

ACTS OF APOSTLES

Conversational Version

Jesus Promises the Spirit

1:¹In the earlier volume, most excellent Theophilus, I gave an account of what Jesus did and taught ²up to when by the Holy Spirit he commissioned the apostles he'd chosen. ³During 40 days after he suffered, he showed himself alive to them in a variety of unmistakable proofs and discussed God's kingdom. ⁴While he was eating with them, he told them to wait in Jerusalem for *"the Father's promise I told you about: ⁵John immersed in water, but you'll be 'immersed' in the Holy Spirit in a few days."*

Acts 1:1-5

The Ascension of Jesus

⁶While they were with him, they asked, *"Lord, is that when you'll restore Israel's independence?"*

⁷*"You^{pl} aren't to know the dates and circumstances the Father has scheduled by his authority. ⁸You'll receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you'll represent me in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and all over the world."*

⁹Then he ascended and a cloud took him out of sight. ¹⁰While they were staring up at the sky, two men in dazzling clothes stood next to them. ¹¹*"Galileans, why stand here staring at the sky? He'll come back the way you've watched him go."*

¹²They went back to Jerusalem from the hill called *The Mount* of Olives, about six-tenths of a mile from the city. ¹³When they went inside, they got together in the upstairs room: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes; and Judas son of James. ¹⁴They were praying with the women there; with Mary, Jesus' mother; and with his brothers.

Acts 1:6-14

Choosing Judas' Replacement

¹⁵During that time Peter stood up among the brothers. (There was a crowd of about 120 there.)

¹⁶*"Brothers, it needed to happen what the Holy Spirit predicted through David about Judas, who guided the ones that arrested Jesus. ¹⁷He had a part in this ministry. (¹⁸He bought a field with the payment for his sin. He swelled up and burst open, and his entrails gushed out. ¹⁹Everybody in Jerusalem heard about it, so in their [Aramaic] language they called that field Haceldama, Field of Blood.) ²⁰Scripture says in the Psalms,*

***'Let his house be deserted
and nobody live in it'** [Ps 69:25];*

and,

‘Let someone else have his office of oversight’ [Ps 109:8].

²¹⁻²²So we need to choose a replacement to serve as a witness with us about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, someone that’s been with us from the time of John’s baptizing to the Lord’s ascension.” **Acts 1:15-22**

²³They put forward Matthias and Joseph Barsabbas called Justus. ²⁴They prayed, “Lord, you know everybody’s heart. Show which one you’ve chosen ²⁵to receive this apostleship that Judas left to go to his own place.” ²⁶They cast lots, and the lot fell on Matthias; he joined the eleven apostles. **Acts 1:23-26**

The Spirit’s Coming

^{2:1}When Pentecost came, they were together. ²All of a sudden a roar from the sky like a violent windstorm filled the house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues like fire sat on each one of them. ⁴The Holy Spirit filled them, and they started speaking in other languages as the Spirit enabled them. **Acts 2:1-4**

⁵Devout Jews from many countries were living in Jerusalem. ⁶When that roar erupted, the crowd came together bewildered. Each one was surprised to hear them speaking in their own language.

⁷“Aren’t these men Galileans? ⁸How can we be hearing our native languages?

⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites; people living in Mesopotamia, Judaea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; Roman visitors, ¹¹Jews and proselytes; Cretans and Arabians—we’re hearing them speak in our own languages about those outstanding things God has done.”

¹²They were surprised and asked each other what was happening.

¹³Others joked, “They’re drunk on sweet new wine.” **Acts 2:5-13**

Peter’s Sermon on Pentecost

¹⁴Peter, standing with the eleven, spoke up,

“Judeans and you that are living in Jerusalem, listen. ¹⁵These men aren’t drunk like you’re trying to make out; it’s only 9 o’clock. ¹⁶This is what the prophet Joel was referring to,

¹⁷“***In the last days,***” God says,

***“I’ll pour my Spirit out on all kinds of people:
your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams, and***

¹⁸*my servants and handmaids will prophesy.*

¹⁹*“I’ll show you wonders in the sky above, and
signs on the earth below—
blood, fire, and smoke.*

²⁰*The sun will go dark, and
the moon will turn red,
before the great day of the LORD comes.*

²¹*“Whoever calls on the LORD will be saved”* [Joel 2:28-32]. Acts 2:14-21

²²*“Israelites, listen. God approved Jesus the Nazarene by miracles,
wonders, and signs you know God did by him among you. ²³You handed him over
to God’s predetermined foreknowledge and plan. You condemned him to death
and got people to crucify him that weren’t under the Law. ²⁴God released him
from a painful death and resurrected him because death couldn’t hold him.
²⁵David said,*

*‘I always see the LORD in front of me;
he’s at my right hand so I’m secure.*

²⁶*So I’m glad and rejoice;
even my flesh will rest in hope,
²⁷because you won’t leave me in the grave, or
let your Holy One decay.*

²⁸*You’ve made the way of life known to me;
you’ll make me happy with your presence’* [Ps 16:8-11].

Acts 2:22-28

²⁹*“Brothers, let me speak frankly about the patriarch David: he died and
was buried, and his grave’s still here. ³⁰So, as a prophet, he knew ‘God had
solemnly sworn that his descendant would sit on his throne’ [Ps 132:11]. ³¹He saw
that ahead of time and was referring to the Messiah’s resurrection when he said,
‘He wouldn’t remain in the grave, and his flesh wouldn’t decay’ [Ps 16:10]. ³²God
resurrected this Jesus, as we can all vouch for. ³³He ascended to God’s right
hand, received from the Father the Holy Spirit he promised, and poured out what
you’re seeing and hearing. ³⁴David didn’t ascend to heaven; he said himself,*

*‘The LORD said to my Lord,
“Sit on my right hand
³⁵till I make your enemies your footstool”* [Ps 110:1].

³⁶*So Israel can know without a doubt that God has made this Jesus you crucified
both ‘Lord’ and Messiah.”*

Acts 2:29-36

³⁷Those comments cut his audience to the heart. They said to Peter and the other apostles, “*What are we going to do, brothers!?*”

³⁸Peter said,

“Repent, and each of you get baptized to Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins, and you’ll receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. ³⁹The promise applies to you, your descendants, and everybody afar off—as many as the LORD our God calls.”

⁴⁰With a lot of additional presentation, he urged them, “*Be saved from this crooked generation.*” ⁴¹The ones that accepted his message were baptized: about 3,000 were added together that day. ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. **Acts 2:37-42**

⁴³Reverence came over them everyone, and the apostles worked many wonders and signs. ⁴⁴The believers were together and shared everything; ⁴⁵they started selling property and possessions and distributing them according to need. ⁴⁶They continued together every day in the Temple, breaking bread by families, and receiving food with sincere gladness. ⁴⁷They kept praising God and being gracious to the people. Every day the LORD was adding together the ones that were being saved. **Acts 2:43-47**

Healing the Lame Man at Gate Beautiful

^{3:1}Peter and John were going up into the Temple at 3 o’clock prayer. ²Daily, people had been carrying a man crippled from birth *and taking him* to the Temple gate called *Gate Beautiful* to ask for alms from people going into the Temple. ³When he saw Peter and John about to go in, he asked for alms. ⁴Peter looked at him with John and said, “*Look at us.*”

⁵He gave them his full attention, expecting to receive something.

⁶Peter said, “*I don’t have any money, but I’ll give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus the Messiah, the Nazarene, get up and walk.*”

⁷He took his right hand and lifted him up. Instantly his feet and ankles strengthened. ⁸He jumped up and stood and started walking around. He went into the Temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God. ⁹The people saw him ¹⁰and recognized him as the beggar at Gate Beautiful. They were astounded. **Acts 3:1-10**

Peter’s Sermon at Solomon’s Portico

¹¹While he kept holding onto Peter and John, the people rushed to them in Solomon’s Portico, utterly astonished. ¹²When Peter saw it, he responded,

“Israelites, why are you amazed at him? Why stare at us as if we made him walk by our power or godliness? ¹³Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob’s God—our ancestors’ God [Ex 3:6, 15]—has glorified his Son Jesus. He’s the One you

delivered up to Pilate when he'd decided to release him. ¹⁴You rejected the Holy and Just One, and asked Pilate to grant you a murderer. ¹⁵You killed the author of life that God has resurrected, the One we're witnesses for. ¹⁶He's the One that made this man strong. Faith working through him has made this man you know completely well as you can see. **Acts 3:11-16**

¹⁷"Now brothers, I know you didn't realize what you were doing—your rulers didn't either. ¹⁸But that's the way God fulfilled what he announced beforehand by many prophets: that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹So repent: God will erase your sins. ²⁰Times of renewal will come from the LORD, and he'll send the Messiah Jesus that he appointed for you. ²¹Heaven needs to receive him till God establishes everything he said through his holy prophets so long ago. ²²Moses said,

'From among you the LORD your God will raise up a prophet for you like me. Listen to everything he tells you. ²³Every person that doesn't will perish from the people' [Deut 18:15-16].

²⁴The prophets from Samuel on have told about our time. ²⁵You're descendants of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your ancestors. He told Abraham,

'Your descendants will bless all the nations' [Gen 22:18; 26:4].

²⁶God has resurrected his Son Jesus and sent him first to you to 'bless' you when you turn away from your sins." **Acts 3:17-26**

Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin

^{4:1}While they were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees confronted them. ²They resented them teaching the people and claiming in Jesus the resurrection. ³They arrested them and put them in jail till the next day because it was already evening. ⁴Many who heard the message believed; the number of men rose to about 5,000.

Acts 4:1-4

⁵The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem with ⁶Annas the high priest and Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and the members the high priest's family. ⁷They stood Peter and John in the assembly, "By what power or name did you do this?"

⁸Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said,

"Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if you're examining us today to find out what good deed has cured this crippled man, ¹⁰know this, you and all the people of Israel: he stands here cured by Jesus the Messiah, the Nazarene you crucified and God resurrected. ¹¹This is

'the stone you builders rejected

that's become the cornerstone' [Ps 118:22].

¹²*Salvation lies only in him; no one else under heaven can save us.*” Acts 4:5-12

¹³When they saw Peter and John's boldness and took note that they were unschooled, common men, they were amazed, knowing they'd been with Jesus. ¹⁴They looked at the man standing with them cured and couldn't say anything against it. ¹⁵They told them to go outside the Sanhedrin while they conferred,

¹⁶*“What are we going to do with these men!? It's obvious to everybody in Jerusalem that they've done a notable sign; we can't deny that. ¹⁷But, to keep it from spreading any further among the people, let's strictly threaten them not to speak to anybody again in this name.”*

¹⁸They called them and commanded them never to teach again in the name of Jesus.

¹⁹But Peter answered, *“In front of our God, you decide if it's right to listen to you or to him. ²⁰We have to say what we've seen and heard.”*

²¹When they'd threatened them some more, they let them go. They couldn't find anything to punish them for, and the people were praising God for what had happened. ²²The man they'd healed was over 40 years old. Acts 4:13-22

Praying for Boldness

²³After their release, they reported to their people what the chief priests and elders had said. ²⁴When they heard it, they said to God together,

“Master, who made earth, sky, and sea, and everything in them, ²⁵you spoke by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David your servant,

***‘Why did the Gentiles rage,
and the peoples plot pointless threats?’***

***²⁶The kings of the earth stood together, and
the rulers assembled as one
against the LORD and his Messiah’ [Ps 2:1-2].***

²⁷Truly in this city, Herod and Pontius Pilate with the ‘Gentiles’ and the ‘people’ of Israel ‘assembled against your Holy Servant Jesus’ ²⁸to do what you already determined would happen. ²⁹Now, LORD, look at their threats, and make us ^{your} servants bold to speak your message ³⁰while you heal and bring about signs and wonders through your Holy Servant Jesus.”

³¹After they'd prayed, the place where they'd gathered shook, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak God's message boldly. Acts 4:23-31

Having All Things in Common

³²The great number of believers united in heart and soul. Nobody considered anything his own; they held everything in common. ³³The apostles were powerfully defending the Lord's resurrection and experiencing a lot of good will. ³⁴Nobody lacked what they needed, because the ones who owned land or houses were selling them ³⁵and taking the proceeds to the apostles. It was distributed as needed. ³⁶Joseph—that the apostles called Barnabas (Encourager), a Levite, a Cypriot—³⁷sold a field and gave the apostles the proceeds. Acts 4:32-3

Ananias and Sapphira

^{5:1}A man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira also sold a piece of land. ²He kept part of the price and took the rest to the apostles. (She was in on it.)

³Peter said, *"Ananias, why did Satan prompt you to lie to the Holy Spirit, when you kept part of the price of the field? ⁴While you had it, wasn't it yours? When you sold it, didn't you control it? Why decide to do this? You didn't just lie to people, but to God."* ⁵When Ananias heard that, he collapsed and died. Great respect came on everybody that heard about it. ⁶The young men got up, wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.

⁷Some three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸Peter asked her, *"Did you^{pl} sell the field for such and such?"*

"Yes."

⁹Peter said, *"Why'd you^{pl} agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? The ones that buried your husband are at the door, and they'll carry you out."*

¹⁰She collapsed right there and died. The young men carried her out to bury her beside her husband. ¹¹People that heard about what happened came to greatly respect the church. Acts 5:1-11

Miracles Among the People

¹²The apostles did many signs and wonders among the people, and they were getting together in Solomon's Portico. ¹³People hesitated to join them, but they held them in high regard. ¹⁴Believers kept coming to the Lord, large numbers of men and women. ¹⁵As a result, they were bringing sick people out into the streets and putting them on cots and stretchers so when Peter came, even his shadow might fall on some of them. ¹⁶Crowds even came from towns around Jerusalem, carrying sick people and people harassed by unclean spirits. They were all healed. Acts 5:12-16

The Apostles Persecuted

¹⁷The high priest and his associates—Sadducees—were jealous. ¹⁸They arrested the apostles and put them in public custody. ¹⁹During the night an angel of the LORD opened the gates of the jail and let them out, ²⁰*"Go into the Temple and speak to the people the message about this life."* ²¹They went in about daylight and started teaching. The high priest and his associates convened Israel's Sanhedrin, the senate, and sent to the jail to bring the apostles. ²²But

the officers didn't find them. They came back and reported, ²³*"We found the jail securely locked and the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened it, we didn't find anybody inside."*

²⁴The captain of the Temple and the chief priests were dumbfounded about what this might lead to. ²⁵A fellow came and told them, *"They're standing in the Temple, teaching the people."* ²⁶The captain went with the officers and brought them without force because they were afraid the people would stone them. **Acts 5:17-26**

²⁷They took them into the Sanhedrin, and the high priest asked them, ²⁸*"Didn't we strictly charge you not to teach in this name? You've filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood on us."*

²⁹Peter and the apostles said,

"We have to obey God instead of you. ³⁰Our ancestors' God raised up Jesus that you did murder on a tree. ³¹God exalted him as Leader and Savior to his right hand to offer repentance and forgiveness to Israel. ³²We speak to that fact and so does the Holy Spirit God has given to ones that obey him."

Acts 5:27-32

Gamaliel's Advice

³³They were furious and wanted to execute them. ³⁴But a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin named Gamaliel, a respected teacher of the Law, stood up and told them to put the men out of the council chamber for a while,

³⁵*"Israelites, be careful what you do to them. ³⁶Before now, Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. About 400 men joined him. He was killed, and everybody that obeyed him scattered and didn't amount to anything."*

³⁷*"After that, Judas the Galilean rose up during the census, and drew people to him. He perished too, and the ones that obeyed him scattered. ³⁸Now I tell you, leave these men alone. If this effort is coming from men, it'll be overthrown. ³⁹If it's from God, you won't overthrow them, and you can be fighting against God."*

They agreed. ⁴⁰They called the apostles, beat them, charged them not to speak in Jesus' name, and released them. ⁴¹They left the Sanhedrin, elated over being considered worthy of suffering for The Name. ⁴²Every day in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to preach that Jesus was the Messiah. **Acts 5:33-42**

Appointing the 7

^{6:1}At that time when the number of disciples was multiplying, the Hellenists started grumbling against the Hebrews for overlooking their widows in daily food distribution. ²The Twelve assembled the disciples,

“We shouldn’t step aside from serving God’s message to serving tables. ³So pick out seven men with good reputations, who have the Spirit and wisdom, and we’ll appoint them to take care of this. ⁴We’ll continue in prayer and serving the message.”

⁵That pleased the crowd, and they chose Stephen, a man with great faith and the Holy Spirit; Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas; and Nicolaus, a proselyte from Antioch. ⁶They presented them to the apostles, who prayed and laid hands on them. ⁷God’s message grew, and the number of disciples multiplied tremendously in Jerusalem. A large group of priests obeyed the faith. Acts 6:1-7

Stephen’s Arrest

⁸With grace and power, Stephen was doing great signs among the people. ⁹Some rose up from The Synagogue of the Freeman, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicians, and Asians, trying to argue with him; ¹⁰but they couldn’t stand up to his wisdom and spirit. ¹¹So they bribed some guys to say, *“We heard him blaspheme Moses and God.”* ¹²They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; seized him, and took him to the Sanhedrin. ¹³False witnesses stood up, *“He keeps speaking against this Holy Place and the Law. ¹⁴We’ve heard him say Jesus the Nazarene will tear this place down and change the customs Moses delivered.”* ¹⁵Everybody sitting in the Sanhedrin looked at him intently and saw his face like the face of an angel. Acts 6:8-15

Stephen’s Defense

^{7:1}The high priest said, *“Is that true?”*

²He said,

“Brothers and fathers, listen. Our glorious God appeared to Abraham our ancestor in Mesopotamia before he settled in Haran. ³He said, ‘Leave your land and relatives, and go to the land I’ll show you’ [Gen 12:1]. ⁴He left Chaldea and settled in Haran. After his father died, God moved him to where we live now. ⁵He didn’t give him an inheritance in it, not even a place to put his foot, but promised ‘to give it to him and his descendants’ [Gen 12:7] even though he didn’t have a child yet. ⁶God said his descendants would live in a foreign land that would enslave them and abuse them for 400 years. ⁷I’ll judge that nation, and afterwards I’ll bring them out, and they’ll serve me here’ [Gen 15:13-14]. ⁸He gave them the covenant of circumcision, so Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him the eighth day. Isaac became the father of Jacob, father of the twelve patriarchs. Acts 7:1-8

⁹*“The other patriarchs resented Joseph and sold him into Egypt, but God was with him. ¹⁰He delivered him from difficult circumstances and gave him grace and wisdom in front of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Pharaoh made him governor over Egypt as well as his own household.*

¹¹An especially stressful famine came over Egypt and Canaan, and our ancestors couldn't find food. ¹²Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt and sent our fathers first. ¹³The second time Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became acquainted with Pharaoh. ¹⁴Joseph called his father Jacob and all his relatives—75 people. ¹⁵Jacob went down to Egypt, and he and our ancestors died there. ¹⁶They were carried over to Shechem and put in the tomb Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. Acts 7:9-16

¹⁷"As the time came for God's promise to Abraham, the people multiplied in Egypt ¹⁸until **'another king arose that didn't know Joseph'** [Ex 1:7-8]. ¹⁹He took advantage of our people and abused our ancestors by making them cast out their babies to die.

²⁰"At that time Moses was born, an especially good-looking baby raised for three months in his father's house. ²¹When he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter picked him up and raised him as her own son. ²²He was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians, capable in word and deed. Acts 7:17-22

²³"When he was 40, it occurred to him to visit his kin, the Israelites. ²⁴When he saw one of them mistreated, he avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. ²⁵He supposed his kin understood that God was going to use him to deliver them, but they didn't.

²⁶"The next day he showed up as two were fighting and tried to make peace, 'Men, you're brothers. Why are you mistreating each other?'

²⁷"The one mistreating his neighbor pushed him away, **'Who made you a ruler and judge over us?'** ²⁸**You don't intend to kill me, do you, like you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'** [Ex 2:13-14]

²⁹"At this, Moses fled from Egypt and became an exile in Midian, where he fathered two sons. Acts 7:23-29

³⁰"After 40 years, **'an angel appeared to him in the flame of a burning bush in the desert'** [Ex 3:2-3] around Mt. Sinai. ³¹Moses was amazed at the sight. When he came for a closer look, the LORD spoke, ³²**'I'm your ancestors' God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'** [Ex 3:6]. Moses began to tremble and didn't dare to look. ³³The LORD said, **'Take your sandals off; you're standing on holy ground. ³⁴I've certainly seen the abuse of my people in Egypt and have come down to deliver them. Go now; I'm sending you to Egypt'**" [Ex 3:4-10].

³⁵"The Moses they rejected, saying, **'Who made you a ruler and judge'** [Ex 2:14], God sent as ruler and deliverer by the angel that appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶He led them out and performed wonders and signs in Egypt, the Red Sea,

and in the desert for 40 years. ³⁷That's the Moses who said to the Israelites, **'From among your people God will raise up a prophet for you like me'** [Deut.18:15]. ³⁸That's the one who was in the congregation in the desert with the angel that spoke to him on Mt. Sinai and with our ancestors. That's the one who received life-giving oracles for us. ³⁹That's the one our forefathers didn't want to obey, but shoved away, turned in heart back to Egypt, ⁴⁰and told Aaron, **'Make us gods to go ahead of us. We don't know what's happened to this Moses who brought us out of Egypt'** [Ex 32:1, 23]. ⁴¹They made a calf, offered sacrifice to the idol, and celebrated over what they had made with their hands. Acts 7:30-41

⁴²"God turned away and gave them up to serve the host of heaven, like scripture says in the Book of the Prophets,

**'You didn't just offer me slain victims and sacrifices
for 40 years in the wilderness, did you, Israel?**

⁴³**You carried the tabernacle of Moloch
and the star of Rephan,
images you made to worship.**

I'll carry you away beyond Babylon' [Amos 5:25-27]. Acts 7:42-43

⁴⁴"Our ancestors had the tabernacle as a testimony to them in the desert. The One that spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the design he'd seen. ⁴⁵That's what our ancestors brought in with Joshua when they took over the nations God forced out till David's time. ⁴⁶David found favor with God and asked to build a house for him. ⁴⁷Solomon did build a house for God, ⁴⁸but the Most High doesn't live in handmade houses. The prophet says,

⁴⁹**"The sky's my throne;
the earth's my footstool.
What kind of house are you going to build me," the LORD says?
"Where will I rest?**

⁵⁰**Haven't I made all this?"'** [Is 66:1-2]

⁵¹"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit just like your ancestors did! ⁵²Which prophet didn't they persecute? They killed the ones that predicted the coming of the Righteous One that you've betrayed and murdered, ⁵³you that received the Law ordained by angels and haven't kept it!" Acts 7:44-53

⁵⁴They were enraged and gritted their teeth at him. ⁵⁵Filled with the Holy Spirit, he looked intently into heaven and saw God's glory and Jesus standing to his right. ⁵⁶He said, "I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing on the right side of God."

⁵⁷They shouted out and covered their ears and rushed at him together. ⁵⁸They threw him out of the city and started stoning him. The witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man called Saul. ⁵⁹As they stoned Stephen, he called out, “*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!*” ⁶⁰He knelt down and shouted out, “*Lord, don’t hold this sin against them!*” Then he died. **8:1** Saul was approving of his death.

Acts 7:54-8:1a

Paul Leads a General Persecution

Severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem. Disciples scattered all over Judaea and Samaria—except for the apostles. ²Devout men buried Stephen and mourned him greatly. ³Saul continued to destroy the church, entering every house, dragging men and women to jail.

Acts 8:1b-3

Philip Preaches to Samaritans

⁴The ones that scattered went around presenting the message. ⁵Philip went down to the city of Samaria and presented the Messiah to them. ⁶The crowds paid attention to what he said and to the signs he did. ⁷Unclean spirits came out crying loudly, and he healed paralyzed and lame people. ⁸A lot of joy came to that city.

⁹A man named Simon had previously practiced sorcery in the city. He amazed the Samaritan nation, claiming to be somebody great. ¹⁰Least to greatest looked up to him, “*This is The Power of God Called Great.*” ¹¹They looked up to him because for a long time he had amazed them with sorcery. ¹²When they believed Philip’s preaching about God’s kingdom and about Jesus *as* the Messiah, men and women were baptized. ¹³Simon himself believed and after his baptism he stayed close to Philip, impressed with *his* outstanding miraculous signs. **Acts 8:4-13**

Peter and John in Samaria

¹⁴When the apostles in Jerusalem heard the Samaritans had accepted God’s message, they sent Peter and John ¹⁵to go down and pray for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶The Spirit hadn’t fallen on any of them; they’d only been baptized into the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷The apostles laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸When Simon saw that the apostles were giving the Spirit by laying on hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹“*Give me that authority, too, so whoever I lay my hands on will receive the Spirit.*”

²⁰Peter told him,

“*Your silver perish with you! You thought you could buy God’s gift with money!*” ²¹*You don’t have any part in this. Your motives aren’t right in front of God.* ²²*Repent of this wickedness and pray that maybe he’ll forgive your motives.*

²³*As far as I'm concerned, you're in the bitterness that gall has and the addiction that sinning brings.*"

²⁴Simon answered, "*You^{pl} pray to the Lord for me so nothing like that happens to me.*"

²⁵When they'd given their testimony and presented the Lord's message, they headed back to Jerusalem. On the way they delivered the good news to many Samaritan villages. **Acts 8:14-25**

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

²⁶An angel of the LORD told Philip, "*Go south to the road from Jerusalem down to Gaza, which is open country.*" ²⁷So he went. An Ethiopian, a eunuch, an official, the treasurer for Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. had come to Jerusalem to worship and ²⁸was going back in his carriage, reading the prophet Isaiah.

²⁹The Spirit told Philip, "*Make contact with that carriage.*"

³⁰Philip ran toward it and heard him reading Isaiah, "*Do you understand what you're reading?*"

³¹"*How can I unless somebody explains it me?*" He invited Philip to come up and sit with him *in the carriage*. ³²This is the passage he was reading:

**"They led him like a sheep to slaughter;
like a lamb silent in front of its shearers,
he didn't open his mouth.**

³³In his humble condition he received no justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

his life has been taken from the earth?" [Is 53:7-8 LXX] **Acts 8:26-33**

³⁴The eunuch asked, "*Who's the prophet talking about, himself or somebody else?*"

³⁵Philip started at that scripture and presented to him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶As they rode along, they came to some water, the eunuch said, "*Here's some water; why can't I be baptized?*" ^{[37]ms} ³⁸He stopped the carriage, and they both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the LORD caught Philip away, and the eunuch never saw him again. He went on his way happy. ⁴⁰Philip showed up in Azotus. As he traveled, he delivered the good news to towns all along the way to Caesarea. **Acts 8:34-40**

Saul's Conversion

9:¹Saul was still making murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ²and asked for letters to synagogues in Damascus so, if he found any belonging to The Way—men or women, he could bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³As he was getting close to Damascus, all of a sudden, a light from the sky shined around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice,

“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

⁵He said, *“Who are you, Sir?”*

“I’m Jesus that you’re persecuting. ⁶Get up and go into the city. Someone will tell you what to do.”

⁷The men traveling with him stood speechless. They heard the voice but didn’t see anyone. ⁸Saul got up; and when he opened his eyes, he couldn’t see. They took him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹For three days he couldn’t see and didn’t eat or drink anything. **Acts 9:1-9**

¹⁰There was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him, *“Ananias.”*

“Yes, Lord.”

¹¹*“Go to Straight Street and ask for Saul of Tarsus in Judas’ house. He’s praying ¹²and has seen a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he could see.”*

¹³Ananias answered, *“Lord, I’ve heard from lots of people how many evil things he’s done in Jerusalem. ¹⁴He has authority from the chief priests to bind everybody here that calls on you.”*

¹⁵The Lord said, *“Go on; I’ve chosen him to carry my name to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites. ¹⁶I’ll show him how much he has to suffer for me.”*

¹⁷Ananias went into Judas’ house, laid hands on him, and said, *“Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus that appeared to you on the road has sent me so you can see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸Immediately scales, as it were, fell from his eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized. ¹⁹After he ate, he regained his strength.* **Acts 9:10-19a**

Saul Preaches in Damascus

He was with disciples in Damascus for some days. ²⁰Right away in the synagogues, he started presenting Jesus as God’s Son. ²¹The ones that heard him were amazed, *“Isn’t he the one that executed people in Jerusalem for calling on this Name and has come here to lead them bound to the chief priests?” ²²Paul grew stronger and confounded the Jews in Damascus, proving that this was the Messiah.*

²³After a while the Jews plotted to kill him, ²⁴but he found out about it. They were watching the gates day and night. ²⁵During the night his disciples lowered him in a big basket through *an opening in the wall.* **Acts 9:19b-25**

Jewish Plot Against Saul

²⁶When he got back to Jerusalem, he tried to associate with the disciples, but they were afraid of him. They didn’t believe he’d become a disciple. ²⁷But Barnabas took him to the apostles, and told them how he’d seen the Lord, how the Lord had spoken to him, how he’d presented the Lord boldly in Damascus. ²⁸Saul was moving freely among them in Jerusalem, presenting the Lord boldly. ²⁹He was disputing with the Hellenistic Jews, who were trying to get

hold of him to kill him. ³⁰But the brothers found out, took him down to Caesarea, and sent him to Tarsus. ³¹Then, all over Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria the church had peace and multiplied. They were living with respect for the Lord and comfort from the Holy Spirit. **Acts 9:26-31**

Peter Heals Aeneas

³²As Peter circulated through the region, he went down to the saints in Lydda. ³³He found a man there named Aeneas, who'd been confined to bed eight years paralyzed. ³⁴Peter said, "*Aeneas, Jesus the Messiah is healing you. Get up and make your bed.*" Immediately he stood up. ³⁵Everyone in Lydda and Sharon saw him, and turned to the Lord.

Peter Resurrects Dorcas

³⁶In Joppa a disciple named Tabitha (Dorcas) was always doing good things for people and giving gifts to those in need. ³⁷She got sick and died. They bathed her and laid her in an upstairs room. ³⁸Lydda was close to Joppa, and the disciples heard that Peter was there. They sent two men, "*Come right away.*" ³⁹Peter went with them. When he got there, they took him upstairs. The widows stood beside him mourning and showing him shirts and *other* clothes Dorcas had made for them. ⁴⁰Peter had them step out; he knelt and prayed, and turned to the body, "*Tabitha, get up.*"

When she opened her eyes and saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹He gave her his hand and raised her up. He called the saints and widows and presented her alive. ⁴²The news spread all over Joppa, and many came to believe in the Lord. ⁴³For some time, Peter stayed in Joppa with Simon the tanner. **Acts 9:32-43**

The Conversion of Cornelius

10:¹A centurion in Caesarea named Cornelius, from the Italian cohort, ²was a devout God-fearer along with his household. He gave considerable charitable gifts to the people and prayed to God constantly. ³In a vision about 3 o'clock, he saw an angel of God coming in and saying, "*Cornelius.*"

⁴He looked at him and was afraid, "*Yes, Sir?*"

"*Your prayers and charitable gifts have come up as a memorial to God.*" ⁵Send some men to Joppa and summon Simon called Peter. ⁶*He's staying with Simon a tanner whose house is by the sea.*" ⁷When the angel left, he called two household servants—his personal assistants—and a devout soldier. ⁸He went through everything with them and sent them to Joppa. **Acts 10:1-8**

⁹The next day, as they were getting close to the town, Peter went up on the housetop about noon to pray. ¹⁰He was getting hungry. While they were fixing lunch, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He watched the sky open up and something like a big sheet was let down to earth by four corners. ¹²It held reptiles, birds, and four-footed animals.

¹³A voice said, *"Kill and eat them, Peter."*

¹⁴*"No, Sir; I've never eaten anything unclean."*

¹⁵The voice spoke again, *"Don't you consider unclean what God has cleansed."*

¹⁶That happened three times, and the vessel went back up into the sky. **Acts 10:9-16**

¹⁷While Peter was wondering what the vision could possibly mean, Cornelius' men had asked around for Simon's house and were standing at the gate. ¹⁸They called out, asking if Simon called Peter was staying there.

¹⁹While he kept trying to figure out the vision, the Spirit said, *"Three men are looking for you."* ²⁰*Go down and go with them without scruples. I've sent them."*

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

²²They said, *"Cornelius is a centurion, a God-fearer with a good reputation in the Jewish nation. A holy angel directed him to invite you to his house to hear what you have to say."* ²³So he invited them in and put them up for the night. The next day he went with them, and some brothers from Joppa went along. **Acts 10:17-23**

²⁴On the second day, he came to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called his relatives and close friends. ²⁵When Peter came in, Cornelius met him and fell down to him in homage. ²⁶Peter raised him up, *"Please stand up; I'm just a man too."* ²⁷As they talked, Peter went in and found a large group.

²⁸He told them, *"You know a Jew's not supposed to associate at home with a foreigner, but God has shown me not to consider anybody ceremonially unclean."* ²⁹*So without objecting, I came when you called. Why did you send for me?"*

³⁰Cornelius said,

"Four days ago about this time, I was observing 3 o'clock prayer in my house. A man stood in front of me in bright clothes ³¹and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your charitable gifts. ³²Send to Joppa for Simon called Peter. He's staying with Simon, a tanner next to the sea. ³³Right away I sent for you. Thank you for coming. We're here in front of God to hear what the Lord has commanded you." **Acts 10:24-33**

³⁴Peter said,

"I perceive that God doesn't show favoritism with people. ³⁵But, in every nation he accepts people that respect him and live right. ³⁶He sent the message to the people of Israel, delivering good news about peace through Jesus the Messiah, who is Lord of all. ³⁷You know what took place all over Judaea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached. ³⁸God anointed Jesus the Nazarene with the Holy Spirit and power. He went around doing good and healing people the devil had oppressed, because God was with him. ³⁹⁻⁴⁰We

witnessed what he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. On the third day God raised up the One they killed on a tree and presented him clearly, ⁴¹not to everybody, but to witnesses he'd previously chosen—to us who ate with him after his resurrection. ⁴²He sent us to tell the people that he's the One God appointed to judge the living and the dead. ⁴³The prophets show that through him everybody who trusts in him has his sins forgiven." Acts 10:34-43

Gentiles Receive the Spirit

⁴⁴While Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on the audience. ⁴⁵The believers from the Circumcision who had come with Peter were surprised that God poured out the Holy Spirit on Gentiles too. ⁴⁶They heard them speak in languages and praise God.

Peter responded, ⁴⁷*"Nobody can forbid water, can they, for baptizing these who have received the Holy Spirit like we did?"* ⁴⁸He commanded to baptize them into Jesus the Messiah.

They asked him to stay for several days.

Acts 10:44-48

Peter Reports to Jerusalem

¹¹¹The apostles and believers in Judaea heard that Gentiles had accepted God's message. ²When Peter went up to Jerusalem, members of the Circumcision took issue with him, ³*"You went in and ate with uncircumcised men."*

⁴Peter explained step by step,

⁵*"I was in Joppa praying when I saw a vision in a trance, something like a big sheet came down from the sky by four corners. It came to me, ⁶and I stared into it and saw four-footed animals, wild animals, reptiles, and birds. ⁷I heard a voice, 'Kill and eat them, Peter.'*

⁸*"I said, 'No, Sir; I've never eaten anything unclean.'*

⁹*"The voice spoke a second time out of the sky, 'Don't you consider unclean what God has cleansed.'* ¹⁰*That happened three times, and everything went back up into the sky.*

¹¹*"Right then, three men from Caesarea stood at the house where we were staying. ¹²The Spirit told me to go with them without scruples. These six brothers went along and entered the man's house. ¹³He told us how he'd seen an angel standing in his house, saying, 'Send to Joppa for Simon called Peter. ¹⁴He'll tell you what will save you and your household.'*

¹⁵*"While I was speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on them like on us in the beginning. ¹⁶I remembered what the Lord had said, 'John immersed in water, but you'll be "immersed" in the Holy Spirit.'* ¹⁷*If God gave them the same gift he*

gave us when we trusted in the Lord Jesus the Messiah ('Christ'), who was I to oppose God?"

¹⁸When they heard that, they backed off and praised God, *"Then God has also offered Gentiles repentance to life."* Acts 11:1-18

The Good News in Antioch

¹⁹The ones scattered by the ordeal surrounding Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message just to Jews. ²⁰But some Cypriots and Cyrenians went to Antioch and started presenting the Lord Jesus to Greeks as well. ²¹The Lord was with them, and a large number turned to the Lord. ²²The church in Jerusalem heard about them and sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When he got there and saw *the evidence of God's grace*, he was glad and encouraged them with heartfelt purpose to remain with the Lord. ²⁴He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith; and a significant number joined the Lord. ²⁵He went to Tarsus to look for Paul. ²⁶When he found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a year they gathered in the church and taught a sizable crowd. They called the disciples Christians first in Antioch.

²⁷At that time, prophets from Jerusalem came down to Antioch. ²⁸One, named Agabus, signified by the Spirit that a severe famine would come over the whole *Roman* empire, which took place in the *reign of Claudius*. ²⁹The believers, as they could, made up their mind to send relief to the Christians in Jerusalem. ³⁰They sent it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Acts 11:19-30

Herod Kills James, Jails Peter

12:¹About that time, King Herod *Agrippa I* reached out to abuse some in the church. ²He killed James, John's brother, with a sword. ³When he saw the Jews liked that, he arrested Peter too (during the days of Unleavened Bread). ⁴He put him in jail, with four detachments of four soldiers to guard him. After Passover he meant to bring him out to the people, ⁵but the church prayed sincerely to God about him. Acts 12:1-5

⁶The night before Herod meant to bring him out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains. There were guards at the door, keeping the jail. ⁷An angel of the LORD stood beside him, and a light glowed in the cell. He tapped Peter on the shoulder to wake him up, *"Get up quick!"* The chains fell off his hands.

Peter Delivered from Jail

⁸*"Fasten your belt and put your sandals on. Put your cloak on and follow me."*

⁹He followed him, not knowing it was real; he thought he was dreaming. ¹⁰They went through the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate into the city. It swung open on its own, and they went out and passed down one street. Then the angel disappeared. Acts 12:6-10

¹¹When Peter came to himself, he said, *"Now I'm sure the LORD sent his angel to deliver me from Herod and the Jews."*

¹²After he came to grips with what happened, he went to the house of Mary, John Mark's mother, where a large number had gathered to pray. ¹³He knocked on the door in the gate, and a girl named Rhoda came to answer it. ¹⁴She recognized Peter's voice. Instead of letting him in, she ran excited to tell them that he was standing at the gate.

¹⁵They said, "*You're out of your mind.*"

But she insisted.

They started saying, "*It must be his angel.*"

¹⁶Peter kept knocking; and when they opened the door, they were surprised to see him.

¹⁷He motioned for them to hold it down and recounted how the LORD had led him out of the jail, "*Tell James and the brothers what's happened.*" He left and went somewhere else.

¹⁸The next morning there was a huge stir among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. ¹⁹When Herod looked for him and didn't find him, he examined the guards and commanded to lead them off for execution. He went down from Judaea to Caesarea and spent some time there.

Acts 12:11-19

The Death of Herod

²⁰He was mad at the residents of Tyre and Sidon. As a group they came to him and befriended Blastus, who was in charge of the king's sleeping quarters. They asked for peace because his country supplied their food. ²¹On a set day, Herod dressed in royal garb, sat on the judgment seat, and gave an oration.

²²The public assembly shouted, "*It's the voice of a god, not a man!*"

²³Immediately an angel of the LORD struck him because *he accepted the credit* and didn't give it to God. He got worms and died. ²⁴God's message grew and multiplied. ²⁵Barnabas and Saul went back from Jerusalem when they'd finished their service and took John Mark with them.

Acts 12:20-25

Barnabas and Saul Commissioned

13:¹In the church at Antioch, there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas; Simeon called Niger; Lucius the Cyrenian; Manaen, brought up with Herod the tetraarch; and Saul. ²As they served the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "*Set Barnabas and Saul apart to the work I've called them for.*" ³They fasted and prayed, laid hands on them, and sent them off.

Acts 13:1-3

Paul and Barnabas in Cyprus

⁴So sent by the Holy Spirit, and they went down to Seleucia and sailed to Cyprus. ⁵At Salamis they delivered God's message in the synagogues of the Jews, with Mark as their assistant. ⁶When they'd gone the length of the island, they came upon a sorcerer, a Jewish false prophet named Barjesus. ⁷He was with the proconsul Sergius Paullus, an intelligent man, who

called for Barnabas and Saul, and wanted to hear God's message. ⁸Elymas ("Sorcerer") opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

⁹But Saul, or Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked him in the eye ¹⁰and said, *"Deceitful, unscrupulousness son of the devil, enemy of goodness, you continually pervert the upright ways of God. ¹¹Now, his hand is on you. You'll be so blind for a while you can't see the sun."* Immediately darkness fell on him, and he went around trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. ¹²When the proconsul saw what happened, he believed, astonished at the Lord's teaching.

Acts 13:4-12

Paul and Barnabas in Antioch of Pisidia

¹³The ones that were with Paul sailed from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia. John left and went back to Jerusalem. ¹⁴From Perga, they arrived at Antioch in Pisidia. On the Sabbath they went into the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent to them, *"Brothers, if you have something encouraging to say to the people, go ahead."*

¹⁶Paul stood up and motioned with his hand,

*"Israelites and God-fearers, ¹⁷our God chose our ancestors and raised them up while they were living as foreigners in Egypt. Afterwards he brought them out of there in stupendous fashion ¹⁸and put up with them for 40 years in the desert. ¹⁹In Canaan he destroyed 7 nations and gave their land to his people as an inheritance—²⁰a process that covered about 450 years. After that, he gave them judges till Samuel the prophet. ²¹When they asked for a king, he gave them Saul son of Kish from the tribe of Benjamin for 40 years. ²²He removed him and raised up David to be king, **'I've found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who'll do my will'** [1 Sam 13:14; Ps 89:20]. ²³As he'd promised, God raised up from David's descendants a savior, Jesus. ²⁴Ahead of him John prepared for his coming by presenting to Israel a baptism of repentance. ²⁵As John was carrying out his role, he said, 'What do you suppose I am? I'm not the One, but after me One is coming whose sandals I'm not worthy to unfasten.'*

Acts 13:13-25

²⁶*"Brothers, members of Abraham's nation and God-fearers among you, God has sent you the message about this salvation. ²⁷Those living in Jerusalem and their rulers didn't recognize him and, by condemning him, fulfilled the prophets they read every Sabbath. ²⁸Although they didn't find any capital offence, they petitioned Pilate to crucify him. ²⁹When they'd fulfilled everything scripture said about him, they took him down from the tree and put him in a tomb. ³⁰But God resurrected him. ³¹For many days, he appeared to the ones that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. ³²We're bringing you the good news that the*

promise God made to our ancestors ³³he's fulfilled to us by resurrecting Jesus.
Scripture says in Psalm 2,

**'You're my Son;
I've inaugurated you today'** [Ps 2:7].

³⁴So he didn't decay, like it says,

'I'll give you David's sure blessings' [Is 55:3 LXX];

³⁵and in another psalm,

'You won't let your Holy One decay' [Ps 16:10 LXX]. Acts 13:26-35

³⁶"When David had served God's will in his own time, he died, was buried with his ancestors, and decayed. ³⁷But the One God resurrected didn't decay.

³⁸Know, then, that through him we're offering forgiveness of sins—something the Law of Moses couldn't do. ³⁹The Messiah justifies everybody that trusts in him.

⁴⁰Be careful so what the prophets said won't apply to you,

**⁴¹'Look, you despisers;
be amazed and perish.
I'll do something in your day you wouldn't believe
if somebody explained it to you''** [Hab 1:5 LXX].

Acts 13:36-41

Paul Asked to Preach Again

⁴²As Paul and Barnabas were leaving, the synagogue rulers invited them to deliver that message the next Sabbath. ⁴³After the synagogue dismissed, lots of Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who urged them to continue in God's grace.

⁴⁴The following Sabbath nearly the whole city came to hear the Lord's message. ⁴⁵When the Jews saw the crowd, they got jealous and contradicted Paul and slandered *what he presented*.

⁴⁶Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, "*We needed to deliver God's message to you first. Since you're rejecting it and consider yourselves not worthy of eternal life, we're turning to the Gentiles.* ⁴⁷*That's what the LORD commanded us,*

***'I've made you a light for the Gentiles
so you can save the whole world''*** [Is 49:6].

⁴⁸When the Gentiles heard that, they praised the Lord's message, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹His message spread out through the region. ⁵⁰But the Jews stirred up devout, respected women and prominent men of the city, and instigated persecution against Paul and Barnabas to force them out of their territory. ⁵¹They shook the dust off their feet at them and went to Iconium. ⁵²The disciples were full of joy and the Holy Spirit. Acts 13:42-52

Paul at Iconium

14:¹At Iconium they went into the Jews' synagogue as usual and spoke so convincingly that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. ²But the disbelieving Jews stirred up the

Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the Christians. ³For a good while, they stayed and kept speaking boldly for the Lord, and he confirmed his message about grace by providing signs and wonders they performed. ⁴The city was divided, some with the Jews, some with the apostles. ⁵The Gentiles and Jews instigated an attempt to mistreat them and stone them. ⁶When the apostles found out, they hurried to Lycaonia to the cities Lystra and Derbe, as well as the surrounding area. ⁷They were delivering the good news there as well. **Acts 14:1-7**

Healing a Crippled Man

⁸At Lystra a man crippled in his feet from birth, had never walked. ⁹He was listening to Paul speak. Paul looked at him and saw he had faith to be cured. ¹⁰He shouted, “*Stand up!*” He jumped up and started walking.

¹¹When the crowd saw what Paul did, they shouted out in Lycaonian, “*Gods have come down to us in human form!*” ¹²They started calling Barnabas “Zeus” and Paul “Hermes” because Paul did most of the speaking. ¹³The priest of Zeus Propolis took bulls decked with wreaths of flowers to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowd. ¹⁴When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard about it, they tore their clothes and rushed into the crowd, shouting,

¹⁵“*Why are you doing this? We’re normal men like you, bringing you good news to turn away from these meaningless things to the living God who made earth, sky, and sea, and everything in them. ¹⁶In the past, he let nations go their own ways, ¹⁷but left evidence of himself by doing good, giving you rain and crops, filling you with food and happiness.*”

¹⁸With that, he barely stopped the crowds from offering sacrifices to them. **Acts 14:8-18**

Paul Stoned at Lystra

¹⁹Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came and persuaded the crowds to stone Paul. They dragged him out of the city, thinking he was dead. ²⁰But with the disciples standing around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he left for Derbe with Barnabas.

²¹When they’d presented the good news in that city and made a significant number of disciples, they went back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia. ²²They were strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to continue in the faith and to enter God’s kingdom through many difficulties. ²³When they’d appointed elders in every city, they prayed and fasted, and commended them to the Lord they’d trusted in.

Return to Antioch of Syria

²⁴They passed through Pisidia to Pamphylia. ²⁵After they’d presented the message in Perga, they went down to Attalia ²⁶and sailed back to Antioch of Syria, where they’d been committed to God’s grace for the work they’d done. ²⁷When they arrived and assembled the

church, they recounted what God had done with them and how he'd opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. ²⁸They stayed there a good while with the disciples. **Acts 14:19-28**

The Conference on Circumcision

15¹Some men came down from Jerusalem and started teaching the believers, *"Unless you're circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you can't be saved."* ²Paul and Barnabas strongly opposed them. The believers appointed Paul, Barnabas, and some others to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this controversy. ³The church sent them forward through Phoenicia and Samaria, reporting extensively on Gentile conversions and bringing a great deal of excitement to those Christians.

⁴When they got to Jerusalem, the church, apostles, and elders welcomed them; and they recounted what God had done with them. ⁵But some Pharisees that believed got up to say they needed to circumcise them and charge them to keep the Law of Moses. **Acts 15:1-5**

⁶The apostles and elders got together to look into the issue. ⁷After considerable discussion, Peter stood up,

"Brothers, you know that some time ago God decided Gentiles would hear the good news from me and believe. ⁸God knows people's hearts and testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit like he did to us Jews. ⁹He didn't make any distinction between them and us. He purified their hearts by trust. ¹⁰So why test God now by putting a yoke on the disciples' neck that our ancestors and we couldn't bear? ¹¹We believe that the grace of the Lord Jesus has saved us the same way it has them." **Acts 15:6-11**

¹²The assembly remained quiet and listened to Barnabas and Paul explain what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

¹³Then James responded,

¹⁴*"Simon has recounted how God first took people out of the Gentiles for himself. ¹⁵That fits what the prophets have written,*

¹⁶*"After that, I'll return
and rebuild David's fallen tabernacle.*

I'll rebuild it and set it up.

I'll do that so

¹⁷*the rest of mankind can seek the LORD,*

that is, the Gentiles who wear my name,"

says the LORD that's doing this' [Amos 9:11-12 mainly < LXX],

¹⁸*who is known from of old.'*

¹⁹*So my judgment is that we stop troubling Gentiles who turn to God, ²⁰but write to them to abstain from defilements with idols, sexual immorality, things*

strangled, and blood; ²¹because for generations people have preached Moses in every city and read about him in the synagogues every Sabbath.” Acts 15:12-21

The Conference Answers

²²The apostles, elders, and the whole church thought it would be good to choose men to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: Silas and Judas called Barsabbas, leaders among the Jewish Christians. ²³They wrote,

“Apostles and elders, to Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings.

²⁴We’ve heard that some have gone out from us on their own and upset you with their message. ²⁵We met and considered it good to send select men with our dearly loved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶who’ve risked their lives for our Lord Jesus the Messiah. ²⁷So we’ve sent Judas and Silas to tell you the same thing orally. ²⁸The Holy Spirit and we considered it good not to lay any burden on you but this: ²⁹abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood and things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from those, you’ll do well. Goodbye.”

Acts 15:22-29

³⁰The ones they sent went down to Antioch, gathered the crowd, and delivered the letter. ³¹They were elated over the consolation. ³²Judas and Silas, being prophets, confirmed the converts with additional presentation. ³³When they’d spent *some* time, the Christians there let them go back in peace. [³⁴]^{ms} ³⁵Paul and Barnabas stayed, teaching and preaching the Lord’s message along with a host of others.

Acts 15:30-35

The Parting of Paul and Barnabas

³⁶After a time Paul said to Barnabas, *“Let’s go back to the towns and cities where we presented the Lord’s message and see how the converts are doing.”* ³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along, ³⁸but Paul didn’t think it was wise to take him because he’d deserted them at Pamphylia instead of going on with them to the work. ³⁹Such a serious disagreement arose that they separated. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; ⁴⁰Paul chose Silas and went out, commended to God’s grace. ⁴¹Paul went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Acts 15:36-41

Paul Continues with the Second Tour

16:¹He arrived at Derbe and Lystra. A disciple was there named Timothy, son of a Greek father and a Jewess who believed. ²The Christians in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³Paul wanted him to go with him; so he circumcised him because of the Jews in the region; everybody knew his father was a Greek. ⁴As they went through the cities, they delivered the decrees to keep that the apostles and elders in Jerusalem had determined. ⁵So the churches were growing in faith and number every day.

Acts 16:1-5

Paul's Vision About Macedonia

⁶They went through Galatia and Phrygia, but the Holy Spirit kept them from presenting the message in Asia. ⁷They came up to the border of Mysia and tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus didn't let them. ⁸They went on past Mysia down to Troas. ⁹During the night Paul had a vision—a Macedonian man standing and urging him, "*Come over to Macedonia and help us.*" ¹⁰When he saw the vision, we planned right away to go to Macedonia because we concluded that God had called us to evangelize them. Acts 16:6-10

Paul and Silas at Philippi

¹¹We sailed from Troas directly to Samothrace and the next day to Neapolis. ¹²*We traveled* from there to Philippi, the main city in that district of Macedonia, *and* a Roman colony. We spent several days there. ¹³On the Sabbath we went outside the gate beside the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer. We sat down and talked to the women who gathered. ¹⁴A woman named Lydia was listening, from the city of Thyatira, a businesswoman dealing in purple fabrics, a God-fearer. The Lord opened her heart to what Paul was saying. ¹⁵When she and her household were baptized, she invited us, "*If you consider me faithful to the Lord, stay at my house.*" Acts 16:11-15

¹⁶As we were going to the place of prayer, a servant girl with a spirit of divination met us. Her handlers were profiting from her fortunetelling. ¹⁷She dogged Paul and us, crying out, "*These men serve God Most High. They're telling you how to be saved.*" ¹⁸She did that for days on end. Paul was really annoyed and turned to the spirit, "*In the name of Jesus the Messiah, come out of her.*" It came out that hour.

Paul and Silas Beaten and Jailed

¹⁹When her handlers saw their prospect for profit disappear, they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the magistrates in the marketplace, ²⁰"*These fellows are Jews. They're causing trouble in our city,* ²¹*promoting customs that aren't legal for us Romans to observe.*" ²²The crowd joined the attack, and the soldiers tore their clothes off and commanded to beat them with rods. ²³When they'd laid many blows on them, they put them in jail and charged the jailor to keep them secure. ²⁴So he put them in the inner jail and fastened their feet in stocks. Acts 16:16-24

The Jailor's Conversion

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the inmates were listening. ²⁶Suddenly a severe earthquake shook the foundations of the jail. The jail doors came open, and everybody's bonds came loose. ²⁷The jailor woke up, saw the doors of the jail open, and drew his sword to kill himself because he assumed the inmates had escaped. ²⁸But Paul yelled, "*Don't harm yourself; we're all here!*" ²⁹He asked for a light, rushed in, trembling

with fear, and fell down to Paul and Silas. ³⁰He brought them outside and said, “*What do I need to do to be saved?*”

³¹They said, “*Trust^{sg} in the Lord Jesus, and you and your family will be saved.*”

³²They spoke the Lord’s message to him and everybody in his family. ³³That hour of the night he washed their wounds, and he and his whole family were baptized right then. ³⁴He took them up to his house, set the table, and rejoiced with his family, having trusted^{pl} in God.

Acts 16:25-34

Paul Leaves Philippi

³⁵At daylight, the magistrates sent the police to release Paul and Silas.

³⁶The jailor conveyed that to Paul, “*The magistrates have sent word to release you. Now, have a good day.*”

³⁷But Paul told them, “*They beat us in public without a hearing—being Roman citizens—and threw us in jail. Now they send us away secretly? Oh no! They need to lead us out themselves.*”

³⁸The police reported that to the magistrates. They were afraid when they heard they were Roman citizens. ³⁹They came and appealed to them, brought them out, and asked them to leave the city. ⁴⁰*Paul and Silas* left the jail and went to Lydia’s house. When they’d met with the church and encouraged them, they left.

Acts 16:35-40

Paul in Thessalonica

^{17:1}They traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica. A Jewish synagogue was there. ²As usual, Paul went in and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the scriptures. ³He showed from predictions that the Messiah had to suffer and arise from the dead, and that, “*This Jesus I’m presenting to you is the Messiah.*”

⁴Some were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas—a good number of God-fearers and prominent women. ⁵The Jews got jealous and took some riffraff from the marketplace to form a mob. They set the city in an uproar and assaulted Jason’s house, intending to bring *Paul and Silas* out to the public assembly. ⁶When they didn’t find them, they dragged Jason and some *other* converts to the city authorities, shouting, “*These insurgents against the empire elsewhere have come here too. Jason has welcomed them. They act contrary to Caesar’s decrees, saying there’s another king—Jesus.*” ⁸That stirred up the crowd and the authorities, ⁹who made Jason and the rest post bond, then released them.

Acts 17:1-9

Paul in Berea

¹⁰That night their converts sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the Jews’ synagogue. ¹¹These Jews were more open-minded than the ones in Thessalonica. They welcomed the message and examined the scriptures daily to check these things out. ¹²Many of them believed, together with quite a few prominent Greek men and women.

¹³When Jews from Thessalonica heard Paul was presenting God's message in Berea, they went there, too, and upset the crowds. ¹⁴Right away the converts sent Paul away as far as the sea, but Silas and Timothy stayed. ¹⁵The ones that went with Paul conducted him to Athens and brought back word for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as they could. **Acts 17:10-15**

Paul Goes to Athens

¹⁶While Paul waited for them in Athens, seeing the city full of idols upset him. ¹⁷He reasoned with the Jews and God-fearers in the synagogues and every day with people in the marketplace. ¹⁸Some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were bantering with him, "*What's this scavenger trying to say?*" Others commented, "*He seems to be presenting strange gods*" (because he was presenting Jesus and the resurrection).

¹⁹They escorted him to the Areopagus, "*Can we know what this new teaching is you're talking about?*" ²⁰*You're bringing some strange things to us. We want to know what they mean.*" (²¹Athenians and foreign visitors typically spent their time telling or hearing something new.)

Acts 17:16-21

Paul's Sermon on the Areopagus

²²Paul stood up in the Areopagus and said,

"Athenians, I observe that you're quite religious in every way. ²³As I was looking at your objects of worship, I ran across an altar inscribed, 'To the Unknown God.' What I'm presenting to you then is what you worship without knowing him. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, is LORD of earth and sky; ²⁵so he doesn't live in handmade sanctuaries. People don't serve him as if he needs anything; he gives everybody life, breath, and everything. ²⁶He made the whole human race with one nature to live all over the world, and appointed their times when and boundaries where they live. ²⁷People are to look for God if by chance they grope around and find him, though he's not far from any of us.

Acts 17:22-27

²⁸*We live and move and exist in him, like some of your poets have said,*

'We're his offspring.'

²⁹*Since we're God's offspring, we shouldn't think of deity as like gold or silver or stone or an image made from human art and imagination. ³⁰God has overlooked the times of ignorance, but now he tells people everywhere to repent. ³¹So he has established a time to judge the world in regard to goodness as measured by the man he's appointed. He's given assurance to everybody by resurrecting him."*

³²When they heard "resurrection," some made fun of it; others said, "*We'll hear you again about this.*" ³³So Paul left them. ³⁴Some *listeners* joined him and believed. Among them was Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and some others. **Acts 17:28-34**

Paul's Ministry in Corinth

18:¹After that, he left Athens for Corinth. ²He found a Jew named Aquila, a native from Pontus, who was recently displaced from Italy with his wife Priscilla. Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. *Paul* went to them. ³Since he had the same trade, he stayed with them and worked because they were leatherworkers. ⁴He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath in an effort to persuade Jews and Greeks. **Acts 18:1-4**

⁵When Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul started devoting himself to the message. He was solemnly telling the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. ⁶When they opposed and slandered *him*, he shook *the dust from his clothes at them*, “*Your blood’s on your own heads; I’m innocent. From now on I’m going to the Gentiles.*”

⁷He moved from there to the house of Titius Justus, a God-fearer whose house was next to the synagogue. ⁸Crispus, the synagogue ruler, believed in the Lord along with his household. Many Corinthians heard and believed and were baptized. ⁹At night the Lord told Paul in a vision, “*Don’t be afraid. Speak out*” ¹⁰*because I’m with you; nobody will harm you. I have lots of people in this city.*” ¹¹For a year and a half he settled there and taught God’s message. **Acts 18:5-11**

Paul Before Gallio

¹²While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews as a group rose up against Paul and took him to the judgment seat, ¹³“*This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to our Law.*”

¹⁴Paul was about to speak up when Gallio told them, “*Jews, if it were some crime or fraud he committed, I’d have a reason to hear your case.*” ¹⁵*But if there are questions about words, names, and your Law, see to it yourselves. I’m not willing to render judgment on such things.*” ¹⁶He made them leave the judgment seat. ¹⁷The bystanders grabbed Sosthenes, the synagogue ruler, and started beating him in front of the judgment seat. Gallio didn’t concern himself with any of that. **Acts 18:12-17**

Paul Returns to Antioch

¹⁸Paul stayed quite a few more days, said goodbye to the converts, and set sail for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila. He cut his hair in Cenchrea to keep a vow. ¹⁹They arrived at Ephesus, and Paul left them there while he went into the synagogue and dialogued with the Jews. ²⁰Although they asked him to stay longer, he declined, ²¹“*I’ll come back, God willing*”; and sailed from Ephesus.

²²When he landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church and went down to Antioch. ²³After he spent some time there, he left and passed through Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening the disciples. **Acts 18:18-23**

Apollos Preaches at Ephesus

²⁴A Jew named Apollos, born in Alexandria, an eloquent speaker, arrived at Ephesus. He knew the scripture well. ²⁵He'd been orally instructed in the way of the Lord. An enthusiastic man, he was teaching accurately things about Jesus, but he only knew about John's baptism. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and presented the way of God to him more completely. ²⁷When he wanted to cross over to Greece, the disciples encouraged him and wrote letters to them to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped the ones that believed by *God's* grace. ²⁸He powerfully refuted the Jews in public and showed by the scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. **Acts 18:24-28**

Paul Enters Ephesus

19:¹While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul took the route through the higher country, and came down to Ephesus and found some disciples. ²He said, *"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"*

They said, *"We've not even heard if the Holy Spirit has come."*

³*"So, what were you baptized into?"*

"John's baptism."

⁴Paul said, *"John baptized to repentance and told the people to trust in the One that would come after him, that is, in Jesus."* ⁵When they heard that, they were baptized into the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak in languages and prophesy. ⁷There were about twelve of those men.

⁸He went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, persuading them about God's kingdom. ⁹When some started resisting and saying negative things about The Way in public, he separated the disciples from them and reasoned every day in the school of Tyrannus. ¹⁰That went on for two years, so many Jews and Gentiles in Asia heard the Lord's message.

Acts 19:1-10

The Sons of Sceva

¹¹God was doing extraordinary miracles through Paul. ¹²Even towels and aprons carried from his body made diseases go away and evil spirits come out. ¹³Some Jewish traveling exorcists tried to name the Lord Jesus over people that had evil spirits, *"I adjure you by Jesus that Paul preaches."* ¹⁴Seven sons of a Jew named Sceva, a chief priest, were doing that. ¹⁵But the evil spirit answered, *"I know Jesus, I recognize Paul, but who are you?"* ¹⁶The man with the evil spirit overpowered them all, and they fled from the house naked and injured. ¹⁷The Jews and Greeks in Ephesus all heard about it. Everyone became afraid and respected the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁸Many believers came and confessed things they'd done. ¹⁹A large number that practiced witchcraft brought their books together and burned them in public. They calculated their value at 50,000 drachmas. ²⁰That's how powerfully the Lord's message was growing.

²¹After that, Paul decided to go through Macedonia and Greece on the way to Jerusalem. *“After I’ve been there, I need to see Rome too.”* ²²He sent two aides on ahead—Timothy and Erastus, while he stayed in Asia for a while. **Acts 19:11-22**

The Riot in Ephesus

²³About that time a major disturbance came up about The Way. ²⁴A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing a thriving business to the craftsmen. ²⁵He gathered them and similar tradesmen,

“You know our livelihood depends on this craft. ²⁶You also see that in Ephesus and most of Asia this Paul has misled a sizable crowd, saying that handmade gods aren’t gods. ²⁷Our business is in danger of losing its reputation, people will discount the Temple of the great goddess Artemis, and she that Asia and the world worship will lose her grandeur.” **Acts 19:23-27**

²⁸That infuriated them, and they started shouting, *“Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”* ²⁹The city was in turmoil. They rushed into the amphitheater, dragging Gaius and Aristarchus of Macedonia, Paul’s companions. ³⁰When he wanted to go into the amphitheater, the disciples wouldn’t let him. ³¹Some Asiarchs that were friendly to him also sent word, urging him not to go into the theater. ³²Some were shouting one thing, some another. The mob descended into confusion; most didn’t know what the gathering was about. ³³Some people supposed Alexander had caused the uproar since the Jews had put him forward. He motioned with his hand to make a defense to the people. ³⁴But when they realized he was a Jew, one outcry erupted from everybody for about two hours, *“Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”* **Acts 19:28-34**

³⁵After the secretary of the city quieted the crowd, he said, *“Ephesians, who doesn’t know that Ephesus is temple keeper for the great Artemis and the image that fell from Zeus? ³⁶Since no one can deny that, you need to come to order and not do something rash. ³⁷You haven’t accused these men of committing sacrilege or blaspheming our goddess. ³⁸If Demetrius and associate craftsmen want to file suit against them, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available. They can bring charges against one another. ³⁹If you want anything else, it’ll be settled in lawful assembly. ⁴⁰We’re in danger of being charged with rioting over today’s affair because there’s no reason for it. We won’t be able to account for this uproar.”*

⁴¹He dismissed the assembly. **Acts 19:35-41**

Paul Travels Through Macedonia and Greece

20:¹After the uproar, Paul sent for the disciples. When he’d encouraged them and said goodbye, he left for Macedonia. ²After he passed through that area and encouraged them a lot, he

went to Greece³ for three months. The Jews laid a plot against him as he was getting ready to sail to Syria; so he decided to go back through Macedonia.⁴ With him were Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea; the Thessalonians Aristarchus and Secundus; Gaius of Derbe; Timothy, and the Asians Tychicus and Trophimus.⁵ They went on ahead and waited for us in Troas.⁶ After the days of Unleavened Bread, we sailed from Philippi and met them in Troas in five days and stayed seven.

Acts 20:1-6

Paul's Farewell to Troas

⁷On the first day of the week, when we got together to break bread, Paul started speaking, He intended to leave in the morning and kept speaking till midnight.⁸ Quite a few lamps were in the upstairs room where we gathered.⁹ A young man named Eutychus was sitting on the windowsill. As Paul kept speaking for a long time, Eutychus went sound asleep and fell from the third floor. They picked him up for dead.¹⁰ When Paul went down, he knelt beside him, took him in his arms, and said, *"Don't worry; he's alive."*¹¹ He went back up and broke the bread and ate. After he talked for a long time till daybreak, he went out directly like he was.¹² They brought the boy alive and were really relieved.

Acts 20:7-12

Paul Sails from Troas to Miletus

¹³We went on ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, intending to pick up Paul there. That's the arrangement he'd made; he planned to go on foot himself.¹⁴ We took him on board at Assos and went on to Mitylene.¹⁵ From there, we arrived the following day across from Chios, the next day came near Samos, and the day after that made it to Miletus.¹⁶ Paul had decided to sail on past Ephesus to keep from spending time in Asia. He was pushing to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost if he could.

Acts 20:13-16

Paul Addresses the Ephesians

¹⁷From Miletus he sent to Ephesus for the church elders.¹⁸ When they came, he said,
*"From the day I first came to Asia, you know how I operated among you.
¹⁹I served the Lord with humility, tears, and trials that came on me from plots by the Jews.
²⁰I told you everything profitable as I taught you publicly and from house to house.
²¹To Jews and Greeks I solemnly preached repentance toward God and trust in our Lord Jesus.
²²Now I'm determined to go to Jerusalem. I don't know what will happen there.
²³In every city the Holy Spirit declares that bonds and sufferings are waiting for me.
²⁴But I don't consider my life of any value to myself, so I can finish my course in the ministry I received from the Lord—to speak the good news about God's grace.*

Acts 20:17-24

²⁵“Now I’ve presented God’s kingdom among you, and I know you won’t see me again. ²⁶So I tell you today, I’m innocent of everybody’s blood. ²⁷I’ve explained to you God’s whole plan. ²⁸Pay attention to yourselves and the flock the Holy Spirit has given you to oversee. Shepherd God’s church that he bought with the blood of his own Son. ²⁹After I leave, I know fierce wolves are going to come in and not spare the flock. ³⁰Even from you, men will rise up and say perverse things to lure away disciples. ³¹So pay attention; remember that for three years day and night I warned each one with tears. ³²Now I entrust you to God and his grace. It can build you up and provide you an inheritance among the sanctified. ³³I haven’t coveted anybody’s gold, silver, or clothes. ³⁴You know these hands have provided for my needs and the ones that were with me. ³⁵In everything I’ve shown you that by working this way you should help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, ‘It’s more blessed to give than to receive.’”

³⁶Then he knelt down with them and prayed. ³⁷They began to cry out loud, hug him, and kiss him. ³⁸They grieved especially over his comment that they wouldn’t see him again. They went with him to the ship.

Acts 20:25-38

Paul Continues to Jerusalem

^{21:1}When we’d left them, we sailed directly to Cos, the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. ²We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, boarded it, and set sail. ³We came within sight of Cyprus; we passed it on the left, kept sailing to Syria, and landed at Tyre, where the ship was to unload its cargo. ⁴We looked up the disciples and stayed there a week. They kept telling Paul by the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem. ⁵When our time there was over, we started our trip. With their wives and children, they escorted us outside the city. After kneeling on the beach and praying, ⁶we said goodbye to one another. We got on the ship, and they went back home.

Acts 21:1-6

⁷When we’d finished the voyage from Tyre and to Ptolemais, we greeted the disciples and stayed with them for a day. ⁸The next day we reached Caesarea and went into the house of Philip the evangelist—one of the seven—and stayed with him. ⁹He had four virgin daughters that prophesied.

¹⁰During our several days there, a prophet from Judaea named Agabus came down. ¹¹He took Paul’s belt and tied up his own hands and feet, and said, “*This is what the Holy Spirit says, ‘The man this belt belongs to, the Jews in Jerusalem are going to tie up and deliver to Gentiles.’*” ¹²When we heard it, we and the locals urged and urged Paul not to go up.

¹³He answered, “*What are you doing, crying and breaking my heart? I’m ready to be bound and even to die in Jerusalem for the Lord Jesus.*”

¹⁴When we couldn’t change his mind, we quit trying, “*The Lord’s will be done.*”

¹⁵After those days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem ¹⁶along with some disciples from Caesarea. They took us up to Mnason of Cyprus, a long-time disciple we would stay with.

Acts 21:7-16

Paul Visits James

¹⁷The believers in Jerusalem welcomed us warmly. ¹⁸The next day Paul went in with us to see James, and the elders were there. ¹⁹After he'd greeted them, he recounted one thing after another that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰The ones that heard it, began to praise God,

"You see, how many thousands among the Jews believe, all zealous for the Law. ²¹People have told them that you teach the Jews among the Gentiles to leave Moses, not circumcise their children, or keep the customs. ²²So what can we do? They'll certainly find out you're here. ²³We have four men under a vow. ²⁴Take them and purify yourself with them; sponsor them so they'll shave their heads. Everybody will know there's nothing to what people have told them about you, but that you live orderly and keep the Law. ²⁵As to Gentile believers, we wrote that they should abstain from meat offered to idols, blood, things strangled, and sexual immorality."

²⁶The next day Paul took the men, purified himself with them, went into the Temple, and gave notice that they'd completed *their* days of purification, till the sacrifice for each one was offered.

Acts 21:17-26

Paul's Arrest in the Temple

²⁷Near the end of the seven days, Jews from Asia saw him in the Temple and stirred up the crowd and attacked him, ²⁸"Men of Jerusalem, help. This is the man that teaches everybody against the people, the Law, and this place. Now he's brought Gentiles into the Temple and profaned this holy place." ²⁹Previously they'd seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and supposed he'd taken him into the Temple. ³⁰The city erupted into an uproar. The people ran together, grabbed Paul, and dragged him out of the Temple. Immediately they shut the doors. ³¹While they were trying to kill him, a report went up to the tribune of the Roman cohort that Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³²At once he took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. When they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³³The tribune came and took him and told *the soldiers* to bind him with two chains. He began asking who he was and what he'd done. ³⁴Some in the crowd shouted one thing, some another. He couldn't find out the truth because of the uproar, so he told *the soldiers* to take him into the barracks. ³⁵When Paul got on the stairs, the soldiers carried him because of the crowd violence. ³⁶The people were following, yelling, "Away with him!"

Acts 21:27-36

Paul Speaks to the Tribune

³⁷At the entrance to the barracks, Paul said to the tribune, "*Can I speak to you?*"

He said, “You know Greek? ³⁸So you’re not the Egyptian that master-minded a revolt some time back and led the 4,000 Assassins out into the desert?”

³⁹Paul said, “I’m a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of a prominent city. Please, let me speak to the people.”

⁴⁰With his permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned to the people. After a great hush settled in, he spoke in Hebrew. Acts 21:37-40

Paul Recounts His Conversion

22:¹“Brothers and fathers, listen to my defense.” ²When they heard him speaking Hebrew, they got quieter.

³“I’m a Jew; I was born in Tarsus in Cilicia but raised in this city. I was educated under Gamaliel strictly according to the law of our ancestors and was as zealous for God as you are today. ⁴I persecuted The Way to death, binding and jailing men and women ⁵as the high priest and presbytery can confirm. I got letters to go to Damascus and bind the ones that had gone there and extradite them to Jerusalem to punish them. Acts 22:1-5

⁶As I got close to Damascus about noon, a bright light suddenly shined around me. ⁷I fell on the ground and heard a voice, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

⁸“I answered, ‘Who are you, Sir?’

‘I’m Jesus the Nazarene that you’re persecuting.’

⁹“The ones that were with me saw the light but couldn’t make out what he was saying to me.

¹⁰“I said, ‘What should I do, Lord!?’

“‘Get up and go into Damascus. Somebody there will tell you.’

¹¹“When I couldn’t see from the brilliance of that light, the ones that were with me led me by the hand into Damascus. Acts 22:6-11

¹²“A man was there named Ananias. He was devout according to the Law, a man the Jews living there vouched for. ¹³He came and stood by me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ I looked at him that very hour.

¹⁴“He said, ‘Our ancestors’ God chose you ahead of time to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear him. ¹⁵You’re to speak for him to all people about what you’ve seen and heard. ¹⁶Now why wait? Get baptized and wash your sins away, calling on him.’ Acts 22:12-16

¹⁷“When I came back to Jerusalem and was praying in the Temple, I fell into a trance, ¹⁸and saw him telling me, ‘Get out of Jerusalem now; they won’t accept your testimony about me.’

¹⁹*“I said, ‘Lord, they know that in every synagogue I was jailing people in bonds who believed in you. ²⁰When Stephen your witness shed his blood, I stood by approving and keeping the clothes for the ones that were killing him.”*

²¹*“He said, ‘Go; I’m sending you away to the Gentiles.’”* Acts 22:17-21

Responses to His Address

²²They listened that far, but then they started shouting, *“Away with such a fellow. Don’t let him live!”* ²³They started yelling and tearing their clothes and throwing dust in the air. ²⁴The tribune ordered the soldiers to bring him into the barracks and interrogate him by scourging to find out why they were shouting about him that way.

²⁵As they were stretching him out with straps, Paul said to the centurion supervising, *“Is it legal to scourge a Roman that hasn’t been condemned?”*

²⁶When the centurion heard that, he went to the tribune, *“What are you doing? This man’s a Roman!”*

²⁷The tribune came and said, *“Tell me, are you a Roman?”*

“Yes.”

²⁸He responded, *“This citizenship cost me a lot of money.”*

Paul said, *“I was born Roman.”*

²⁹At once the ones that were going to interrogate him stepped away. The tribune was worried when he found out Paul was a Roman and he’d bound him. Acts 22:22-29

Paul Before the Sanhedrin

³⁰The next day he was still wanting to know why the Jews were accusing Paul. The tribune took off Paul’s bonds and commanded the chief priests and full Sanhedrin to meet. He took Paul down and put him in front of them. **23:**¹Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin, *“Brothers, in good conscience I’ve conducted myself as a citizen toward God up to this day.”* ²Ananias the high priest commanded the ones that were standing by him to slap him in the mouth.

³Paul said, *“God’s going to slap you, you whitewashed wall! You sit judging me by the Law and command them to slap me in violation of the Law.”*

⁴The ones that were standing there said, *“You insult God’s high priest?”*

⁵Paul said, *“Brothers, I was not aware that he was a high priest. The scripture does say,*

‘Don’t say bad things about a ruler of your people’” [Ex 22:28]. Acts 22:30-23:5

⁶Knowing one part was Sadducees and the other was Pharisees, he started shouting, *“I’m a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee! I’m on trial for having hope in the resurrection!”*

⁷Dissension erupted between the Pharisees and Sadducees. ⁸Sadducees say there’s no resurrection, angel, or spirit; Pharisees profess them all. ⁹During the uproar, some scribes from

the Pharisees' party stood up, protesting violently, *"We don't find anything wrong with this man! What if a spirit or angel spoke to him?"*

¹⁰As the conflict grew, the tribune was afraid they'd tear Paul limb from limb. He commanded the troops to rescue him and bring him back into the barracks.

¹¹That night the Lord stood by him, *"Don't be afraid. As you've spoken for me in Jerusalem, you need to speak for me in Rome."* **Acts 23:6-11**

Jewish Plot to Kill Paul

¹²The next day, some Jews took a binding oath not to eat or drink till they'd killed Paul. ¹³More than 40 men instigated that plot. ¹⁴They came to the chief priests and elders, *"We've taken a binding oath not to taste anything till we've killed Paul. ¹⁵Now you and the Sanhedrin inform the tribune to bring him down as if to find out more accurately the issues about him. Before he gets close, we're prepared to kill him."*

¹⁶Paul's nephew heard about the ambush, went into the barracks, and let Paul know. ¹⁷Paul called a centurion, *"Take this young man to the tribune; he has something to tell him."*

¹⁸He took him to the tribune, *"The prisoner Paul asked me to bring you this young man. He has something to tell you."*

¹⁹The tribune took his hand and withdrew privately, *"What do you have to report?"*

²⁰*"Some Jews have agreed together to ask you to take Paul down into the Sanhedrin tomorrow as if to ask something more accurately about him. ²¹Don't let them persuade you. More than 40 of them are lying in ambush. They've taken an oath not to eat or drink till they've killed him. They're ready now and waiting for your promise."*

²²The tribune let him go, *"Don't tell anybody you told me about this."* **Acts 23:12-22**

²³He called 2 centurions, *"Get 200 soldiers ready, 75 cavalymen, and 200 infantrymen to leave for Caesarea at 9:00 tonight. ²⁴Provide mounts to deliver Paul safely to Felix the governor."*

²⁵He wrote a letter to this effect:

²⁶*"Claudius Lysias to most excellent Governor Felix.*

²⁷*The Jews arrested this man and were trying to kill him when I came on them with troops and rescued him, when I discovered he was a Roman citizen. ²⁸To learn why they were accusing him, I took him down into their Sanhedrin. ²⁹I found out they were accusing him about questions in their Law, not about anything that deserves bonds or death. ³⁰I was informed about a plot against him and sent him to you at once. I have instructed his accusers to bring charges against him in your hearing."* **Acts 23:23-30**

Paul Sent to Caesarea

³¹So the soldiers took Paul to Antipatris during the night. ³²The next day they left the cavalymen to go with him the rest of the way while they came back to the barracks. ³³When they got to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. ³⁴After he read it, he asked what province he was from. When he learned he was from Cilicia, ³⁵he said, *“I’ll give you^{sg} a hearing when your accusers get here.”* He gave orders to keep Paul in Herod’s Praetorium. Acts 23:31-35

Paul’s Accusers Come

24:¹Five days later, the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and an orator, Tertullus. They brought charges to the governor against Paul. ²After Felix called for Paul, Tertullus began accusing him to the governor,

“We’ve experienced considerable peace because of you, and your foresight has led to reforms for this nation. ³With gratitude we welcome them, most excellent Felix, in every way and everywhere. ⁴But not to detain you further, kindly grant us a brief hearing. ⁵We’ve found this man a troublemaker, who stirs up Jews all over the empire, the ringleader of a sect, the Nazarenes. ⁶He even tried to desecrate the Temple, and we arrested him. [⁷]^{ms} ⁸You can question him yourself and find out the things we’re accusing him of.”

⁹The Jews joined in the attack, claiming those things were so.

Acts 24:1-9

Paul’s Defense Before Felix

¹⁰When the governor nodded to him, Paul spoke:

“I know that for many years you’ve judged this nation, so I’m glad to make my own defense about these claims. ¹¹You can learn that not more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. ¹²They didn’t find me debating or attacking anybody in the Temple, in the synagogues, or in the city. ¹³They can’t prove to you any of these accusations. ¹⁴I do admit that according to The Way, which they’re calling a ‘sect,’ I serve our ancestors’ God, and believe everything written in the Law and the Prophets. ¹⁵In God I have a hope these men themselves share, that the just and unjust will resurrect.” Acts 24:10-15

¹⁶*I always do my best to have a clear conscience toward God and other people. ¹⁷After some years I was bringing offerings and charitable gifts to my nation. ¹⁸In that connection they found me in the Temple, not with a crowd or making a disturbance. ¹⁹Some Jews from Asia—they should be here to raise accusation if they have anything against me. ²⁰Or, let these men specify what they*

found wrong with me when I stood in the Sanhedrin—²¹other than I shouted, ‘I’m being judged today about the resurrection from the dead!’” Acts 24:16-21

Paul Kept in Custody

²²Because he knew more accurately about The Way, Felix put them off, *“When Lysias the tribune comes down, I’ll decide your case.”* ²³He ordered the centurion to keep him in custody but give him some freedom and let his friends help him.

²⁴After some time, Felix with Drusilla his wife, a Jewess, sent for Paul and was listening to him about faith in Jesus the Messiah. ²⁵As he talked about right living, self-control, and judgment to come, Felix became uneasy, *“Go away for now; I’ll call you when I have time.”*

²⁶Besides, he was hoping Paul would give him a bribe; so he would send for him often and talk to him.

²⁷After two years, Porcius Festus succeeded Felix. To gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul behind in prison. Acts 24:22-27

Paul’s Appeal to Caesar

^{25:1}Festus arrived in the province and after three days went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. ²The chief priests and leading men of the Jews filed charges against Paul. ³They were demanding a favor against him—to call him to Jerusalem (laying an ambush along the way). ⁴Festus answered that he would keep Paul in Caesarea and that he himself was going there soon. ⁵*“Have qualified men come down with me and prosecute him if something’s wrong with him.”*

Acts 25:1-5

⁶Eight or ten days later, he went down to Caesarea. The next day he sat on the judgment seat and commanded to bring Paul. ⁷When he arrived, the Jews from Jerusalem stood around him and brought many serious accusations they couldn’t prove.

⁸Paul spoke on his own behalf, *“I haven’t done anything against the Law of the Jews, the Temple, or Caesar.”*

⁹Felix wanted to do the Jews a favor, so he asked Paul, *“Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial in front of me there about these matters?”*

¹⁰Paul said, *“I’m standing at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I should be judged. I’ve not done anything against the Jews, as you very well know. ¹¹If I’m guilty of something that deserves death, I’m willing to die. But, if there’s nothing to these accusations, nobody can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar.”*

¹²Festus conferred with the council and said, *“You’ve appealed to Caesar; you’ll go to Caesar.”* Acts 25:6-12

Festus Presents Paul’s Case to Agrippa

¹³Several days later, King *Herod Agrippa II* and Bernice arrived in Caesarea and greeted Festus. ¹⁴When they'd spent several days there, Festus presented Paul's case to the king,

"Felix left a prisoner behind. ¹⁵When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews filed charges against him and asked for his condemnation.

¹⁶I told them that Roman law doesn't hand anyone over till the accused meets the accusers and has a chance to defend himself. ¹⁷After they assembled here, I didn't lose any time. The next day I sat on the judgment seat and had the man brought in. ¹⁸The accusers stood up and started bringing accusations against him that weren't like the crimes I'd supposed. ¹⁹They disagreed with him about their religion and about a dead Jesus that Paul claimed was alive. ²⁰Uncertain what to do with the controversy, I asked if he'd go to Jerusalem and stand trial on these things. ²¹When he appealed to Caesar, I commanded that he be held in custody till I sent him up to Caesar."

²²Agrippa said, "I've been wanting to hear him myself. Tomorrow I will." **Acts 25:13-22**

²³The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and went into the auditorium with the tribunes and prominent men of the city. Festus commanded to bring Paul.

²⁴Festus said,

"King Agrippa and you^{pl} that are here with us, you see this man that the Jews in Jerusalem and here have appealed to me about, shouting that he has to die. ²⁵I didn't find that he'd committed any capital offense. Since he appealed to Caesar, I decided to send him. ²⁶I don't have anything definite to write to my superior; so I've brought him to you^{pl}, especially you, King Agrippa, to have something to write after this investigation. ²⁷It doesn't make sense to send a prisoner without specifying the charges." **Acts 25:23-27**

Paul's Defense Before Agrippa

26:¹Agrippa said to Paul, "You can speak for yourself."

Paul stretched out his hand,

²*"In light of the things the Jews accused me of, King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to present my own defense today, ³especially since you're familiar with Jewish customs and issues. So please listen patiently.*

⁴*The Jews know my way of life from my youth, which I spent in my own nation in Jerusalem. ⁵If they're willing to admit it, they know I lived before as a Pharisee, the strictest sect of our religion. ⁶Now I stand in judgment for having hope in God's promise to our ancestors. ⁷Our twelve tribes sincerely hope to obtain that promise as they serve God every day. In regard to that hope, the Jews are accusing me. ⁸Why do you^{pl} consider it unbelievable that God raises the*

dead? ⁹At one time I thought I needed to do a lot of things against Jesus the Nazarene. ¹⁰That's what I did in Jerusalem. Not only did I lock up many saints in jail with authority from the chief priests; but when they were being sentenced to execution, I voted against them. ¹¹I punished them often in every synagogue and tried to make them blaspheme. I was insanely furious and persecuted them even to foreign cities.

Acts 26:1-11

The Third Account of Paul's Conversion

¹²"In that effort, I was traveling to Damascus with authority from the chief priests. ¹³In the middle of the day, King Agrippa, I saw a light from the sky brighter than the sun, shining around me and the ones that were with me. ¹⁴When we'd fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking in Hebrew, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It's hard for you to keep kicking against the goads.'

¹⁵"I said, 'Who are you, Sir?'

"I'm Jesus that you're persecuting. ¹⁶Get up. I've appeared to you to appoint you as a witness to what you've seen and what I'll show you. ¹⁷I'll protect you from the people and from the Gentiles, where I'm sending you. ¹⁸Open their eyes so they'll turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, so they'll receive forgiveness and an inheritance among the ones that become holy by trusting in me."

¹⁹"So, King Agrippa, I obeyed the heavenly vision. ²⁰First to the people in Damascus, Jerusalem, and Judaea, then to the Gentiles, I continually declared they should repent toward God and do what's appropriate to repentance. ²¹That's why some Jews grabbed me in the Temple and tried to murder me. ²²I've obtained help from God till today and speak to small and great simply what the Prophets and Moses said would happen: ²³the Messiah needed to suffer, and by resurrection he would present light first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles."

Acts 26:12-23

Paul Appeals to Agrippa to Believe

²⁴While Paul was delivering his defense, Festus shouted, "Paul, your extensive learning is driving you crazy!"

²⁵"I'm not crazy, most excellent Festus; I'm speaking sensible truth. ²⁶The king that I'm confidently speaking to, knows about these matters. I'm sure none of it has escaped his attention; it didn't happen off in a corner somewhere. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."

²⁸Agrippa said, "With a little urging are you trying to persuade me to become a Christian?"

²⁹Paul said, *“I wish to God, whether by little or much, you and everybody listening today would become like me except for these bonds.”*

³⁰The king, the governor, Bernice, and those sitting with them got up. ³¹When they’d gone aside, they said to one another, *“He hasn’t done anything that deserves bonds or death.”*

³²Agrippa told Festus, *“He could’ve been released if he hadn’t appealed to Caesar.”*

Acts 26:24-32

Paul’s Voyage to Rome

^{27:1}When they decided we would sail to Italy, they turned Paul and some other prisoners over to Julius, a centurion of the Augustan cohort. ²We boarded a ship out of Adramyttium, ready to sail to places along the coast of Asia. We put out to sea along with Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. ³The next day we harbored at Sidon. Julius was nice to Paul and let him go to friends and refresh himself. ⁴We launched from there and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were against us. ⁵After we navigated the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. ⁶The centurion found an Alexandrian ship there that was sailing for Italy and put us on board. ⁷For a number of days, we sailed slowly, and barely made it to Cnidus. Since the wind didn’t let us sail under the shelter of Crete along Salmone, ⁸we drifted along it with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens near the city of Lasea.

⁹When considerable time had passed and the voyage was getting risky—even the Fast [*Yom Kippur*] was past, Paul started advising them, ¹⁰*“Men, I sense the voyage will involve damage and considerable loss of cargo, the ship, and our lives.”* ¹¹But the centurion listened more to the captain and the ship owner than to Paul. ¹²Because the harbor wasn’t suitable for wintering, the majority decided to sail from there if they could just get to Phoenix—a harbor at Crete facing southwest and northwest—and winter there.

Acts 27:1-12

The Storm at Sea

¹³When a gentle breeze came up, they supposed they’d achieved their purpose. They weighed anchor and started sailing along Crete as close to shore as they could. ¹⁴But not long afterwards, a nor’easter called Euraquilo rushed down from land ¹⁵and caught the ship. It couldn’t face the gale; so we gave way to it and scudded along. ¹⁶We ran under a small island called Cauda and were barely able to secure the dinghy. ¹⁷After they hoisted it up, they used cables to gird up the ship. They were afraid they might run aground on Syrtis, so they let down the sail and drifted along. ¹⁸The next day, the storm tossed us violently, and *the crew* began to throw cargo overboard*. ¹⁹The third day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard by hand. ²⁰When the sun and stars didn’t appear for several days, and the monstrous storm bore down on us, we lost all hope of surviving.

Acts 27:13-20

²¹When they’d gone a long time without eating, Paul stood up among them,

“Men, you should’ve listened to me and not sailed from Crete and incurred this damage and loss. ²²Now I urge you to take heart. There won’t be any loss of life, just the ship. ²³Last night an angel of the God I serve stood by me, ²⁴‘Don’t be afraid, Paul; you need to stand in front of Caesar, and God has granted you everybody that’s sailing with you.’ ²⁵So take heart; I believe it will turn out like he said, ²⁶but we have to run aground on an island.” Acts 27:21-26

²⁷The fourteenth night, the storm was driving us around in the *Sea of Hadria*. About midnight the sailors sensed we were nearing land, ²⁸so they took a sounding and found the depth was 120 feet. A little farther on, another sounding showed 90 feet. ²⁹Fearing we might run aground on a rocky coast, they cast four anchors out the stern and longed for daylight. ³⁰The sailors tried to jump ship by lowering its dinghy into the water on the pretense of laying out anchors from the bow. ³¹Paul told the centurion and *his* soldiers, *“If those sailors don’t stay on the ship, you^{pl} won’t make it.”* ³²The soldiers cut the ropes to the dinghy and let it fall off.

³³At early dawn, Paul started urging everybody to eat, *“Today makes two weeks you’ve been on edge, not eating. ³⁴Eat for your survival. Not a hair of your head will perish.”*

³⁵When he’d said that, he took a loaf, thanked God in front of them all, broke it up, and starting eating. ³⁶They took heart and started eating too. ³⁷There were 276 of us on board. ³⁸When they’d eaten enough, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat overboard.

Acts 27:27-38

The Shipwreck on Malta

³⁹When it got daylight, they didn’t recognize the land, but they noticed a creek with a beach. They decided, if possible, to save the ship. ⁴⁰They cut the anchors loose and left them in the sea. At the same time, they took loose the ropes of the rudders, hoisted the foresail to the wind, and headed for the beach. ⁴¹But they struck a mud bar where two currents met. The prow stuck fast and wouldn’t budge, and the force of the waves started tearing the stern apart. ⁴²The soldiers intended to kill the prisoners so none of them could swim away and escape. ⁴³But the centurion wanted to take Paul safely through and stopped them. He told the ones that could swim to jump overboard and get to land first. ⁴⁴The rest would float there on planks or items from the ship. That way everybody got to shore.

Acts 27:39-44

Paul’s Winter Stay on Malta

28:¹When we’d made it safely, we learned the island was Malta. ²The locals were especially nice to us and received us all. Because of the rain and cold that had set in, they built a fire. ³When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a snake came out of the wood from the heat and fastened on his hand. ⁴The locals saw it and said to one another, *“He*

must be a murderer that survived the sea, but Justice didn't let live."⁵He shook it loose into the fire and wasn't harmed. ⁶They were expecting him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after a good while not seeing anything unusual, they started saying he was a god.

⁷Around that place were lands that belonged to Publius, the Principal in the island. He welcomed us and entertained us for three days. ⁸His father lay sick with dysentery and bouts of fever. Paul went in to see him, prayed, laid hands on him, and healed him. ⁹After that, other sick people on the island started coming to be healed. ¹⁰They greatly honored us; and *later*, when we set sail, they put on board what we needed. Acts 28:1-10

Paul's Arrival in Rome

¹¹After three months, we sailed on an Alexandrian ship that had wintered on the island—it had The Twin Brothers (Dioscuri/Twin Sons of Zeus) as its figurehead. ¹²We harbored at Syracuse for three days, ¹³then sailed around to Rhegium. A day later, a south wind came up, and the second day we made it to Puteoli. ¹⁴We found disciples there, who invited us to stay with them for a week. And so we got to Rome. ¹⁵From there disciples heard about us and came to meet us as far as Three Taverns and The Forum of Appius. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took heart. ¹⁶When we went into Rome, *the centurion* let Paul stay by himself with a soldier guarding him. Acts 28:11-16

Paul's Witness in Rome

¹⁷Three days later he called together the Jewish leaders,

"Brothers, though I hadn't done anything against the people or the customs of the forefathers, the Jews delivered me to the Romans as a prisoner from Jerusalem. ¹⁸The Romans examined me and were willing to release me because there wasn't any reason to execute me. ¹⁹When the Jews objected, I had to appeal to Caesar, though I didn't have anything against my nation. ²⁰I asked to speak to you because I'm wearing this chain on account of Israel's hope."

²¹They said, *"We haven't received any letters about you from the Jews, and none of the brothers have come to report anything bad about you. ²²We do want to hear what you think, because we know that people everywhere speak against this sect."* Acts 28:17-22

²³On a day they appointed him, quite a number came to where he roomed. From morning to evening, from the Law of Moses and the Prophets, he talked about God's kingdom and made efforts to persuade them about Jesus. ²⁴What he said persuaded some, but not others. ²⁵When they disagreed with each other, they left at Paul's one comment,

"The Holy Spirit described your ancestors well in Isaiah the prophet,

²⁶*'Tell this people,*

"You certainly hear, but don't understand;

you certainly see, but don't perceive
²⁷*because you've become insensitive;*
you're hard of hearing, and
you've closed your eyes
so you don't see or hear,
understand or change
so I can heal you''' [Is 6:9-10].

²⁸*Understand, then, that God has sent this salvation to the Gentiles; they'll*
listen." [²⁹]^{ms} Acts 28:23-29

Paul's Two-Year Imprisonment in Rome

³⁰For two whole years Paul stayed in his own rented quarters and received everyone that came to him. ³¹He presented God's kingdom without interference and taught boldly about the Lord Jesus as the Messiah. Acts 28:30-31

Translator: Virgil Warren

christir.org