t understandⁱ the voice of the One who was speaking to me. ¹⁰I said, “What should I do, Lord?” And the Lord said to me, “Get up and go into Damascus. There you’ll be told everything that you’ve been appointed to do.” ¹¹And I couldn’t see, after the brilliance^j of that light. So I came into Damascus being led by the hand by the people I was with.

¹²Then^k a man named Ananias^l came to me. He was a devout person who kept the Law.^m He was well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there.ⁿ ¹³He came up and said to me, “Brother Saul, see again!” And at that moment I could see him.^o ¹⁴And he said, “The God of our ancestors chose you to know God’s will—and to see the Just One and hear his very voice.^p ¹⁵That’s because you’re going to be a witness for him. You’ll tell all people what you’ve seen and heard. ¹⁶So now what are you waiting for? Get up and get baptized—get your sins washed away by calling on his name.”^q

Paul Tells How Jesus Sent him to the Gentiles

¹⁷Now, when I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the Temple, I went into a dream state.^r ¹⁸And I saw Jesus saying to me, “Hurry—leave Jerusalem right away! They’re not going to accept your testimony about me.” ¹⁹And I said, “Lord, they know that I’ve been putting the people

^a Lit. “at the feet of.”

^b Prn. *ga-may-lee-al*.

^c Lit. “rigorously.”

^d Lit. “I persecuted this Way to death.” He means with deadly force, not that he snuffed it out.

^e Lit. “and handing them over to prisons.”

^f Lit. “and the whole council of elders.”

^g Lit. “to me.”

^h Lit. “in bonds.”

ⁱ Or “hear.”

^j Lit. “glory.”

^k Lit. “And.”

^l Prn. *ann-a-nye-us*.

^m Lit. “a man devout according to the Law.”

ⁿ Some mss have, “who lived in Damascus.”

^o Some mss have, “I saw again.”

^p Lit. “the voice from his mouth.” “The Just One” (Traditionally: “the Righteous One”) is Jesus.

^q Lit. “get your sins washed away, having called on his name.”

^r This is often rendered, “I fell into a trance.”

who believe in you in prison, and having them beaten^a in one synagogue^b after another! ²⁰And when your witness Stephen's blood was being shed, I personally stood there approving of it. I even looked after the coats of the people who were killing him!" ²¹And he said to me, "Go—I'm going to send you far away from here, to the Gentiles."

Paul Narrowly Escapes being Tortured

²²Now, they had been listening to Paul until he made that statement. But now they all shouted, "Execute him! A person like him should be wiped off the face of the earth!^c He shouldn't be allowed to live!" ²³And they were screaming and flinging down their coats and throwing dust in the air. ²⁴The commander gave the order to bring Paul inside the fortress. He had given the order for him to be questioned under torture, to find out the reason they'd been shouting about him.^d ²⁵But when they had stretched him out to be whipped,^e Paul said to the Roman officer^f standing there, "Are you allowed to whip a person who is a Roman citizen without even a trial?" ²⁶And when the officer^g heard that, he came up to the commander and told him what Paul had said. He said, "What are you going to do? This person is a Roman citizen!" ²⁷And the commander came over to Paul and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" And he said, "Yes." ²⁸And the commander said back to him, "I acquired my Roman citizenship with a large sum of money." And Paul said, "Well, I was born into it." ²⁹Then the people who were about to torture^h Paul immediately stepped away from him. And the commander was frightened too—he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen, and he had put him in chains.

Paul Appears in Front of the High Council

³⁰On the next day he released Paul, because he wanted to find out what the Jews were accusing him of. He ordered the chief priests and the whole high council to come together. Then he brought Paul down and stood him in front of them.ⁱ

23 Paul looked straight at the high council and said, "Gentlemen, brothers!^j I've lived my life with a completely clear conscience^k towards God, right up to this day." ²And the high priest Ananias^l ordered the people standing next to Paul to hit him in the mouth. ³Then Paul said to him, "God's going to hit you, you whitewashed wall! Are you really going to sit there and judge

^a Lit. "and beating them."

^b Prn. *sinn-a-gogg*.

^c Lit. "Remove such a person from the earth!" The words "remove him" mean execute him.

^d Lit. "...the fortress, saying to question him with whipping, in order for it to be known for what cause they shouted against him that way."

^e Or "when they had stretched him out with straps."

^f Lit. "centurion."

^g Lit. "centurion."

^h Lit. "question." They were clearly about to try to torture a confession out of him.

ⁱ Verse 30 is all one sentence in Greek: lit. "And on the next day, wanting to know the basis upon which he was being accused by the Jews, he released him, and ordered the chief priests and the whole high council to assemble, and bringing Paul down, stood him before them."

^j Lit. "Brother men."

^k Lit. "in all good conscience."

^l Prn. *ann-a-nye-us*.

me^a according to the Law, and break the Law by ordering me to be hit?”⁴ And the people standing next to Paul said, “You’re insulting God’s high priest!”^b ⁵And Paul said, “Brothers, I didn’t know that he is the high priest. Because scripture says,^c ‘You’re not to say bad things^d about a leader of your people.’”^e

⁶Now, Paul knew that some of them were Sadducees^f and others were Pharisees.^g He started shouting in the council, “Gentlemen, brothers!^h I am a Pharisee, and a son of Pharisees. I’m on trial about my hope in the resurrection of the dead!”⁷ And when he said that, a disagreement arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the group was split in two.⁸ Because Sadducees say there is no such thing as resurrection or an angel or a spirit. But Pharisees agree that all three exist.⁹ There was all kinds of shouting,ⁱ and some of the scripture experts who belonged to the Pharisees stood up and started insisting, “We find nothing wrong with this person! Maybe a spirit, or an angel, has spoken to him!”¹⁰ The disagreement became so violent^j that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn in two.^k He ordered his soldiers to go down and snatch Paul out of there,^l and take him to the fortress. ¹¹On the following night, the Lord came to Paul and said, “Keep your courage up. Just as you’ve testified to the truth^m about me in Jerusalem, you also have to testify in Rome.”

Forty Men Vow to Ambush Paul and Kill him

¹²When morning came, some of the Judeansⁿ made a secret plan. They put themselves under a curse if they ate or drank anything before they had killed Paul. ¹³There were more than forty of them that made that secret plan. ¹⁴They all came to the chief priests and the elders and said, “We’ve put ourselves under a curse so that we can’t eat anything until we kill Paul. ¹⁵So now you and the council need to explain things to the commander in such a way that he brings him down to you. Pretend that you want to consider his case in greater detail.^o But we’re ready to kill him before he gets here.”^p ¹⁶Now, Paul’s sister’s son heard about the trap. He came up and was let into^q the fortress, and told Paul about it. ¹⁷Paul then called one of the Roman officers^r and said, “Take this young man to the commander. He has something to report to him.” ¹⁸So he took him and led him

^a Lit. “Do you even sit judging me.”

^b Or “How dare you insult God’s high priest?”

^c Lit. “it is written.”

^d Lit. “You shall not speak evilly.”

^e Exod. 22:28.

^f Prn. *sadd-yoo-seez*.

^g Prn. *ferr-a-seez*. Lit. “...that one part is Sadducees and the other Pharisees.”

^h Lit. “Brother men.”

ⁱ Lit. “there was a huge outcry.”

^j Lit. “great.” But the word for “disagreement” can also mean “riot”!

^k Lit. “...torn in two by them.”

^l Lit. “snatch him from the middle of them.”

^m Lit. “the things.”

ⁿ Or “Jews.”

^o Lit. “...down to you, as though you intend to decide the things about him more accurately.”

^p Lit. “gets close.”

^q Lit. “Arriving, and going into.”

^r Lit. “centurions.”

to the commander and said, “The prisoner Paul called me over and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you.”¹⁹ The commander took the boy by the hand and went someplace private. He asked him, “What is it that you have to report to me?”²⁰ And he said, “The Judeans^a have agreed to make a request of you tomorrow, so that you bring Paul down to the high council. The pretext will be that the council wants^b to ask in a bit more detail about him.
²¹ Don’t believe them!^c More than forty of their men are waiting to ambush him. They’ve put themselves under a curse so that they can’t eat or drink until they’ve killed him. And now they are ready and waiting for your agreement.”^d

The Commander Sends Paul to Felix the Governor

²² So then the commander let the young man go, after giving him a strict order: “Don’t tell anyone that you revealed this to me.”²³ Then^e he called over two of his ²⁰officers^f and said, “Get two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen^g ready to march to Caesarea starting at nine o’clock tonight. ²⁴ And have animals for Paul to ride, so that he can be brought safely to Felix the governor.”²⁵ Then the commander wrote a letter that went like this:^h

²⁶ From Claudius Lysiasⁱ to His Excellency, Governor Felix. Greetings. ²⁷ This man was arrested by the Judeans^j and was about to be killed by them. When I learned that he was a Roman citizen, I went with my soldiers and rescued him. ²⁸ And I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their high council. ²⁹ I found that he was being accused in relation to disputes about their own Law—there wasn’t any accusation against him that deserved death or imprisonment. ³⁰ And when I learned that there was a plot against the man, I immediately sent him to you.^k And I’ve instructed his accusers to make their case against him to you.^l

³¹ So the soldiers followed their orders and^m took Paul at night to Antipatris.ⁿ ³² Then the next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the fortress. ³³ The horsemen went to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, and they brought Paul to him. ³⁴ The governor read the letter, and he asked what province Paul came from. He learned he came from Cilicia.^o

^a Or “Jews.”

^b Lit. “...the high council, as though it intends.”

^c Lit. “So don’t you be persuaded by them.”

^d Lit. “for the pledge of agreement from you.”

^e Lit. “And.”

^f Lit. “centurions.”

^g Or perhaps, “light infantry.”

^h Lit. “a letter having this form.”

ⁱ Prn. *liss-ee-us*.

^j Or “Jews.”

^k Some mss have slight variations on this statement, such as, “And when I learned that there was a plot against the man coming from them [i.e. the high council], I sent him to you.” The words “among them” and “immediately” sound similar in Greek.

^l Some mss conclude the letter with a closing greeting: “Be well.”

^m Lit. “So the soldiers, according to their orders.”

ⁿ Prn. *an-tipp-a-triss*.

^o Prn. *sil-liss-ee-a*.

35 “I’ll hear your case,”^a he said, “when the people who are accusing you are present too.” And he ordered him to be held in Herod’s^b palace.

Paul Stands Trial in Front of Felix

24 After five days, the high priest Ananias came down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer^c named Tertullus.^d They all appeared in front of the governor to make their case against Paul.^e 2 So Paul was summoned, and Tertullus began to accuse him. He said to the governor,

“We’ve had a long time of peace thanks to your governorship.^f And lots of reforms have come about in this nation thanks to your foresight. 3 We all acknowledge and are grateful for everything you do, Your Excellency Felix.^g 4 And we certainly do not wish to interrupt you at length—but I’d like to ask your indulgence in hearing us for a brief moment.^h 5 We are here before you because we have found this man to be a public nuisance. He’s been stirring up arguments with all the Jews throughout the Roman Empire. He’s a leader of the sect of the Nazarenes.ⁱ 6 He also tried to pollute the Temple, but we caught him.^j 8 You can learn about all these things that we’re accusing him of by questioning him yourself.” 9 Then the Judeans^k joined in the attack too. They insisted that it was all true.^l

10 When the governor nodded for him to speak, Paul gave his response. “Since you’ve been a judge in this nation for many years, I’m happy to offer a defense of myself. 11 You can verify that I went up to Jerusalem to pray not more than twelve days ago. 12 And I wasn’t found arguing with anyone or attracting a crowd—not in the Temple, in the synagogues,^m or around the city. 13 And they can’t prove the things they just accused me of.” 14 But I will admit this to you: I serve the God of our ancestors as a follower ofⁿ the Way. (They’re calling it a sect.) I follow the Way because I believe everything that’s written in the Law and the prophets.^p 15 I’m putting my hope in God—just as my accusers themselves are^q—that there’s going to be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.^r 16 So I always take care to keep a clear conscience towards God and all people. 17 Now, after many

^a In other words, he would try the case.

^b Prn. *herr-eddz*.

^c Lit. “orator.”

^d Prn. *ter-tull-us*.

^e This is really a trial, with the governor as the judge.

^f Lit. “We’ve experienced much peace through you.”

^g Lit. “In all ways everywhere we acknowledge these things, most powerful Felix, with all thanks.”

^h Lit. “And in order not to interrupt you at length, I beg you to hear us briefly in your graciousness.”

ⁱ Prn. *nazz-a-reenz*.

^j See Acts 21:28-29. A number of mss include some version of v. 7: “And we wanted to try him according to our own Law, but Lysias the commander came and took him from us by force and ordered his accusers to come to you.”

^k Or “Jews.”

^l Lit. “...the attack, asserting that these things were so.”

^m Prn. *sinn-a-goggz*.

ⁿ Lit. “Nor are they able to prove to you about the things they’re now accusing me of.”

^o Lit. “according to.”

^p Lit. “everything according to the Law and in the prophets.”

^q Lit. “which hope also these themselves look forward to.”

^r Traditionally: “of the righteous and the unrighteous.”

years away, I came to Jerusalem. I was bringing money to the poor people of my nation. I also intended to make offerings in the Temple. ¹⁸I was found making those offerings in a ceremonially pure state.^a There was no crowd or disturbance involved. ¹⁹Now, there were some Jews from Asia—but they ought to be here in front of you if they have something against me. ²⁰Otherwise these people here^b should say what crime they discovered^c when I was tried by^d the high council. ²¹Or is it about that one single thing I said, when I stood on trial in front of them and shouted, ‘I’m being judged by you today over the resurrection of the dead?’

²²Then Felix adjourned^e the trial. He was already well informed about the Way. He said, “I’ll decide your case when Lysias the commander comes.” ²³And he ordered the Roman officer^f to guard Paul, but that he should have freedom to move around. The officer wasn’t to prevent any of Paul’s friends^g from taking care of his needs.

Felix Leaves Paul in Prison for Two Years

²⁴After a number of days, Felix came with his wife Drusilla,^h who was Jewish. He sent for Paul, and listened to him talk about faith in Messiah Jesus.ⁱ ²⁵But when Paul was teaching about integrity and self-control, and about the coming judgment, Felix got frightened. And he said back to him, “Leave for now. And when I get the time I’ll send for you.” ²⁶He was also hoping Paul would give him a bribe—so he sent for him a lot, and would talk with him. ²⁷And after two years he was replaced as governor by Porcius^j Festus. And Felix left Paul imprisoned, as a way of gaining favor with the Judeans.^k

Festus (Successor to Felix) Looks into Paul’s Case

25 So then Festus arrived in the province, and three days later he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea.¹ ²And the chief priests and the most important Judeans^m presented their case against Paul. ³And they were pleading with Festus to grant them a favor against him: to have him transferred to Jerusalem. Because they had made a secret plan to kill him on the way. ⁴But Festus replied that Paul was being held at Caesarea, and that he himself was just about to leave for there. ⁵He said, “So let your most capable people come down with me. If there is anything wrong about the man, they can bring charges against him.”

^a Lit. “...offerings, in which I was found, having been purified.”

^b Lit. “themselves.”

^c Some mss have “discovered in me.”

^d Lit. “when I stood before.”

^e That is, he stopped it for the day.

^f Lit. “centurion.”

^g Lit. “his own people.”

^h Prn. *droo-silla*.

ⁱ Some mss have “in Jesus the Messiah” (i.e. “in Jesus Christ”), and some have “in Christ.”

^j Prn. *porsh-us*.

^k Or “the Jews.”

^l Prn. *sezz-a-ree-a*.

^m Or “Jews.” Prn. *joo-dee-anz*.

Paul Appeals his Case to Caesar

6So after spending no more than eight or ten days in Jerusalem Festus went down to Caesarea. The next day he held a hearing^a and ordered for Paul to be brought in. 7When he arrived, the Judeans who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him. They made many serious^b charges against him, which they couldn't prove. 8Paul defended himself by saying, "I haven't sinned in any way against the Jewish Law, against the Temple, or against Caesar." 9But Festus wanted to gain favor with the Judeans. He said back to Paul, "Are you willing to go to up Jerusalem, and be tried on these charges in front of me there?" 10And Paul said, "I'm standing in Caesar's court, where I should be tried. I've done nothing wrong to the Judeans, as you very well know.^c 11If I'm guilty, and have done something that deserves death, I have no objection to dying.^d But if there is nothing to the charges these people are making against me, no one can turn me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!" 12Then Festus, after talking with his advisers, replied, "You've appealed to Caesar—you'll go to Caesar."

Festus Asks for Advice from King Agrippa

13A few days later, King Agrippa and Bernice visited Caesarea^e to welcome^f Festus. 14And since they were spending quite a few days there, Festus laid out the case against Paul for him. He was saying, "There's a certain man that Felix left behind as a prisoner. 15When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of Judea^g brought charges against him and asked for a judgment against him. 16I told them^h it's not the Roman custom to hand somebody over as a favor. Firstⁱ the accused person gets to see the accusers face to face and have a chance to make a defense as to the accusation. 17So they came here with me, and^j I didn't waste any time. I held a hearing^k the next day, and ordered the man brought in. 18But when his accusers stood up,^l they didn't bring any of the criminal charges^m I had been expecting. 19Instead, they had some disputes against him about their own religion—and about a certain dead man named Jesus, that Paul insisted was alive. 20And I didn't know what to make of those arguments. So I started to ask if maybe he might be willing to go to Jerusalem, and stand trial there for the charges.ⁿ 21But Paul appealed to be held in custody for the Emperor's decision. So I ordered him to be held in custody until I can send him to Caesar." 22Agrippa said to Festus, "I'd like to hear this person myself." And he said, "You'll hear him tomorrow."

^a Lit. "he sat on the judgment bench."

^b Lit. "many and serious."

^c Lit. "as you also know very well."

^d More literally: "I do not refuse to die," or "I'm not trying to avoid dying."

^e Prn. *sezz-a-ree-a*.

^f Some mss have, "and welcomed."

^g Or "of the Jews."

^h Lit. "I replied to them."

ⁱ Lit. "...favor, before." Verses 14-16 are one long sentence.

^j Or "So when they assembled here."

^k Lit. "sat on the judgment bench."

^l I.e. when they argued their case. See also Mt. 12:41-42 and Lk. 11:31-32 for this expression.

^m Some mss have, "any charge."

ⁿ Lit. "and be judged there about these things."

Paul is Brought in Front of King Agrippa and his Sister Bernice

23So the next day Agrippa and Bernice came, and there was a big ceremony.^a They came into the governor's audience hall with the Roman commanders and the leading^b men of the city. Then Festus gave the order, and Paul was brought in. 24Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all of you gentlemen here with us! You're looking at the person that the whole Jewish community complained^c to me about both in Jerusalem and here. They were shouting that he shouldn't be allowed to live.^d 25But I didn't see that he'd done anything worthy of death.^e But since he himself has appealed to the Emperor, I've decided to send him. 26But I don't have anything reliable to write to the Emperor about him. That's why I've brought him in front of you, especially you, King Agrippa. That way, after this hearing I'll have something to write. 27After all, it seems senseless to me to send a prisoner without indicating the charges against him."

Paul Gives his Defense in Front of Agrippa

26 Agrippa then said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul extended his hand^f and began his defense:

2Given^g all the things that I'm being accused of by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate that it is in front of you, King Agrippa, that I'm about to defend myself here today. 3Because you're especially knowledgeable about all Jewish customs and disputes. So I ask^h that you hear me out patiently. 4All Jews are well aware of my life from childhood onwards—with my fellow Jewsⁱ and among the people of Jerusalem. 5They've known me all along—if they were just willing to testify. They know that I lived by the rules of the strictest sect of our religion: I was a Pharisee.^j 6And now I stand here on trial for my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors. 7It's that promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain by diligently serving^k God night and day. It's for that hope, King Agrippa, that I'm being accused by the Jews. 8Why do you all find it unbelievable^l that God should raise the dead? 9But then again, I myself once thought the name of Jesus of Nazareth had to be vigorously opposed.^m 10And I did so in Jerusalem. I even imprisonedⁿ many of the holy ones, after receiving authority to do so from the chief priests. And when they were being killed, I cast my vote against them. 11And I went around all the synagogues,^o often having them punished. I would try

^a Lit. "...Agrippa came with Bernice, with much pomp."

^b Lit. "prominent."

^c Lit. "appealed."

^d Lit. "...here, crying out that it was necessary that he no longer live."

^e Lit. "But as for me, I understood nothing he had done to be worthy of death."

^f Paul is making the classic gesture of a Greek orator beginning a speech.

^g Lit. "Concerning."

^h Lit. "I beg."

ⁱ Lit. "in my nation/country." This probably does not mean Cilicia, the country of Paul's birth (see Acts 21:39), because Jews thought of their nation as being Israel, no matter where they lived (see Acts 24:17).

^j Prn. *ferr-a-see*.

^k Or "...attain, as they diligently serve." "Serve" here can also mean "worship."

^l Lit. "Why is it reckoned unbelievable by you [pl]."

^m Lit. "Even I believed in myself that it was necessary to do many things in opposition to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

ⁿ Lit. "locked up in prisons."

^o Prn. *sinn-a-goggz*.

to force them to curse him. I was so totally enraged at them that I was even persecuting them in^a cities outside Israel.

Paul Tells of his Conversion (Acts 9:1-19a; 22:6-16)

¹²That's what I was doing when I was on my way to Damascus, with authority and permission from the chief priests. ¹³In the middle of the day on the road, King Agrippa, I saw a light from heaven. It was brighter than the sun, and was shining around me and my traveling companions. ¹⁴When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, "Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me? It's hard for you to kick back against the goads."^b ¹⁵And I said, "Who are you, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus. I'm the one you're persecuting. ¹⁶Now get up and stand on your feet: there's a reason I've appeared to you. I've appointed you to be a servant and a witness. You'll be a witness to the vision of me that you've just seen,^c and to other visions of me that I'm going to give you.^d ¹⁷I'm going to be rescuing you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I'm sending you to the Gentiles, to open their eyes. That way they'll turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. They'll receive forgiveness of their sins, and an inheritance^e alongside those who have already been made holy by putting their faith in me."

Paul Tells of his Preaching

¹⁹In conclusion,^f King Agrippa, I didn't disobey that heavenly vision. ²⁰In Damascus at first, and then in Jerusalem, and the whole territory of Judea,^g and among the Gentiles, I've been announcing that people should change their hearts^h and turn to God, doing things worthy of a changed heart.ⁱ ²¹That's why the Judeans^j grabbed me in the Temple and tried to kill me. ²²But I've had help from God to this day, and I've stood my ground. I've been testifying to the weak and to the powerful.^k I haven't said anything beyond what the prophets and Moses said was going to happen: ²³that the Messiah was to suffer and be the first to rise from among the dead. And he would spread light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.

Festus Accuses Paul of Being Crazy

²⁴As Paul was making these points in defense of himself, Festus shouted, "You're crazy!^l Paul! All that education is driving you crazy!" ²⁵And Paul said, "I'm not crazy, Your Excellency.^m Far from it.

^a Or "pursuing them as far as" (see Acts 8:1).

^b Goads were sharp points that jabbed into the back legs of a working ox if it tried to go backwards. It's a metaphor for trying to resist God's will.

^c Some mss lack the words "of me." It is implied in any case.

^d Lit. "...a witness to the things you've seen me and to the things I will be seen by you."

^e Lit. "portion," in other words, one's proper share of an inheritance. This is a radical statement: that Gentiles will receive an inheritance right alongside the people of Israel who put faith in Jesus.

^f Lit. "In consequence of which."

^g Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

^h Traditionally: "repent" (see "Bible Words").

ⁱ Traditionally: "worthy of repentance" (see "Bible Words").

^j Or "the Jews."

^k Lit. "from the small to the great."

^l Or "You're raving."

^m Lit. "most powerful Festus." This is a highly formal mode of address.

I'm saying things that are true and level-headed.^a 26And the King knows about these things, so I'm speaking openly to him. After all, I'm convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, since it didn't happen off in a corner somewhere.^b 27Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know you do!" 28And Agrippa said to Paul, "Pretty soon, you're going to win me over and make me a Christian!"^c 29Paul replied, "Whether sooner or later, I'd just pray to God that you could be like I am—and not only you, but everyone listening to me today. Except for these chains, that is."

30The king, the governor and Bernice stood up along with those sitting there with them. 31When they had left the room, they began talking to each other. They were saying, "That fellow isn't doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment."^d 32And Agrippa said to Festus, "The fellow could have been set free, if he hadn't appealed to Caesar."

Paul Sails for Rome

27 Finally^e the decision was made for us to sail to Italy. Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a Roman officer of the Imperial Regiment^f named Julius. 2We boarded a ship from Adramyttium^g that was about to sail for places in Asia. We set sail, and Aristarchus^h the Macedonianⁱ from Thessalonica^j was with us. 3The next day we landed at Sidon.^k Julius was kind to Paul, and let him visit his friends so they could take care of him. 4From there we put out to sea again and sailed on the downwind side of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. 5We then sailed across the open water to Cilicia^l and Pamphylia,^m and landed at Myraⁿ in Lycia.^o 6And the Roman officer^p found an Alexandrian ship there that was sailing for Italy, and got us on it. 7After quite a few days of sailing slowly, we barely got to Cnidus.^q Since the wind wouldn't let us go any further, we sailed on the downwind side of Crete, off Salmone.^r 8We were sailing along the coast and barely got past Salmone to a place called Fair Havens. The town of Lasea^s was close to it.

^a Lit. "I'm speaking words of truth and good sense/sobriety."

^b Lit. "for this has not been done in a corner."

^c Unfortunately it's pretty clear that Agrippa is making fun of Paul. His words can also mean, "Do you think you're going to persuade me to play the Christian so quickly?"

^d Lit. "This person isn't doing anything worthy of death or chains."

^e Lit. "When."

^f Lit. "to a centurion of the Augustian cohort."

^g Prn. *add-ra-mitt-ee-um*.

^h Prn. *er-i-stark-us*.

ⁱ Prn. *mass-a-doe-nee-an*.

^j Prn. *thess-a-lo-nye-ka*.

^k Prn. *sy-din*.

^l Prn. *sil-liss-ee-a*.

^m Prn. *pam-fill-ee-a*.

ⁿ Prn. *mye-ra*.

^o Prn. *liss-ee-a*.

^p Lit. "centurion."

^q Prn. *k'nye-das*.

^r Prn. *sal-moe-nee*.

^s Prn. *la-see-a*.

⁹A good amount of time had been lost, and sailing was already dangerous. The Day of Atonement^a was already past. Paul warned them, ¹⁰“Gentlemen, I can see that we’re going to sail into disaster and heavy loss^b—not just to the cargo and the ship, but even to our own lives.” ¹¹But Julius, the Roman officer,^c trusted^d what the captain and the owner said more than what Paul was saying. ¹²And the harbor they were in wasn’t a good place to spend the winter, so most wanted to leave that place. They were hoping they could get to Phoenix,^e and spend the winter there. Phoenix is a harbor on Crete that faces both southwest and northwest.

A Terrible Storm on the Mediterranean Sea

¹³And when a gentle wind started blowing from the south, they thought their plan had worked out.^f They pulled up the anchor and sailed along the coast of Crete. ¹⁴But before long a hurricane wind called “the northeaster” hit us from the land. ¹⁵The ship was caught in it, and couldn’t come around to face the wind. So we gave up and were swept along. ¹⁶Then we passed behind^g a little island called Cauda,^h and managed to get the lifeboat secured—barely. ¹⁷When they had gotten it up, they worked with cables to brace the ship. They were afraid they would run agroundⁱ at Syrtis,^j so they let down the sea anchor, and we got carried along that way. ¹⁸But we got heavily battered by the storm, and on the second day they started throwing cargo overboard. ¹⁹And on the third day they threw the ship’s equipment overboard with their bare hands. ²⁰But there was no sign^k of sun or stars for many days, and the huge^l storm kept raging. Finally we lost all hope^m that we would be saved.

²¹When everyone had gone a long time without food, Paul stood in front of everyoneⁿ and said, “Gentlemen, you should have taken my advice and not sailed from Crete—you would have avoided this whole disaster.^o ²²But now I encourage you to keep your spirits up. Because none of you is going to lose their life—only the ship will be lost. ²³Because an angel visited me tonight, from^p the God that I belong to and that I serve. ²⁴He said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Paul. You have to stand in front of Caesar. And God has granted you the lives of all the people who are sailing with you.’

^a Lit. “the Fast,” which happens at the Jewish new year festival in September.

^b Lit. “that the voyage is going to be with disaster and great loss.”

^c Lit. “the centurion.”

^d Or “was persuaded by.”

^e Prn. *fee-nix*.

^f Lit. “they thought they had achieved their purpose.”

^g That is, behind in relation to the wind. The island gave them a little protection from the wind so that they got a chance to tie the lifeboat up properly.

^h Or, following another ancient spelling, “Clauda.”

ⁱ That’s when the hull of the ship strikes the bottom and gets stuck.

^j Prn. *sir-tiss*.

^k Lit. “appearance.”

^l Lit. “not small.”

^m Lit. “Finally all hope was abandoned.”

ⁿ Lit. “in the midst of them.”

^o Lit. “this disaster and loss.” They’ve lost all the cargo, and the expectation is that the ship is either going to sink in the open sea or be smashed up when it reaches the land.

^p Lit. “of.”

25 So keep your spirits up, gentlemen. I believe in God, and that it's going to turn out exactly as I've been told. 26 But we have to run aground^a on a certain island."

27 Now, it got to be the fourteenth night of being swept along in the Sea of Adria.^b And in the middle of the night the sailors started to think we were getting near to land somewhere. 28 And when they measured the depth, they found it was a hundred and twenty feet. When they had sailed a little further they measured again and found it was ninety feet. 29 And they were afraid we'd run aground on the rocks somewhere, so they set out four anchors from the stern^c and started praying for morning to come. 30 Then some of the sailors tried to escape the ship by lowering the lifeboat into the water. They had been pretending that they were going to set out anchors from the bow.^d 31 Paul said to the Roman officer^e and the soldiers, "Unless those men stay on the ship, you can't be saved." 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the lifeboat, and let it fall.

33 Right before daybreak, Paul encouraged everyone to eat some food. He was saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you've been in suspense and have gone without food. You haven't eaten a thing. 34 So I'm urging you to eat some food, because it's a matter of your own safety. Not even a hair on one of your heads is going to be lost." 35 When he'd said that, he took a loaf of bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. And he broke it and started to eat. 36 And their spirits lifted, and they ate some food. 37 There were two hundred and seventy-six of us altogether^f on the ship. 38 When people had had enough food, they started lightening the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

The Shipwreck

39 When day came, they didn't recognize the land. But they noticed a bay with a beach. They planned to run the ship aground^g there if they could. 40 So^h they cut the anchors loose into the sea, and loosened the rudder ties. Then they raised the forward sail to the wind, and started heading for the beach. 41 But they came on a reef,ⁱ and ran the ship aground.^j And the bow stayed firmly stuck, and the stern started coming apart because of the force of the waves. 42 And the soldiers planned^k to kill the prisoners, so nobody would swim away and escape. 43 But the Roman officer^l wanted to save Paul, and kept them from doing it.^m He ordered the people who could swim to jump overboard first and get to the shore. 44 And the rest had to get there on boards and on various things from the ship. And that's how everybody got safely to shore.

^a See the nt. on v. 17.

^b Prn. *ay-dree-a*.

^c That is, from the back end of the ship.

^d That is, from the front end of the ship.

^e Lit. "centurion."

^f Lit. "we were all two hundred and seventy-six souls." The mss have some variations on the number. One, for example, has "about seventy-six."

^g See the nt. on v. 17.

^h Lit. "And."

ⁱ Lit. "a place between two seas."

^j See the nt. on v. 17.

^k Lit. "And the intention of the soldiers was."

^l Lit. "centurion."

^m Lit. "kept them from the plan."

Safe Ashore on Malta

28 So we had gotten through safely. We then learned that the island was called Malta. ²And the islanders^a showed us extraordinary kindness. They started a fire and welcomed us all, because it was rainy and cold.^b ³And Paul gathered a bunch of brushwood and laid it on the fire. And a poisonous snake came out because of the heat, and attached itself to Paul's hand. And when the islanders^c saw the creature hanging from his hand, they started saying to one another, "Surely this man is a murderer. He's been saved from the sea, but justice hasn't allowed him to live." ⁴But then Paul just shook the creature off into the fire and didn't suffer any harm. ⁵They kept expecting him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. ⁶But after a long time of waiting and watching, with nothing out of the ordinary happening to him, they changed their minds and started saying he was a god.

⁷Nearby to that place were the fields^d of the chief official of the island, whose name was Publius. He welcomed us and was very friendly, and put us up for three days. ⁸And it happened that Publius's father had gotten ill, and was sick in bed with a fever and diarrhea.^e Paul went in to visit him. He prayed, laid his hands on him, and healed him. ⁹And when that happened, all the other people on the island who were ill started coming and getting cured too. ¹⁰Those folks honored us in many ways, and when we were setting sail they gave us everything we needed.

Paul Arrives at Rome

¹¹After three months, we set sail on an Alexandrian ship that had spent the winter at the island. On its bow was a carving of the twin gods Castor and Pollux.^f ¹²We came ashore at Syracuse^g and stayed there for three days. ¹³From there we set sail^h and reached Rhegium.ⁱ After a day there a wind started blowing from the south, and on the second day we came to Puteoli.^j ¹⁴We found some Christian brothers and sisters there, and we were invited to stay^k with them for seven days.

And so we finally came to Rome. ¹⁵The brothers and sisters from there had heard about us, and came out to meet us. They came all the way to the Appian Forum and the Three Taverns. When Paul saw them, he gave thanks to God and was encouraged.^l ¹⁶When we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier guarding him.

^a Lit. "the barbarians."

^b Lit. "because of rain being present and because of the cold."

^c Lit. "barbarians."

^d Or "lands."

^e Or "dysentery."

^f Lit. "Its figurehead was the Sons of Zeus." These were the twin gods Castor and Pollux. A figurehead was a full-size carving built into the bow of a ship.

^g Prn. *sīhr-a-kyooz*.

^h More literally, "we cast off," i.e. untied from a pier or other mooring. It could also mean pull up the anchors. Some mss have, "we sailed around," in other words, along the coast.

ⁱ Prn. *ree-gee-am*.

^j Prn. *poo-tee-o-lee*.

^k Some mss have "and stayed."

^l Lit. "took courage."

Paul Arranges a Meeting with the Jewish Leaders in Rome

17After three days, he called together the leaders in the Jewish community there.^a When they had all come together, he said to them, "Gentlemen, brothers!^b I haven't done anything against the people of Israel or against the customs of our ancestors. Yet I was handed over to the Romans as a prisoner from Jerusalem. 18When they questioned me, they intended to release me, because I hadn't done anything that deserved death.^c 19But when the Judeans^d objected to my release, I was forced to appeal to Caesar. It's not that I have any legal grievance against my people. 20So here's the reason I've requested to see you and talk to you: it's because of the hope of Israel that I'm wearing these chains."^e 21They said to Paul, "We haven't received letters from Judea^f about you. And none of the Jewish brothers has arrived and reported or said anything bad about you. 22We'd like to hear your opinions, because we're aware that people everywhere complain about this sect."^g

Paul Preaches to the Jews of Rome

23So they arranged a date with him, and a large number of people^h came to him where he was staying. Paul explained the Reign of God to them from morning till night. He was testifying to them and trying to persuade them about Jesus, both from the Law of Moses and the prophets. 24And some were persuaded by the things he said, but others wouldn't believe. 25And since they were in disagreement, they started to leave, after Paul said one last thing: "The Holy Spirit spoke wiselyⁱ to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah:

26Go to this people and say,
 Listen closely, but you'll never understand;
 Look closely, but you're never going to see;
 27Because this people's hearts have gotten dull,^j
 And they can hardly hear with their ears,
 And they've closed their eyes.
 Otherwise they would see with their eyes,
 And hear with their ears,
 And understand in their hearts,
 And they would turn back to me—
 And I would^k heal them.^l

^a Lit. "those who were first among the Jews."

^b Lit. "Brother men."

^c Lit. "because there was no basis for the death penalty in me."

^d Or "the Jews."

^e Lit. "this chain."

^f Prn. *joo-dee-a*.

^g Lit. "for it is known to us about this sect that it is spoken against everywhere."

^h Or "even more of them."

ⁱ Lit. "well."

^j Lit. "thick."

^k Lit. "will."

^l Isa. 6:9-11.

²⁸So you should all know that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles—and they’re going to listen.”

³⁰Paul stayed in Rome for two whole years, in his own rented place. And he used to welcome everyone who came to him. ³¹He was preaching the Reign of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ completely openly. No one tried to stop him.^a

^a Lit. “with all openness, unhindered.”