1:1 In my first book, O Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach,

1:2 until the day He was taken up [to heaven], after giving instructions through [the] Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen.

1:3 After His suffering, He presented Himself to [them] with many convincing proofs [that] He was alive. He appeared to them over [a span ] of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

1:4 And when they were gathered together, He commanded them: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the [gift] the Father promised, which you have heard Me [ discuss ].

1:5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with [the] Holy Spirit.”

1:6 So [when] they came together, they asked Him, “Lord, {will You} at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

1:7 [Jesus] replied, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority.

1:8 But you will receive power [when] the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to [the] ends of the earth.�

1:9 [After] He had said this, they watched as He was taken up, and a cloud hid Him from their sight.

1:10 They were looking intently into the sky as He was going, [when] suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

1:11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand [here] looking into the sky? This [same] Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.”

1:12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from [the] Mount of Olives, which is near [the city], a Sabbath day’s journey away.

1:13 When they arrived, they went to the upper room where they were staying: Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James [son] of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas [son] of James.

1:14 With one accord they all continued in prayer, along with [the] women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

1:15 In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (a gathering of about a hundred [and] twenty) [and] said,

1:16 “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit foretold through [the] mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus.

1:17 He was one of our number and was allotted a share in this ministry.”

1:18 ( With [the] reward of [his] wickedness [Judas] bought a field, and falling headlong, he burst open in [the] middle and all his intestines spilled out.

1:19 [This] became known to everyone living in Jerusalem; so they called that field in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

1:20 “For it is written in [the] book of Psalms: ‘{May} his dwelling be deserted; let there be no [one] to live in it,’ and, ‘{May} another take his office.’

1:21 Therefore it is necessary [to select] one of the men who have accompanied us [the] whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

1:22 beginning from John’s baptism until the day [Jesus] was taken up from us. [For] one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

1:23 [So] they proposed two [men]: Joseph called Barsabbas ( [also] known as Justus) and Matthias.

1:24 And they prayed, “Lord, You know everyone’s heart. Show [us] which of these two You have chosen

1:25 to assume this ministry and apostleship, which Judas abandoned to go to his [rightful] place.”

1:26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; [so] he was added to the eleven apostles.

2:1 [When] the day of Pentecost came, [the believers] were all together in one [place].

2:2 Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

2:3 They saw tongues like flames of a fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

2:4 And they {were} all filled with [the] Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

2:5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

2:6 And [when] this sound rang out, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking [his] own language.

2:7 In wonder and amazement, they asked, “Are not all these [men] who are speaking Galileans?

2:8 How is it then that each of us hears [them] in his own native language?

2:9 Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

2:10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome,

2:11 both Jews and converts to Judaism; Cretans and Arabs— we hear them declaring the mighty works of God [in] our own tongues!”

2:12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

2:13 But others mocked [them] [and] said, “They are drunk on new wine!”

2:14 Then Peter stood up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and addressed [the crowd]: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen carefully to my words.

2:15 These [men] are not drunk as you suppose. It is [only the] third hour of the day!

2:16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

2:17 ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people; your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

2:18 Even on My servants, [both men] and [women], I will pour out My Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

2:19 I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and clouds of smoke.

2:20 The sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming [of the] great and glorious day of [the] Lord.

2:21 And everyone who calls on the name of [the] Lord will be saved.’

2:22 Men of Israel, listen to this message: Jesus of Nazareth [was] a man certified by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know.

2:23 He was handed over by God’s set plan and foreknowledge, {and you}, by the hands of the lawless, put [Him] to death by nailing [Him] to the cross.

2:24 [But] God raised Him from the dead, releasing [Him] from the agony of death, because it was impossible [for] Him to be held in its [clutches].

2:25 David says about Him: ‘I saw the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

2:26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope,

2:27 because You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor will You let Your Holy One see decay.

2:28 You have made known to me [the] paths of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence.’

2:29 Brothers, I can tell you with confidence that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

2:30 [But] he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that He would place [one] of [his descendants] on his throne.

2:31 Foreseeing this, [David] spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that He was not abandoned to Hades, nor {did] His body see decay.

2:32 God has raised this Jesus {to life}, to which we are all witnesses.

2:33 Exalted, then, to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit [and] has poured out what you now see and hear.

2:34 For David {did} not ascend into heaven, but he himself says: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand,

2:35 until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”’

2:36 Therefore {let} all Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ!”

2:37 [When] [the people] heard [this], they were cut to the heart and asked Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

2:38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

2:39 [This] promise belongs to you and to your children and to all who [are] far off, to all whom [the] Lord our God will call to Himself.”

2:40 With many other words he testified, and he urged them, “Be saved from this corrupt generation.”

2:41 Those who embraced his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added [ to the believers ] that day.

2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

2:43 A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs.

2:44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.

2:45 Selling [their] possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need.

2:46 With one accord they continued [to meet] daily in the temple [courts] and to break bread from house [to house], sharing [their] meals with gladness and sincerity of heart,

2:47 praising God and enjoying [the] favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

3:1 [ One afternoon ] Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth [hour].

3:2 And a man who was lame from birth was being carried [to] the temple gate called Beautiful, [where] he was put every day to beg from those entering the temple courts.

3:3 [When] he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he asked [them] for money.

3:4 Peter looked directly at him, as [did] John. “Look at us!” said [Peter].

3:5 [So] [the man] gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

3:6 But Peter said, “Silver [or] gold I do not have, but what I have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!�

3:7 Taking him by the right hand, [Peter] helped him up, and at once [the man’s] feet and ankles were strengthened.

3:8 He sprang to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple [courts], walking and leaping and praising God.

3:9 [When] all the people saw him walking and praising God,

3:10 they recognized him [as] the [man] who used to sit [begging] at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

3:11 [While] [the man] clung to Peter and John, all the people were astonished [and] ran to them in the [walkway] called Solomon’s Colonnade.

3:12 [When] Peter saw [this], he addressed the people: “Men of Israel, why are you surprised by this? Why do you stare at us as if by [our] own power or godliness [we] had made [this man] walk?

3:13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus. You handed [Him over] and rejected [Him] before Pilate, [even though] he had decided to release [Him].

3:14 You rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.

3:15 You killed the Author of life, [but] God raised [Him] from [the] dead, [and] we are witnesses of [the fact].

3:16 By faith in [the] name of Jesus, this [man] whom you see and know has been made strong. [It is Jesus’] name and the faith that [comes] through Him [that] has given him this complete healing in your presence.

3:17 And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as [did] your leaders.

3:18 But in this way [God] has fulfilled what [He] foretold through all the prophets, [saying that] His Christ would suffer.

3:19 Repent, then, and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped away,

3:20 that times of refreshing may come from [the] presence of the Lord, and [that] He may send Jesus, [the] Christ, who has been appointed for you.

3:21 Heaven must take Him in until [the] time [comes] for [the] restoration of all things, which God announced long ago through His holy prophets.

3:22 For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to Him in everything He tells you.

3:23 Everyone who does not heed [ His words ] will be completely cut off from among the people.’

3:24 Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have proclaimed these days.

3:25 [And] you are sons of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers, [when] He said to Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed.�

3:26 [When] God raised up His servant, He sent Him first to you to bless you by turning each [of you] from your wicked ways.”

4:1 [While Peter and John] were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them,

4:2 greatly disturbed that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of [the] dead.

4:3 They seized [Peter and John], and because it was already evening, they put [them] in custody until the next day.

4:4 But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

4:5 The next day [the] rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem,

4:6 along with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and many others from the high priest’s family.

4:7 They had [Peter and John] {brought} in [and] began to question them: “By what power or what name {did} you do this?”

4:8 Then Peter, filled with [the] Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people!

4:9 If we are being examined today about a kind service [to a] man [who was] lame, [to determine] how he was healed,

4:10 [then] let this be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel: [It is] by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified [but] whom God raised from [the] dead, [that] this [man] stands before you healed.

4:11 [He] is ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become [the] cornerstone.’

4:12 Salvation exists in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

4:13 [When] they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and recognized that they had been with Jesus.

4:14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing [there] with them, they had nothing to say in response.

4:15 So they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin [and] then conferred together.

4:16 “What shall we do with these men?” they asked. “[It] is clear to everyone living [in] Jerusalem that a remarkable miracle has occurred through them, and we cannot deny [it].

4:17 But to keep [this message] from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.”

4:18 Then they called them in [again] and commanded [them] not to speak [or] teach at all in the name of Jesus.

4:19 But Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to listen to you rather than God.

4:20 For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

4:21 [So] [the Council members] threatened them further [and] let them go. They could not find a way to punish them, because {all} the people were glorifying God for what had happened.

4:22 For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years [old].

4:23 On their release, [Peter and John] returned to [their] own people and reported everything that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

4:24 [When] [the believers] heard this, they lifted up [their] voices to God with one accord. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “You made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them.

4:25 [You] spoke by [the] Holy Spirit through [the] mouth of Your servant, our father David: ‘Why {do} the nations rage, and [the] peoples plot in vain?

4:26 The kings of the earth take [their] stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His Anointed One.’

4:27 In fact, this [is] the very city [where] Herod and Pontius Pilate conspired with [the] Gentiles and [the] people of Israel against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed.

4:28 They carried out what Your hand and purpose had decided beforehand would happen.

4:29 And now, Lord, consider their threats, and enable Your servants to speak Your word with complete boldness,

4:30 as You stretch out Your hand to heal and [perform] signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.”

4:31 [After] they had prayed, [their] meeting place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

4:32 The congregation of believers was one [in] heart and soul. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they owned.

4:33 [With] great power, the apostles continued to give [their] testimony about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And abundant grace was upon them all.

4:34 There were no needy ones among them, because those who owned lands or houses would sell [ their property ], bring the proceeds from [the] sales,

4:35 and lay [them] at the apostles’ feet for distribution [to] anyone as he had need.

4:36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas ( meaning Son of Encouragement),

4:37 sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid [it] at the apostles’ feet.

5:1 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, [also] sold a piece of property.

5:2 [With] [his] wife’s full knowledge, he kept back [some] of the proceeds [for himself], [but] brought a portion [and] laid [it] at the apostles’ feet.

5:3 Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and withhold [some] of the proceeds from the land?

5:4 Did it not belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, was it [not] at [your] disposal? How could you conceive such a deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God!”

5:5 On hearing these words, Ananias fell down [and] died. And great fear came over all who heard [what had happened].

5:6 Then the young [men] stepped forward, wrapped up his [body], and carried [him] out [and] buried [him].

5:7 About three hours later his wife also came in, unaware of what had happened.

5:8 “Tell me,” said Peter, “[is this] the price you [and your husband ] got for the land?” “Yes,” she answered, “that is the price.”

5:9 “How could you agree to test the Spirit of [the] Lord?” Peter [replied]. “Look, the feet of the [men who] buried your husband [are] at the door, and they will carry you out [also].”

5:10 At that instant she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young [men] came in [and] found her dead. [So] they carried [her] out [and] buried [her] beside her husband.

5:11 And great fear came over the whole church and all who heard about these [events].

5:12 The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people, and with one accord [the believers gathered together] in Solomon’s Colonnade.

5:13 Although the people regarded them highly, no one else dared to join them.

5:14 Yet more and more believers were brought to the Lord— large numbers of both men and women.

5:15 As a result, [people] brought the sick into the streets and laid [them] on cots and mats, so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by.

5:16 Crowds also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing [the] sick and [those] tormented by unclean spirits, [and] all [of them] were healed.

5:17 Then the high priest and all his associates (who belonged to the party of the Sadducees) rose up with jealousy.

5:18 They arrested the apostles and put them in [the] public jail.

5:19 But during the night an angel of [the] Lord opened the doors of the jail [and] brought them out, saying,

5:20 “Go, stand in the temple courts [and] tell the people the full message of this [new] life.”

5:21 At daybreak, [the apostles] entered the temple courts as they had been told and began to teach [the people]. [When] the high priest and his associates arrived in the Council, they called together the full assembly of the elders of Israel, and sent to the jail [for] [the apostles].

5:22 But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them [there]. [So] they returned with the report:

5:23 “We found the jail securely locked, [with] the guards posted at the doors; but when we opened [them], we found no one inside.”

5:24 [When] the captain of the temple [guard] and the chief priests heard this account, they were perplexed as to what was happening.

5:25 Then someone came in [and] announced, “Look, the men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts, teaching the people!”

5:26 At that point, the captain went with the officers [and] brought [the apostles]— [but] not by force, for fear the people would stone [them].

5:27 They brought them in [and] made [them] stand before the Sanhedrin, [where] the high priest interrogated them.

5:28 “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us responsible for this man’s blood.”

5:29 But Peter and the other apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than men.

5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging [Him] on a tree.

5:31 God exalted Him to His right hand [as] Prince and Savior, [ in order ] to grant repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

5:32 We are witnesses of these things, and so [is] the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

5:33 When [the Council members] heard this, they were enraged and wanted to put [the apostles] to death.

5:34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin [and] ordered that the men be put outside for a short time.

5:35 “Men of Israel,” he said, “consider carefully what you are about to do to these men.

5:36 Some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, [and] about four hundred men joined [him]. [He] was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing.

5:37 After [him], Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and drew away people after him. He too perished, and all his followers were scattered.

5:38 So in the present [case] I advise you: Leave these men {alone}. Let them go! For if [their] purpose or endeavor is of human origin, it will fail.

5:39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God.”

5:40 At this, they yielded to [Gamaliel]. They called the apostles [in] and had them flogged. Then they ordered [them] not to speak in the name of Jesus, [and] released [them].

5:41 [The apostles] left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

5:42 Every day, in the temple [courts] and from house [to house], they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus [is] the Christ.

6:1 In those days [when] the disciples were increasing in number, the Grecian [Jews] began to grumble against the Hebraic [Jews], because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution [ of food ].

6:2 So the Twelve summoned all the disciples [and] said, “It is unacceptable [for] us to neglect the word of God [in order] to wait on tables.

6:3 Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men confirmed to be full of [the] Spirit and wisdom. We will appoint this responsibility [to them]

6:4 and devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

6:5 [This] proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and [of the] Holy Spirit, as well as Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

6:6 They presented [these seven] to the apostles, [who] prayed [and] laid [their] hands on them.

6:7 [So] the word of God continued to spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem grew rapidly, and a great number of priests became obedient to the faith.

6:8 Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

6:9 But resistance arose from what was known as [the] Synagogue of the Freedmen, including Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and men from [the provinces of] Cilicia and Asia. They began to argue with Stephen,

6:10 [but] they could not stand up to [his] wisdom [or] the Spirit by whom he spoke.

6:11 Then they prompted [some] men to say, “We heard [Stephen] speak words of blasphemy against Moses and [against] God.”

6:12 [So] they stirred up the people and elders and scribes. They seized [Stephen] and brought [him] before the Sanhedrin.

6:13 They presented FALSE witnesses [who] said, “This man never stops speaking against this holy place and [against] the Law.

6:14 For we have heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us.”

6:15 All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at [Stephen], [and] they saw that his face [was] like [the] face of an angel.

7:1 Then the high priest asked [Stephen], “Are these [charges] true?”

7:2 And [Stephen] declared: “Brothers and fathers, listen [to me]! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was [still] in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,

7:3 and told him, ‘Leave your country and your kindred and go to the land I will show you.’

7:4 [So] [Abraham] left [the] land of the Chaldeans [and] settled in Haran. After his father died, [God] brought him out of that place, into this land where you {are} now living.

7:5 He gave him no inheritance [here], not even a foot of ground. [But] [God] promised to give possession of [the land] to [Abraham] and his descendants, [even though] he did not yet have a child.

7:6 God told [him] that his descendants would be foreigners in a strange land, and they would be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.

7:7 ‘[But] I will punish the nation [that] enslaves them,’ God said, ‘and afterward they will come forth and worship Me in this place.’

7:8 Then [God] gave [Abraham] [the] covenant of circumcision, and [Abraham] became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day. And Isaac [became the father of] Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

7:9 [Because] the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him

7:10 and rescued him from all his troubles. [He] granted [Joseph] favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt, [who] appointed him ruler over Egypt and all his household.

7:11 Then famine and great suffering swept across Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers could not find food.

7:12 [When] Jacob heard that [there] was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers [on their] first [visit].

7:13 On [their] second [visit], Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, and [his] family became known to Pharaoh.

7:14 Then Joseph sent for his father Jacob and all [his] relatives, seventy-five in all.

7:15 [So] Jacob went down to Egypt, [where] he and our fathers died.

7:16 [Their bones] were carried back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a price he paid in silver.

7:17 As the time drew near for God [to fulfill] His promise to Abraham, [our] people in Egypt increased greatly in number.

7:18 Then another king, who knew nothing of Joseph, arose over Egypt.

7:19 He exploited our people [and] oppressed our fathers, forcing [them] to abandon their infants so they would die.

7:20 At that time Moses was born, and he was beautiful in the sight of God. [For] three months [he] was nurtured in [his] father’s house.

7:21 [When] he was set outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him and brought him up as her own son.

7:22 So Moses was educated in all [the] wisdom of [the] Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

7:23 When [Moses] [was] forty years [old], he decided to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel.

7:24 And when he saw one [of them] being wronged, [Moses] went to his defense and avenged [him] by striking down the Egyptian who was oppressing [him].

7:25 He assumed his brothers would understand that God was using him to deliver them, but [they did not].

7:26 The next day he came upon [two Israelites who] were fighting, and he tried to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers. Why are you mistreating one another?’

7:27 But the [man who] was abusing [his] neighbor pushed [Moses] aside [and] said, ‘Who made you ruler and judge over us?

7:28 {Do} you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’

7:29 At this remark, Moses fled to [the] land of Midian, where he lived as a foreigner [and] had two sons.

7:30 [After] forty years had passed, an angel appeared to [Moses] in [the] flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai.

7:31 [When] Moses saw [it], he marveled at the sight. [As] he approached to look [more closely], [the] voice of [the] Lord came [to him]:

7:32 ‘I [am] the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’ Moses trembled with fear [and] did not dare to look.

7:33 Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off [your] sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.

7:34 I have indeed seen the oppression of My people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.�

7:35 This Moses, whom they had rejected with the words, ‘Who made you ruler and judge?’ [is] the one God sent to be [their] ruler and redeemer, through [the] angel who appeared to him in the bush.

7:36 [He] led them out [and] performed wonders and signs in [the] land of Egypt, at [the] Red Sea, and [for] forty years in the wilderness.

7:37 This is the [same] Moses who told the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your [own] brothers.’

7:38 [He] was in the assembly in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and [with] our fathers. [And] he received living words to pass on to us.

7:39 [But] our fathers refused to obey [him]. Instead, they rejected [him] and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.

7:40 They said to Aaron, ‘Make us gods who will go before us! As for this Moses who led us out of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.’

7:41 At that time they made a calf and offered a sacrifice to the idol, rejoicing in the works of their hands.

7:42 But God turned away [from them] and gave them over to the worship of the heavenly bodies, as it is written in [the] book of the prophets: ‘Did you offer Me slain beasts and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?

7:43 You took along the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. [Therefore] I will carry you away beyond Babylon.’

7:44 Our fathers [had] the tabernacle of the testimony with [them] in the wilderness. [It was] constructed exactly as [God] had directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.

7:45 And our fathers who received it brought [it in] with Joshua [when] they dispossessed the nations God drove out before [them]. [It remained] until the time of David,

7:46 who found favor in the sight of God and asked to provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.

7:47 But [it was] Solomon [who] built [the] house for Him.

7:48 However, the Most High {does} not live in [houses] made by human hands. As the prophet says:

7:49 ‘Heaven [is] My throne and the earth [is] My footstool. What kind of house will you build for Me, says [the] Lord, or where [will] My place of repose [be]?

7:50 {Has} not My hand made all these things?’

7:51 [You] stiff-necked [people] [with] uncircumcised hearts and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit, just as your fathers [did].

7:52 Which of the prophets {did} your fathers fail to persecute? They even killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One. And now you are [His] betrayers and murderers�

7:53 [you] who have received the Law ordained by angels, yet have not kept [it].”

7:54 On hearing this, [the members of the Sanhedrin] were enraged, and they gnashed [their] teeth at him.

7:55 But [Stephen], full of [the] Holy Spirit, looked intently into heaven [and] saw [the] glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

7:56 “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right [hand] of God.”

7:57 At this they covered their ears, cried out in a loud voice, and rushed together at him.

7:58 They dragged [him] out of the city [and] began to stone [him]. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

7:59 [While] they were stoning [him], Stephen appealed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

7:60 Falling on [his] knees, he cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, {do} not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

8:1 And Saul was there, giving approval to [Stephen’s] death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

8:2 God-fearing men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him.

8:3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women [and] put [them] in prison.

8:4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

8:5 Philip went down to [a] city [in] Samaria [and] proclaimed the Christ to them.

8:6 The crowds gave their undivided attention to Philip’s message and the signs they saw him perform.

8:7 With loud shrieks, unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, and many [of the] paralyzed and lame were healed.

8:8 So there was great joy in that city.

8:9 Prior to that time, a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed the people of Samaria. He claimed to be someone great,

8:10 [and] all [the people], from the least to the greatest, heeded [ his words ] [and] said, “This [man] is the divine power called [the] Great [Power].”

8:11 They paid close attention to him because he had amazed them for a long time with [his] sorcery.

8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the gospel of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

8:13 Even Simon himself believed and was baptized. He followed Philip {closely} and was amazed [by the] great signs and miracles he observed.

8:14 [When] the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.

8:15 On their arrival, they prayed for them to receive [the] Holy Spirit.

8:16 For [the Holy Spirit] had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

8:17 Then [Peter and John] laid [their] hands on them, and they received [the] Holy Spirit.

8:18 [When] Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money.

8:19 “Give {me} this power as well,” he said, “so that everyone on whom I lay [my] hands may receive [the] Holy Spirit.”

8:20 But Peter replied, “{May} your silver perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!

8:21 You have no part [or] share in [our] ministry, because your heart is not right before God.

8:22 Repent, therefore, of your wickedness, and pray to the Lord. Perhaps He will forgive you for the intent of your heart.

8:23 For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and captive to iniquity.”

8:24 Then Simon answered, “Pray to the Lord for me, so that nothing you have said may happen to me.”

8:25 [After Peter and John] had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many of the Samaritan villages.

8:26 Now an angel of [the] Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go south to the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”

8:27 [So] he started out, and on his way [he met] an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official in charge of the entire treasury of Candace, queen of [the] Ethiopians. [He] had gone to Jerusalem to worship,

8:28 and on his return was sitting in his chariot, reading Isaiah the prophet.

8:29 The Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to [that] chariot and stay by [it].”

8:30 [So] Philip ran up [and] heard [the man] reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” [Philip] asked.

8:31 “How can I,” he said, “unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up [and] sit with him.

8:32 [The eunuch] was reading this passage of Scripture: “He was led like a sheep to [the] slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer [is] silent, so He did not open His mouth.

8:33 In His humiliation He was deprived of justice. Who can recount His descendants? For His life was removed from the earth.”

8:34 “Tell me,” said the eunuch, “who {is} the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?”

8:35 Then Philip began with this very Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

8:36 As they traveled along the road [and] came to some water, the eunuch said, “Look, [here is] water! What is to prevent me [from] being baptized?”

8:37 And Philip said, If you believe from all the heart, it is lawful. He answered and he said, I believe the Son of God to be Jesus Christ.

8:38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and [Philip] baptized him.

8:39 When they came up out of the water, [the] Spirit of [the] Lord carried Philip {away}, and the eunuch saw him no more, [but] went on his way rejoicing.

8:40 But Philip appeared at Azotus and traveled through [that region], preaching the gospel in all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

9:1 Meanwhile, Saul {was} still breathing out threats of murder against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest

9:2 to ask for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any men [or] women belonging to the Way, he could bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

9:3 [As] [Saul] drew near to Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

9:4 He fell to the ground [and] heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?”

9:5 “Who are You, Lord?” [Saul] asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” [He replied].

9:6 “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

9:7 The men traveling with [Saul] stood [there] speechless. They heard the voice but did not see [anyone].

9:8 Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could not see [a thing]. [So] they led him by the hand into Damascus.

9:9 [For] three days he was without sight, and he did not eat [or] drink [anything].

9:10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, “Ananias!” “Here I [am], Lord,” he answered.

9:11 “Get up!” the Lord [told] him. “Go to [the] house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for [a man from] Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.

9:12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place [his] hands on him to restore his sight.”

9:13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, many [people] have told me about this man [and] all [the] harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.

9:14 And now [he is] here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on Your name.”

9:15 “Go!” said the Lord. “This [man] is My chosen instrument to carry My name before the Gentiles and their kings, and [before the] people of Israel.

9:16 I will show him how much he must suffer for My name.”

9:17 [So] Ananias went to the house, and [when] he arrived, he placed [his] hands on [Saul]. “Brother Saul,” he said, “the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road [as] you were coming [here], has sent me so that you may see again and be filled [with the] Holy Spirit.”

9:18 At that instant, [something] like scales fell from [Saul’s] eyes, and his sight was restored. He got up [and] was baptized,

9:19 and after taking [some] food, he regained his strength. And he spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

9:20 [Saul] promptly began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, [ declaring ], “He is the Son of God.”

9:21 All who heard [him] were amazed and asked, “Isn’t this the [man who] wreaked havoc in Jerusalem on those [who] call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?�

9:22 But Saul was empowered all the more, and he confounded the Jews living in Damascus by proving that [Jesus] is the Christ.

9:23 After many days had passed, the Jews conspired to kill him,

9:24 but Saul learned of their plot. Day and night they watched the [city] gates in order to kill him.

9:25 One night, however, his disciples took [him] [and] lowered [him] in a basket through [ a window ] in the wall.

9:26 [When] [Saul] arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, [but] they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

9:27 Then Barnabas brought [him] to the apostles and described how [Saul] had seen the Lord, [who] spoke to him on the road [to Damascus], and how [Saul] had spoken boldly in [that city] in the name of Jesus.

9:28 [So] [Saul] stayed with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem [and] speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

9:29 He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him.

9:30 [When] the brothers learned of [this], they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

9:31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria experienced [a time of] peace. It grew in strength and numbers, living in the fear of the Lord and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit.

9:32 As Peter traveled throughout [the area], he went to [visit] the saints [in] Lydda.

9:33 There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been paralyzed [and] bedridden for eight years.

9:34 “Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you! Get up and put away your mat.” Immediately [Aeneas] got up,

9:35 and all who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him [and] turned to the Lord.

9:36 In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which is translated as Dorcas), who was always occupied with works of kindness and charity.

9:37 At that time, however, she became sick [and] died, and her body was washed [and] placed in an upper room.

9:38 [Since] Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples heard that Peter was [there] [and] sent two men to urge him, “Come to us without delay.�

9:39 [So] Peter got up [and] went with them. On his arrival, they took [him] to the upper room. All the widows stood around him, weeping and showing [him] [the] tunics and [other] clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

9:40 Then Peter sent them all out of the room. He knelt down [and] prayed, and turning toward [her] body, he said, “Tabitha, get up!” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up.

9:41 [Peter] took her by the hand [and] helped her up. Then he called the saints and widows [and] presented her [to them] alive.

9:42 [This] became known all over Joppa, and many [people] believed in the Lord.

9:43 And [Peter] stayed for several days in Joppa with a tanner [named] Simon.

10:1 At Caesarea [there was] a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was called [the] Italian Regiment.

10:2 [He and] all his household [were] devout and God-fearing. He gave generously to the people and prayed to God regularly.

10:3 [One] day at about the ninth hour, he had a clear vision of an angel of God who came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

10:4 [Cornelius] stared at him in fear and asked, “What is it, Lord?” [The angel] answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have ascended as a memorial [ offering ] before God.

10:5 Now send men to Joppa to call for a man [named] Simon who is called Peter.

10:6 He is staying with Simon [the] tanner, whose house is by [the] sea.”

10:7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, [Cornelius] called two of [his] servants and a devout soldier from among his personal attendants.

10:8 He explained what had happened [and] sent them to Joppa.

10:9 The next day at about the sixth hour, as [the men] were approaching the city on their journey, Peter went up on the roof to pray.

10:10 He became hungry and wanted [something] to eat, but [while] the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.

10:11 He saw heaven open and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners.

10:12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth, as well as birds of the air.

10:13 Then a voice [spoke] to him: “Get up, Peter, kill and eat!”

10:14 “No, Lord!” Peter answered. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

10:15 [The] voice [spoke] to him a second time: “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

10:16 This happened three times, and all at once the [sheet] was taken back up into heaven.

10:17 While Peter was puzzling over the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found Simon’s house [and] approached the gate.

10:18 They called out to ask if Simon called Peter was staying [there].

10:19 As Peter continued to reflect on the vision, the Spirit told him, “Three men are here looking for you.

10:20 Get up! Go downstairs and accompany them without hesitation, because I have sent them.”

10:21 [So] Peter went down to the men [and] said, “Here am I, the one you are looking for. Why have you come?”

10:22 “Cornelius [the] centurion [ has sent us ],” they said. “[He is] a righteous and God-fearing man [with] a good reputation among the whole Jewish nation. A holy angel instructed [him] to request your presence in his home, [so that he could] hear a message from you.”

10:23 So [Peter] invited them in as his guests. And the next day he got ready [and] went with them, accompanied by some of the brothers from Joppa.

10:24 The following day he arrived in Caesarea, [where] Cornelius was expecting them [and] had called together his relatives and close friends.

10:25 As Peter was about to enter, Cornelius met him [and] fell at [his] feet to worship [him].

10:26 But Peter helped him up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.”

10:27 [As] [Peter] talked with him, he went inside and found many [people] gathered together.

10:28 He said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with a foreigner or visit [him]. But God has shown me [that] I should not call [any] man impure or unclean.

10:29 So when I was invited, I came without objection. I ask, then, why have you sent for me?”

10:30 Cornelius answered: “Four days ago, I was in my house praying at this, the ninth hour. Suddenly a man in radiant clothing stood before me

10:31 and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your gifts to the poor have been remembered before God.

10:32 Therefore send to Joppa for Simon, who is called Peter. He is a guest in [the] home of Simon [the] tanner, by [the] sea.’

10:33 So I sent for you immediately, and you were kind enough to come. Now then, we {are} all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has instructed you [to tell us].�

10:34 Then Peter began to speak: “I now truly understand that God does not show favoritism,

10:35 but welcomes those from every nation who fear Him and do what is right.

10:36 He has sent [this] message to the people of Israel, proclaiming the gospel of peace through Jesus Christ, [who] is Lord of all.

10:37 You yourselves know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee with the baptism that John proclaimed:

10:38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with [the] Holy Spirit and with power, [and] how [Jesus] went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him.

10:39 We [are] witnesses of all that He did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And although they put [Him] to death by hanging [Him] on a tree,

10:40 God raised [Him] up on the third day and caused Him to be seen—

10:41 not by all the people, but by the witnesses God had chosen beforehand, by us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from [the] dead.

10:42 And He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the [One] appointed by God to judge [the] living and [the] dead.

10:43 All the prophets testify about Him [that] everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.”

10:44 [While] Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard [his] message.

10:45 All the circumcised believers [who] had accompanied Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.

10:46 For they heard them speaking in tongues and exalting God. Then Peter said,

10:47 “Can anyone withhold the water to baptize these [people]? [They] have received the Holy Spirit just as we [have]!”

10:48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay [for a few] days.

11:1 The apostles and brothers throughout Judea soon heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

11:2 [So] when Peter went up to Jerusalem, [the] circumcised [believers] took issue with him

11:3 [and] said, “You visited uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

11:4 But Peter began [and] explained to them the whole sequence of events:

11:5 “I was in [the] city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision [of] something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by [its] four corners, and it came right down to me.

11:6 I looked at it {closely} [and] saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air.

11:7 Then I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter, kill and eat.’

11:8 ‘No, Lord,’ I said, ‘for nothing impure or unclean has {ever} entered my mouth.’

11:9 But the voice spoke from heaven a second [time], ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’

11:10 This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into heaven.

11:11 Just then, three men sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house [where] I was [staying].

11:12 The Spirit told me to accompany them without hesitation. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s home.

11:13 He told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa [for] Simon who is called Peter.

11:14 [He] will convey to you a message by which you and all your household will be saved.’

11:15 [As] I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as [He had come] upon us at [the] beginning.

11:16 Then I remembered the word of the Lord, as He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with [the] Holy Spirit.’

11:17 So if God gave them the same gift as [He gave] us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to hinder [the work of] God?�

11:18 [When] they heard [this], [ their objections ] were put to rest, and they glorified God, saying, “So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.”

11:19 Meanwhile, those scattered by the persecution that began with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message only to Jews.

11:20 But some of them, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks as well, proclaiming the good news about the Lord Jesus.

11:21 [The] hand of [the] Lord was with them, and [a] great number [of people] believed [and] turned to the Lord.

11:22 [When] news of this [reached] the ears of the church in Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

11:23 [When] he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to abide in the Lord with all their hearts.

11:24 [Barnabas] was a good man, full of [the] Holy Spirit and faith, and a great [number of people] were brought to the Lord.

11:25 Then [Barnabas] went to Tarsus to look for Saul,

11:26 and [when] he found [him], he brought [him] back to Antioch. [So] [for] a full year they met together with the church and taught large [numbers of people]. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.

11:27 In those days [some] prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

11:28 One of them named Agabus stood up [and] predicted through the Spirit [that] a great famine would sweep across the entire [ Roman ] world. ([This] happened under Claudius.)

11:29 [So] the disciples, each according to his ability, decided to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.

11:30 This they did, sending [their gifts] to the elders with Barnabas and Saul.

12:1 About that time, King Herod reached out to inflict harm on some who belonged to the church.

12:2 {He had} James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.

12:3 Seeing that [this] pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter during the Feast of Unleavened [Bread].

12:4 He arrested [him] and put [him] in prison, handing [him] over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers [each]. [Herod] intended to bring him out to the people after the Passover.

12:5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was fervently praying to God for him.

12:6 On [the] night [before] Herod was to bring him [to trial], Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, with sentries standing guard at the entrance to the prison.

12:7 Suddenly an angel of [the] Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side [and] woke him up, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off [his] wrists.

12:8 “Get dressed and put on your sandals,” said the angel. Peter did so, and [the angel] told him, “Wrap your cloak {around you} and follow me.”

12:9 [So] [Peter] followed him out, [but] he was unaware that what the angel was doing was real. He only thought he was seeing a vision.

12:10 They passed [the] first and second guards [and] came to the iron gate leading to the city, which opened for them by itself. [When] they had gone outside [and] walked the length of one block, the angel suddenly left him.

12:11 Then Peter came to himself [and] said, “Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent His angel and rescued me from Herod’s grasp and [from] everything the Jewish people were anticipating.�

12:12 And [when] he had realized [this], he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, [also] called Mark, where many [people] were gathered together praying.

12:13 He knocked [at] the outer gate, [and] a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer [it].

12:14 When she recognized Peter’s voice, she was so overjoyed [that] she forgot to open the gate, but ran inside [and] announced, “Peter is standing at the gate!”

12:15 “You are out of your mind,” they told her. But [when] she kept insisting [it] was so, they said, “It is his angel.”

12:16 But Peter kept on knocking, and [when] they opened [the door], they saw him and were amazed.

12:17 [Peter] motioned with [his] hand for silence, [and] he described how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. “Send word to James and to the brothers,” he said, and he left for another place.

12:18 At daybreak there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become [of] Peter.

12:19 [After] Herod had searched for him [unsuccessfully], he examined the guards [and] ordered that they be executed. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea [and] spent some time [there].

12:20 Now [Herod] had become infuriated [with the] people of Tyre and Sidon, and they convened before him. Having secured the support of Blastus, the king’s chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their region depended on the king’s [country] for food.

12:21 On the appointed day, Herod donned [his] royal [robes], sat on [his] throne, [and] addressed [the people].

12:22 And [they] began to shout, “[This is the] voice of a god, not a man!”

12:23 Immediately, because [Herod] did not give glory to God, an angel of [the] Lord struck him {down}, and he was eaten by worms [and] died.

12:24 But the word of God continued to spread and multiply.

12:25 [When] Barnabas and Saul had fulfilled [their] mission to Jerusalem, they returned, bringing with [them] John, [also] called Mark.

13:1 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (a childhood companion of Herod the tetrarch), and Saul.

13:2 [While] they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.�

13:3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they laid [their] hands on them [and] sent [them] off.

13:4 Then [Barnabas and Saul], sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.

13:5 [When] they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. And John was with them as their helper.

13:6 They traveled through the whole island as far as Paphos, [where] they found a Jewish sorcerer [and] false prophet named Bar-Jesus,

13:7 an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. [The proconsul], a man of intelligence, summoned Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.

13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them [and] tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.

13:9 Then Saul, who [was] also [called] Paul, filled with [the] Holy Spirit, looked directly at Elymas

13:10 and said, “O child of [the] devil [and] enemy of all righteousness! [You are] full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the straight ways of the Lord?

13:11 Now look, [the] hand of the Lord [is] against you, and for a time you will be blind [and] unable to see the light of the sun.” Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead [him] by the hand.

13:12 [When] the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.

13:13 After setting sail from Paphos, Paul [and] his companions came to Perga in Pamphylia, [where] John left them to return to Jerusalem.

13:14 And from Perga, they traveled inland to Pisidian Antioch, where they entered the synagogue on the Sabbath [and] sat down.

13:15 After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue leaders sent word to them: “Brothers, if you have a word of encouragement for the people, please speak.�

13:16 Paul stood up, motioned with [his] hand, [and] began to speak: “Men [of] Israel and [you Gentiles] who fear God, listen [to me]!

13:17 The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers. He made them into a great people during [their] stay in Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out of [that land].

13:18 He endured their conduct for about forty years in the wilderness.

13:19 And having vanquished seven nations in Canaan, {He gave} their land [to His people] as an inheritance.

13:20 [All this took about] 450 {} years. After this, [God] gave [them] judges until the time of Samuel the prophet.

13:21 Then [the people] asked for a king, and God gave them forty years [under] Saul son of Kish, from [the] tribe of Benjamin.

13:22 [After] removing [Saul], He raised up David as their king and testified [about him]: ‘I have found David [son] of Jesse a man after My [own] heart; [he] will carry out My will in its entirety.�

13:23 From the descendants of this [man], God has brought to Israel [the] Savior Jesus, as He promised.

13:24 Before the arrival of [Jesus], John preached a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

13:25 As John was completing [his] course, he said, ‘Who do you suppose I am? I am not [that One]. But He is coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.�

13:26 Brothers, children of Abraham, and you [ Gentiles ] who fear God, [it is] to us [that] this message of salvation has been sent.

13:27 The [people] of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize [Jesus], yet in condemning [Him] they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath.

13:28 And though they found no ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have Him executed.

13:29 When they had carried out all that was written about Him, they took [Him] down from the tree [and] laid [Him] in a tomb.

13:30 But God raised Him from [the] dead,

13:31 [and] for many days [He] appeared to those who had accompanied Him from Galilee to Jerusalem. [They] are now His witnesses to [our] people.

13:32 And now we proclaim to you the good news: [What God] promised [our] fathers

13:33 [He] has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son; today I have become Your Father.�

13:34 In fact, [God] raised Him from [the] dead never to see decay. As He has said: ‘I will give you the holy [and] sure [blessings] [I promised to] David.’

13:35 So also, He says in another [Psalm]: ‘You will not let your Holy One see decay.’

13:36 For [when] David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep. [His body] was buried with his fathers and saw decay.

13:37 But the [One] whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

13:38 Therefore let it be known to you, brothers, that through [Jesus] [the] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.

13:39 Through Him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by [the] Law of Moses.

13:40 Watch out, then, that what was spoken by the prophets does not happen [to you]:

13:41 ‘Look, [you] scoffers, wonder and perish; for I am doing a work in your days [that] you would never believe, even if someone told you.’”

13:42 [As] [Paul and Barnabas] were leaving [the synagogue], [the people] urged them to continue this message on the next Sabbath.

13:43 [After] the synagogue was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them [and] urged them to continue in the grace of God.

13:44 On the following Sabbath, nearly the whole city gathered to hear the word of [the] Lord.

13:45 But [when] the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, and {they} blasphemously contradicted what Paul was saying.

13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas answered [them] boldly: “It was necessary to speak the word of God to you first. But since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.

13:47 For this is what the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have made you a light for [the] Gentiles, to bring salvation to [the] ends of the earth.’”

13:48 [When] the Gentiles heard [this], they rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord, and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

13:49 And the word of the Lord spread throughout [that] region.

13:50 The Jews, however, incited the religious women of prominence and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of their district.

13:51 [So] they shook the dust {off} [their] feet [in protest] against them [and] went to Iconium.

13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy and [with the] Holy Spirit.

14:1 At Iconium, [Paul and Barnabas] entered the Jewish synagogue as usual, and they spoke so [ well ] that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed.

14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned [their] minds against the brothers.

14:3 So [Paul and Barnabas] spent considerable time {there}, speaking boldly for the Lord, who affirmed the message of His grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders.

14:4 The people of the city were divided. [Some] sided with the Jews, and [others] with the apostles.

14:5 But when the Gentiles and Jews, together with their rulers, set out to mistreat and stone them,

14:6 they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe, and to the surrounding region,

14:7 where they continued to preach the gospel.

14:8 In Lystra sat a man crippled in [his] feet, who was lame from birth [and] {had} never walked.

14:9 This [man] was listening to the words of Paul, who looked intently at him and saw that he had faith to be healed.

14:10 In a loud voice [Paul] called out, “Stand up on your feet!” And [the man] jumped up and began to walk.

14:11 [When] the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices in the Lycaonian language: “The gods have come down to us in human form!”

14:12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul [they called] Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

14:13 The priest of Zeus, [whose temple] was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the [city] gates, hoping to offer a sacrifice along with the crowds.

14:14 But [when] the apostles Barnabas and Paul found out about this, they tore their clothes [and] rushed into the crowd, shouting,

14:15 “Men, why are you doing this? We too are [only] men, human like you. We are bringing you good news that you should turn from these worthless things to [the] living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them.

14:16 In past generations, [He] let all nations go their [own] way.

14:17 Yet He has not left Himself without testimony to His goodness: He gives you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness.”

14:18 Even with these words, [Paul and Barnabas] could hardly stop the crowds from sacrificing to them.

14:19 Then [some] Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowds {over}. They stoned Paul [and] dragged [him] outside the city, presuming he was dead.

14:20 But [after] the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. And the next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe.

14:21 They preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples. [Then] they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch,

14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples [and] encouraging [them] to continue in the faith. “We must endure many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” [they said].

14:23 [Paul and Barnabas] appointed elders for them in each church, praying [and] fasting as they entrusted them to the Lord, in whom they had believed.

14:24 [After] passing through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

14:25 And [when] they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

14:26 From [Attalia] they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had just completed.

14:27 [When] they arrived, they gathered the church {together} [and] reported all that God had done through them, and how He had opened [the] door of faith to the Gentiles.

14:28 And they spent a long time [there] with the disciples.

15:1 Then some men came down from Judea [and] were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

15:2 So Paul and Barnabas engaged [these men] in sharp debate. [The two of them] were appointed, along with some other [ believers ], to go up to Jerusalem to [see] the apostles and elders about this question.

15:3 Sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, recounting the conversion of the Gentiles and bringing great joy to all the brothers.

15:4 [On] their arrival in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and apostles and elders, [to whom] they reported all that God had done through them.

15:5 But some believers from the party of the Pharisees stood up [and] declared, “[The Gentiles] must be circumcised and required to obey the Law of Moses.”

15:6 [So] the apostles and elders met to look into this matter.

15:7 After much discussion, Peter got up [and] said to them, “Brothers, you know that in [the] early days, God made a choice among you [that] the Gentiles would hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.

15:8 And God, who knows the heart, showed His approval by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as [He did] to us.

15:9 He made no distinction between us and them, [for] He cleansed their hearts by faith.

15:10 Now then, why do you test God by placing on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?

15:11 On the contrary, we believe [it is] through the grace of [the] Lord Jesus [that] we are saved, just as they [are].”

15:12 The whole assembly fell silent [as they] listened to Barnabas and Paul describing [the] signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

15:13 When they had finished speaking, James declared, “Brothers, listen to me!

15:14 Simon has told us how God first visited [the Gentiles] to take from [them] a people [to be] His [own].

15:15 The words of the prophets agree with this, as it is written:

15:16 ‘After [this] I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,

15:17 so that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear My name, says [the] Lord who does these things

15:18 [that] have been known for ages.’

15:19 [It is] my judgment, therefore, that we should not cause trouble for the Gentiles [who] are turning to God.

15:20 Instead, we should write [ and tell] them to abstain from [ food ] polluted by idols, [from] sexual immorality, [from] the meat of strangled animals, and from blood.

15:21 For Moses has been proclaimed in every city from ancient times [and] is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

15:22 Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to select men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. [They chose] Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, [two] leaders among the brothers,

15:23 [and sent them with] this letter: “The apostles and the elders, [your] brothers, To the brothers among [the] Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings.

15:24 It has come to our attention that some went out from us without our authorization [and] unsettled your minds by what [they] said.

15:25 [So] we all agreed to choose men to send you along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

15:26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15:27 Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to tell you [in person] the same things [we are writing you].

15:28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you [with anything] beyond these essential requirements:

15:29 [You must] abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.”

15:30

15:31 [When] [the people] read [it], they rejoiced at [its] encouraging message.

15:32 Judas and Silas, [who] themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers.

15:33 After spending some time [there], they were sent off by the brothers in peace to [return to] those who had sent them.

15:34 It seemed good however to Silas to remain there.

15:35 But Paul and Barnabas remained at Antioch, along with many others, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord.

15:36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back [and] visit the brothers in every town where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, [ to see ] how they are doing.�

15:37 Barnabas wanted to take John, [also] called Mark.

15:38 But Paul thought it best not to take him, [because] he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work.

15:39 Their disagreement was so sharp that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark [and] sailed for Cyprus,

15:40 but Paul chose Silas [and] left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

15:41 And he traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

16:1 [Paul] came to Derbe and then to Lystra, [where] [he found] a disciple named Timothy, [the] son of a believing Jewish woman and a Greek father.

16:2 The brothers in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of [him].

16:3 Paul wanted [Timothy] to accompany him, [so] he took [him] [and] circumcised him on account of the Jews in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

16:4 As they went from town to town, they delivered the decisions handed down by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for [the people] to obey.

16:5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

16:6 {After] the Holy Spirit prevented them from speaking the word in [the province of] Asia, they traveled through the region of Phrygia and Galatia.

16:7 And when they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, [but] the Spirit of Jesus would not permit them.

16:8 [So] they passed by Mysia [and] went down to Troas.

16:9 During the night, Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and pleading with him, “Come over to Macedonia [and] help us.”

16:10 As soon as [Paul] had seen the vision, we got ready to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

16:11 We sailed from Troas straight to Samothrace, and on the following day on to Neapolis.

16:12 From there, [we went] to [the Roman] colony of Philippi, [the] leading city of [that] district of Macedonia. And we stayed [there] [several] days.

16:13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate along [the] river, where [it] was customary to find [a place of] prayer. [After] sitting down, we spoke to the women who had gathered [there].

16:14 Among those listening [was a] woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple [cloth] from [the] city of Thyatira, [who was] a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.

16:15 And when [she] and her household had been baptized, she urged [us], “If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come [and] stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

16:16 One day as we were going to the [place of] prayer, we were met by a slave girl with a spirit of clairvoyance, who earned a large income for her masters by fortune-telling.

16:17 [This girl] followed Paul and [the rest of] us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you [the] way of salvation.”

16:18 She continued this for many days. [Eventually] Paul grew so aggravated [that] he turned [and] said to the spirit, “In [the] name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!� And [the spirit] left her at that very moment.

16:19 [When] [the girl’s] owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas [and] dragged [them] before the authorities in the marketplace.

16:20 They brought them to the magistrates [and] said, “These men are Jews [and] are throwing our city {into turmoil}

16:21 [by] promoting customs that are unlawful for us Romans to adopt [or] practice.”

16:22 The crowd joined in the attack against [Paul and Silas], and the magistrates ordered that they be stripped [and] beaten with rods.

16:23 And after striking them with many blows, they threw [them] into prison [and] ordered the jailer to guard them securely.

16:24 On receiving [this] order, he placed them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

16:25 About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying [and] singing hymns to God, and the [other] prisoners were listening to them.

16:26 Suddenly a strong earthquake shook the foundations of the prison. At once all the doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose.

16:27 [When] the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword [and] was about to kill himself, presuming that the prisoners had escaped.

16:28 But Paul called out in a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself! We are all here!”

16:29 Calling for lights, [the jailer] rushed in and fell trembling {before} Paul and Silas.

16:30 Then he brought them out [and] asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

16:31 They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household.”

16:32 Then [Paul and Silas] spoke the word of the Lord to him [and] to everyone in his house.

16:33 At that hour of the night, [the jailer] took them [and] washed [their] wounds. And without delay, he and all his household were baptized.

16:34 Then he brought them into [his] home and set [a meal before them]. [So] {he} and all [his] household rejoiced that they had come to believe in God.

16:35 [When] daylight came, the magistrates sent [their] officers with the order: “Release those men.”

16:36 The jailer informed Paul: “The magistrates have sent orders to release you. Now you may go on your way in peace.”

16:37 But Paul said to [the officers], “They beat us publicly without a trial [and] threw [us] into prison, [even though] we are Roman citizens. And now do they want to send us away secretly? Certainly not! Let them come themselves and escort us out!�

16:38 [So] the officers relayed this message to the magistrates, [who] were alarmed to hear that [Paul and Silas] were Roman citizens.

16:39 They came to appease them and led them out, requesting that they leave the city.

16:40 After [Paul and Silas] came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house to see the brothers and encourage [them]. Then they left [ the city ].

17:1 [When] they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.

17:2 As was [his] custom, Paul went into [the synagogue], and on three Sabbaths he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

17:3 explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from [the] dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,” [ he declared ].

17:4 Some of [the Jews] were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of God-fearing Greeks and [quite] a few leading women.

17:5 The Jews, however, became jealous. [So] they brought in some troublemakers from the marketplace, formed a mob, [and] sent the city into an uproar. They raided Jason’s house in search of [Paul and Silas], [hoping] to bring them out to the people.

17:6 But when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting, “These [men] who have turned the world {upside down} have now come here,

17:7 [and] Jason has welcomed them into his home. They {are} all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying there is another king, [ named ] Jesus!”

17:8 On hearing this, the crowd and city officials were greatly disturbed.

17:9 And after they had collected bond from Jason and the others, they released them.

17:10 As soon as night [had fallen], the brothers sent Paul and Silas {away} to Berea. On arriving [there], they went into the Jewish synagogue.

17:11 Now [the Bereans] were more noble-minded than the Thessalonians, [for] they received the message with great eagerness [and] examined the Scriptures every day [to see] if these [teachings] were true.

17:12 As a result, many of them believed, along with [quite] a few prominent Greek women and men.

17:13 But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that Paul was also proclaiming the word of God in Berea, they went there themselves to incite and agitate the crowds.

17:14 The brothers immediately sent Paul to the [coast], [but] Silas and Timothy remained [in Berea].

17:15 Those who escorted Paul brought [him] to Athens and then [returned] with instructions for Silas and Timothy to [join] him as soon as possible.

17:16 [While] Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply disturbed in his spirit to see that the city was full of idols.

17:17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and God-fearing [Gentiles], and in the marketplace with those he met each day.

17:18 Some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also began to debate with him. Some [of them] asked, “What {is} this babbler trying to say?” while others [said], “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” [They said this] because [Paul] was proclaiming the good news of Jesus and the resurrection.

17:19 So they took [Paul] [and] brought [him] to the Areopagus, [where] they asked [him], “May we know what this new teaching [is] [that] you are presenting?

17:20 For you are bringing some strange notions to our ears, [and] we want to know what [they] mean.”

17:21 Now all [the] Athenians and foreigners who lived there spent their time [doing] nothing [more] than hearing and articulating new [ideas].

17:22 Then Paul stood up before the Areopagus [and] said, “Men [of] Athens, I see that in every way you [are] very religious.

17:23 For as I walked around and examined your objects of worship, I even found an altar with the inscription: To an unknown God. Therefore what you worship as something unknown, I [now] proclaim to you.

17:24 The God who made the world and everything in it is [the] Lord of heaven and earth [and] {does} not live in temples made by human hands.

17:25 Nor is He served by human hands, as if He needed anything, [because] He Himself gives all [men] life and breath and everything [else].

17:26 From one [man] He made every nation of men, to inhabit the whole earth; and He determined [their] appointed times and the boundaries of their lands.

17:27 [ God intended that ] they would seek [Him] [and] perhaps reach out for Him and find [Him], though He is not far from each one of us.

17:28 ‘For in Him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your [own] poets have said, ‘We are [His] offspring.’

17:29 Therefore, being offspring of God, we should not think that the Divine Being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by man’s skill and imagination.

17:30 Although God overlooked the ignorance of [earlier] times, He now commands all men everywhere to repent.

17:31 For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof [of this] to all men by raising Him from [the] dead.”

17:32 [When] they heard about [the] resurrection of [the] dead, some began to mock [him], but [others] said, “We want to hear you again on this [topic].”

17:33 At that, Paul left [the Areopagus].

17:34 But some people joined him [and] believed, including Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others [who were] with them.

18:1 After this, [Paul] left Athens [and] went to Corinth.

18:2 [There] he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who {had} recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. [Paul] went to [ visit ] them,

18:3 and he stayed and worked with them because they were tentmakers by trade, [just as] he was.

18:4 Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks alike.

18:5 And when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself fully to the word, testifying to the Jews [that] Jesus is the Christ.

18:6 But [when] they opposed and insulted [him], he shook out [his] garments [and] told them, “Your blood [be] on your [own] heads! I [am] innocent [of it]. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.�

18:7 [So] [Paul] left the synagogue [and] went next door to [the] house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.

18:8 Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his whole household believed in the Lord. And many of the Corinthians who heard [ the message ] believed and were baptized.

18:9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “{Do} not be afraid; keep on speaking; {do} not be silent.

18:10 For I am with you and no one will lay a hand on you, because I have many people in this city.”

18:11 [So] [Paul] stayed for a year and [a half], teaching the word of God among [the Corinthians].

18:12 [While] Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews coordinated an attack on Paul and brought him before the judgment seat.

18:13 “This [man] is persuading the [people] to worship God in ways contrary to the Law,” they said.

18:14 But [just as] Paul was about to speak, Gallio told the Jews, “If this matter involved a wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to hear your [ complaint ].

18:15 But since it is a dispute about words and names and your own law, settle [it] yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of such things.”

18:16 And he drove them {away} from the judgment seat.

18:17 At this, the crowd seized Sosthenes the synagogue leader [and] beat [him] in front of the judgment seat. [But] none of this was of any concern to Gallio.

18:18 Paul remained [in Corinth] for quite some time [before] saying goodbye to the brothers. {He had} [his] head shaved in Cenchrea to keep a vow he had [ made ], [and then] he sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.

18:19 [When] they reached Ephesus, [Paul] parted ways with [Priscilla and Aquila]. He himself went into the synagogue [there] [and] reasoned with the Jews.

18:20 [When] they asked [him] to stay for a while longer, he declined.

18:21 But as he left, he said, “I will come back to you again [if] God is willing.” [And] he set sail from Ephesus.

18:22 [When Paul] had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church [ at Jerusalem ]. [Then] he went down to Antioch.

18:23 [After] [Paul] had spent some time [in Antioch], he traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

18:24 Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the Scriptures.

18:25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord and was fervent in spirit. He spoke and taught accurately about Jesus, [though] he knew only the baptism of John.

18:26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. [When] Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him in and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

18:27 [When] [Apollos] resolved to cross over to Achaia, the brothers encouraged [him] [and] wrote to the disciples [there] to welcome him. On his arrival, he greatly aided those who by grace had believed.

18:28 For he powerfully refuted the Jews in public [debate], proving by the Scriptures [that] Jesus is the Christ.

19:1 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the interior [and] came to Ephesus. [There] he found some disciples

19:2 and asked them, “Did you receive [the] Holy Spirit when you became believers?” “No,” [they answered], “we have not even heard that there is [a] Holy Spirit.”

19:3 “Into what, then, were you baptized?” [Paul] asked. “The baptism of John,” they replied.

19:4 Paul explained: “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the [One] coming after him, that is, in Jesus.”

19:5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

19:6 And [when] Paul laid [his] hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

19:7 There were about twelve men in all.

19:8 Then [Paul] went into the synagogue [and] spoke boldly [there] for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.

19:9 But when some of them stubbornly refused to believe [and] publicly maligned the Way, [Paul] took [his] disciples [and] left [the synagogue] to conduct daily discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

19:10 This continued for two years, so that everyone who lived in [the province of] Asia, Jews and Greeks alike, heard the word of the Lord.

19:11 God did extraordinary miracles through the hands of Paul,

19:12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and the diseases and evil spirits left them.

19:13 Now [there were] some itinerant Jewish exorcists who tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those with evil spirits. They would say, “I bind you [by] Jesus, whom Paul proclaims.�

19:14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

19:15 Eventually, [one of] the evil spirits answered them, “Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but you, who are you?”

19:16 Then the man with the evil spirit jumped on them [and] overpowered them all. The attack was so violent that they ran out of the house, naked and wounded.

19:17 This became known to all the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, and fear came over all of them. [So] the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

19:18 Many who had believed now came forward, confessing and disclosing their deeds.

19:19 And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought [their] books [and] burned [them] in front of everyone. [When] the value of [the books] was calculated, [it came to] fifty thousand drachmas.

19:20 So the word of the Lord powerfully continued to spread and prevail.

19:21 After these things had happened, Paul purposed in spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must see Rome as well.”

19:22 He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, [while] he stayed for a time in [the province of] Asia.

19:23 About that time a great disturbance arose about the Way.

19:24 [ It began with] a silversmith named Demetrius, who had brought much business to the craftsmen making silver shrines of Artemis.

19:25 [Demetrius] assembled [the craftsmen], along with the workmen in related trades. “Men,” he said, “you know that this business is our [source of] prosperity.

19:26 And [as] you see and hear, not only in Ephesus, but in nearly the whole [province of] Asia, Paul has persuaded a great number of people to turn away. He says that man-made [gods] are no gods [at all].

19:27 [There is] danger not only [that] our business will fall into disrepute, but also [that] the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited and her majesty deposed� [she] who is worshiped by all [ the province of ] Asia and the [whole] world.�

19:28 [When] [the men] heard [this], they were enraged [and] began shouting, “Great [is] Artemis of [the] Ephesians!”

19:29 [Soon] the whole city was in disarray. They rushed together into the theatre, dragging with [them] Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia.

19:30 Paul wanted to go before the assembly, [but] the disciples would not allow him.

19:31 Even some of [Paul’s] friends who were officials of the province of Asia sent word to him, begging him not to venture into the theatre.

19:32 Meanwhile the assembly was in turmoil. Some were shouting one thing [and some another], and most [of them] did not [even] know why they were there.

19:33 The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander {forward} to explain himself, and [he] motioned for silence so he could make [his] defense to the people.

19:34 But when they realized that he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great [is] Artemis of [the] Ephesians!”

19:35 Finally the city clerk quieted the crowd [and] declared, “Men [of] Ephesus, doesn’t [everyone] know that the city of Ephesus is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of [her image], which fell from heaven?

19:36 Since these things are undeniable, you ought to be calm and not do anything rash.

19:37 For you have brought these men {here}, [though they have] neither robbed [our] temple nor blasphemed our goddess.

19:38 So if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a complaint against anyone, [the] courts are open and proconsuls are available. Let them bring charges against one another [ there ].

19:39 But if you are seeking anything beyond this, it must be settled in a legal assembly.

19:40 For we are in jeopardy of being charged with rioting for today’s [events], [and] we have no justification to account for this commotion.”

19:41 [After] he had said [this], he dismissed the assembly.

20:1 When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples. After he had encouraged [them], he said goodbye [to them] [and] left for Macedonia.

20:2 [After] traveling through that area and speaking many words of encouragement, he arrived in Greece,

20:3 [where] he stayed three months. [And when] the Jews formed a plot against him [as] he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia.

20:4 [Paul] was accompanied by Sopater [son of] Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia.

20:5 These [men] went on ahead [and] waited for us in Troas.

20:6 And after the [Feast] of Unleavened Bread, we sailed from Philippi, and five days later we rejoined them in Troas, where we stayed seven days.

20:7 On the first [day] of the week we came together to break bread. [Since] Paul was ready to leave the next day, he talked to them and kept on speaking until midnight.

20:8 Now there were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered.

20:9 And a certain young man named Eutychus, seated by the window, was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell from the third story and was picked up dead.

20:10 But Paul went down, threw [himself] on [the young man], and embraced [him]. “{Do} not be alarmed!” he said. “He is still alive!”

20:11 Then [Paul] went back upstairs, broke bread, and ate. [After] speaking until daybreak, he departed.

20:12 And [the people] {were} greatly relieved to take the boy [home] alive.

20:13 We went on ahead to the ship [and] sailed to Assos, [where] we were to take Paul {aboard}. He had arranged this because he was going there on foot.

20:14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him aboard [and] went on to Mitylene.

20:15 Sailing on from there, we arrived the next [day] opposite Chios. The [day] after that we arrived at Samos, and on the following [day] we came to Miletus.

20:16 Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in [the province of] Asia, because he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

20:17 From Miletus, [Paul] sent to Ephesus [for] the elders of the church.

20:18 When they came to him, he said, “You know how I lived the whole time [I was] with you, from the first day I arrived in [the province of] Asia.

20:19 I served the Lord with great humility and [with] tears, and in the trials I faced through the plots of the Jews.

20:20 I did not shrink back from declaring [anything] that was helpful to you [as] I taught you publicly and from house to house,

20:21 testifying to Jews and Greeks alike {about} repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus.

20:22 And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me [there].

20:23 [I] only [know] that in town after town the Holy Spirit warns me that chains and afflictions await me.

20:24 But I consider my life of no value to myself, if only I may finish my course and [ complete ] the ministry I have received from the Lord Jesus— [ the ministry ] of testifying to the good news of God�s grace.

20:25 Now I know that [none of] you among whom I have preached the kingdom will see my face [again].

20:26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I [am] innocent of the blood of all [men].

20:27 For I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole will of God.

20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and the entire flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He purchased with [His] own blood.

20:29 I know that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

20:30 Even from your own number, men will rise up [and] distort [the truth] to draw away disciples after them.

20:31 Therefore be alert [and] remember that for three years I never stopped warning each [of you] night and day with tears.

20:32 And now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which can build [you] up and give you an inheritance among all who are sanctified.

20:33 I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing.

20:34 You yourselves know that these hands [of mine] have ministered to my [own] needs and [those of] my companions.

20:35 In everything, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus Himself: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.��

20:36 [When] [Paul] had said this, he knelt down with all of them [and] prayed.

20:37 They all wept openly [as] they embraced Paul [and] kissed him.

20:38 They were especially grieved by his statement that they would [never] see his face [again]. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

21:1 After we had torn ourselves away from them, we sailed directly to Cos, and the next [day] on to Rhodes, and from there to Patara.

21:2 Finding a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we boarded [it] [and] set sail.

21:3 [After] sighting Cyprus and passing south of it, we sailed on to Syria and landed at Tyre, [where] the ship was to unload [its] cargo.

21:4 We sought out the disciples [in Tyre] [and] stayed [with them] seven days. Through the Spirit [they] kept telling Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

21:5 But when our time [there] had ended, we set out on our journey. All [the disciples], with [their] wives and children, accompanied us out of the city and knelt down on the beach to pray [with us].

21:6 After we had said our farewells, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

21:7 [When] we had finished [our] voyage from Tyre, we landed at Ptolemais, [where] we greeted the brothers [and] stayed with them for a day.

21:8 Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea, and we went to stay at the home of Philip the evangelist, who was [one] of the Seven.

21:9 [He] had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

21:10 After we had been there several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

21:11 Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, bound his [own] feet and hands, [and] said, “The Holy Spirit says: ‘In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and hand [him] over to [the] Gentiles.’�

21:12 When we heard this, we and the [people] there pleaded with [Paul] not to go up to Jerusalem.

21:13 Then Paul answered, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.�

21:14 [When] he would not be dissuaded, we fell silent [and] said, “The Lord’s will be done.”

21:15 After these days, we packed up [and] went on to Jerusalem.

21:16 [Some] of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us, [and] they took us to stay at the home of Mnason [the] Cypriot, an early disciple.

21:17 When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us joyfully.

21:18 The next [day], Paul went in with us to [see] James, and all the elders were present.

21:19 [Paul] greeted them [and] recounted one by one the things God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

21:20 When they heard [this], they glorified God. Then they said to [Paul], “You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the Law.

21:21 But they are under the impression that you teach all [the] Jews who [live] among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise [their] children [or] observe [our] customs.

21:22 What then should [we do]? They will certainly hear that you have come.

21:23 Therefore do what we advise you. There are four men with us who have taken a vow.

21:24 Take these [men], purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so {they can have} [their] heads shaved. Then everyone will know that there is no truth [to these] rumors about you, but [that] you also live in obedience to the Law.

21:25 As for the Gentile believers, we have written [them] our decision [that] they must abstain from [food] sacrificed to idols, [from] blood, [from] the meat of strangled animals, and [from] sexual immorality.”

21:26 [So] the next day Paul took the men [and] purified himself along with them. [Then] he entered the temple to give notice of the date [their] purification would be complete [and] the offering would be made for each of them.

21:27 When the seven days were almost over, [some] Jews from [the province of] Asia saw [Paul] at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him,

21:28 crying out, “Men [of] Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all [men] everywhere against [our] people and [against our] Law and [against] this place. Furthermore, he has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place.�

21:29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, [and] they assumed that Paul had brought [him] into the temple.

21:30 The whole city was stirred up, and the people rushed together. They seized Paul [and] dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut.

21:31 [While] they were trying to kill him, the commander of the [Roman] regiment received a report that all Jerusalem was in turmoil.

21:32 Immediately he took [some] soldiers and centurions [and] ran down to [the crowd]. [When the people] saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

21:33 The commander came up [and] arrested [Paul], ordering that he be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done.

21:34 [Some] in the crowd were shouting one thing, [and] [some] another. And [since] [the commander] could not determine the facts because of the uproar, he ordered that [Paul] be brought into the barracks.

21:35 When [Paul] reached the steps, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob.

21:36 For the crowd that followed [him] kept shouting, “Away with him!”

21:37 [As] they were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, “May I say something to you?” “Do you speak Greek?” [he] replied.

21:38 “Aren’t you the Egyptian who incited a rebellion some time ago and led four thousand members of the ‘Assassins’ into the wilderness?”

21:39 But Paul answered, “I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen [of] no ordinary city. Now I beg you to allow me to speak to the people.�

21:40 Having received permission, Paul stood on the steps [and] motioned to the crowd. A great hush came over [the crowd], [and] he addressed [them] in Aramaic:

22:1 “Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense before you.”

22:2 [When] they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became even more silent. Then [Paul] declared,

22:3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but raised in this city. I was educated at the feet of Gamaliel in strict conformity to the Law of our fathers. I am {just as} zealous for God as any of you [here] today.

22:4 [I] persecuted this Way even to the death, detaining both men and women and throwing them into prison,

22:5 as the high priest and the whole Council can testify about me. I even obtained letters from them to [their] brothers in Damascus, [and] I was on my way to apprehend [these people] and bring [them] to Jerusalem to be punished.

22:6 About noon [as] I was approaching Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me.

22:7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’

22:8 ‘Who are You, Lord?’ I asked. ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ He replied.

22:9 My companions saw the light, but they could not understand the voice of the [One] speaking to me.

22:10 Then I asked, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ ‘Get up [and] go into Damascus,’ [He] told me. ‘There you will be told all that you have been appointed to do.’

22:11 Because the brilliance of the light had blinded me, my companions led me by the hand into Damascus.

22:12 [There] a man [named] Ananias, a devout observer of the Law [who was] highly regarded by all the Jews living there,

22:13 came and stood beside me. ‘Brother Saul,’ he said, ‘receive your sight.’ And at that [moment] I could see him.

22:14 Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear [His] voice.

22:15 You will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.

22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and wash your sins {away}, calling on His name.’

22:17 Later, [when] I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance,

22:18 and saw [the Lord] saying to me, ‘Hurry! Leave Jerusalem quickly, because [the people here] will not accept your testimony about Me.’

22:19 ‘Lord,’ I answered, ‘they know very well that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in You.

22:20 And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’

22:21 Then He said to me, ‘Go! I will send you far away to [the] Gentiles.’”

22:22 [The crowd] listened to [Paul] until he made this statement. Then they lifted up their voices [and] shouted, “Rid the earth of [him]! He is not fit to live!”

22:23 [As] they were shouting and throwing off [their] cloaks and tossing dust into the air,

22:24 the commander ordered that [Paul] be brought into the barracks. He directed that [Paul] be flogged and interrogated to determine the reason for this outcry against him.

22:25 But as they stretched him out to strap him down, Paul said to the centurion standing there, “Is it lawful for you to flog a Roman citizen without a trial?”

22:26 [On] hearing [this], the centurion went [and] reported [it] to the commander. “What are you going to do?” he said. “This man is a Roman citizen.”

22:27 The commander went to [Paul] and asked, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” “Yes,” he answered.

22:28 “I paid a high price [for my] citizenship,” said the commander. “But I was born a citizen,” Paul replied.

22:29 Then those who were about to interrogate [Paul] stepped back, and the commander [himself] was alarmed when he realized that he had put a Roman citizen {in chains}.

22:30 The next day [the commander], wanting to learn the real reason [Paul] was accused by the Jews, released him and ordered the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul {down} and had him stand before them.

23:1 Paul looked directly at the Sanhedrin [and] said, “Brothers, I have conducted myself before God in all good conscience to this day.”

23:2 At this, the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near [Paul] to strike him on the mouth.

23:3 Then Paul said to him, “God will strike [you], you whitewashed wall! You sit [here] to judge me according to the Law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck.�

23:4 But those standing nearby said, “How dare you insult the high priest of God!”

23:5 “Brothers,” Paul replied, “I was not aware that he was [the] high priest, for it is written: ‘Do not speak evil [about the] ruler of your people.’”

23:6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, [the] son of a Pharisee. [It is] because of [my] hope in the resurrection of [the] dead [that] I am on trial.�

23:7 As soon as he had said [this], a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.

23:8 For [the] Sadducees say there is neither a resurrection, nor angels, nor spirits, but [the] Pharisees acknowledge them all.

23:9 A great clamor arose, and some scribes from the party of the Pharisees got up [and] contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?�

23:10 [The] dispute grew so violent [that] the commander was afraid they would tear Paul to pieces. He ordered the soldiers to go down [and] remove him by force and bring [him] into the barracks.

23:11 The following night the Lord stood by [Paul] [and] said, “Take courage! As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so also you must testify in Rome.�

23:12 When daylight came, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat [or] drink until they had killed Paul.

23:13 More than forty [of them] were involved in this plot.

23:14 They went to the chief priests and elders [and] said, “We have bound ourselves with a solemn oath [not] to eat [anything] until we have killed Paul.

23:15 Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him down to you on the pretext of examining his case more carefully. We are ready to kill him on the way.�

23:16 But [when] the son of Paul’s sister heard about the ambush, he went into the barracks [and] told Paul.

23:17 Then Paul called one of the centurions [and] said, “Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him.”

23:18 So [the centurion] took him to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner sent [and] asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to tell you.�

23:19 The commander took [the young man] by the hand, drew [him] aside, and asked, “What do you need to tell me?”

23:20 He answered, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul to the Sanhedrin tomorrow, on the pretext of acquiring more information about him.

23:21 {Do} not {let} them persuade you, because more than forty men are waiting to ambush him. [They] have bound themselves with an oath not to eat [or] drink until they have killed him; they are ready now, awaiting your consent.�

23:22 So the commander dismissed the young man and instructed [him], “Do not tell [anyone] that you have reported this to me.”

23:23 Then he called two of [his] centurions [and] said, “Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea in the third hour of the night.

23:24 Provide mounts [for] Paul to take [him] safely to Governor Felix.”

23:25 [And] he wrote the following letter:

23:26 “Claudius Lysias, To His Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings.

23:27 This man was seized by the Jews, and they were about to kill [him] when I came with [my] troops to rescue [him]. For I had learned that he is a Roman citizen,

23:28 and since I wanted to understand [their] charges [against] him, I brought [him] down to their Sanhedrin.

23:29 I found that the accusation involved questions [about] their [own] Law, but there was no charge worthy of death or imprisonment.

23:30 [When] I was informed that there was a plot against the man, I sent [him] to you at once. I also instructed [his] accusers to present [their case] against him before you.�

23:31 So the soldiers followed their orders [and] brought Paul by night to Antipatris.

23:32 The next day they returned to the barracks [and] let the horsemen go on with him.

23:33 [When the horsemen] arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and presented Paul to him.

23:34 [The governor] read [the letter] and asked what province [Paul] was from. Learning that [he was] from Cilicia,

23:35 he said, “I will hear your case when your accusers arrive.” Then he ordered that [Paul] be kept under guard in Herod’s Praetorium.

24:1 Five days later, the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a lawyer [named] Tertullus, who presented to the governor {their case} against Paul.

24:2 [When] [Paul] had been called in, Tertullus opened the prosecution: “Because of you, we have enjoyed a lasting peace, and your foresight has brought improvements to this nation.

24:3 In every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge [this] with all gratitude.

24:4 But in order not to burden you any further, I beg your indulgence to hear us briefly.

24:5 We have found this man [to be] a nuisance, stirring up dissension among the Jews all over the world. [He is] a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes,

24:6 [and he] even tried to desecrate the temple; [so] we seized [him].

24:7 But Lysias the commander having come up with great force, took [him] away out of our hands,

24:8 By examining him yourself, you will be able to learn [the truth] about all our charges [against] him.”

24:9 The Jews concurred, asserting that these [charges] were true.

24:10 [When] the governor motioned for [Paul] to speak, [he] began his response: “Knowing that you have been a judge over this nation for many years, I gladly make my defense.

24:11 You can verify {for yourself} that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.

24:12 Yet [my accusers] did not find me debating with anyone in the temple or riling up a crowd in the synagogues [or] in the city.

24:13 Nor can they prove to you [any of] their charges against me.

24:14 I do confess to you, however, that I worship the God of our fathers according to the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that is laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets,

24:15 [and] I have [the same] hope in God that they themselves cherish, [that] there will be a resurrection of both [the] righteous and [the] wicked.

24:16 In this [hope], I strive always to maintain a clear conscience before God and man.

24:17 After several years, then, I returned [ to Jerusalem ] to bring alms to my people and to present offerings.

24:18 At the time they found me in the temple, I was ceremonially clean [and] was not {inciting} [a] crowd [or] an uproar. But [there are] some Jews from [the province of] Asia

24:19 who ought to appear before you and bring charges, if they have anything against me.

24:20 Otherwise, let [these men] state for themselves any crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin,

24:21 unless [it was] this one thing I called out as I stood in their [presence]: ‘[It is] concerning [the] resurrection of [the] dead [that] I am on trial before you today.’”

24:22 Then Felix, who was well informed about the Way, adjourned the hearing [and] said, “When Lysias the commander comes, I will decide your case.”

24:23 He ordered the centurion to keep [Paul] under guard, [but] to allow him some freedom and permit his [friends] to minister to his [needs].

24:24 After several days, Felix returned with [his] wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him [speak] about faith in Christ Jesus.

24:25 [As] [Paul] expounded on righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened [and] said, “You may go for now. [When] I find the time, I will call for you.�

24:26 At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe. So he sent for [Paul] frequently [and] talked with him.

24:27 [After] two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And wishing to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

25:1 Three days after his arrival in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem,

25:2 [where] the chief priests and Jewish leaders presented their case against Paul. They urged [Festus]

25:3 to grant them a concession against [Paul] by summoning him to Jerusalem, [ because ] they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way.

25:4 But Festus replied, “Paul is being held in Caesarea, and [I myself] am going there soon.

25:5 So if [this] man has done anything wrong, {let} some of your leaders come down with me and accuse him [there].”

25:6 [After] spending no more than eight or ten days with them, [Festus] went down to Caesarea. The next day he sat on the judgment seat [and] ordered that Paul be brought in.

25:7 [When] [Paul] arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges that they could not prove.

25:8 [Then] Paul made his defense: “I have committed no offense against the law of the Jews [or] against the temple [or] against Caesar.”

25:9 But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem to stand trial before me on these [charges]?”

25:10 Paul replied, “I am standing before the judgment seat of Caesar, where I ought to be tried. I have done nothing wrong to [the] Jews, as you [yourself] know very well.

25:11 If, however, I am guilty [of] anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die. But if there is no [truth] to their accusations against me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!�

25:12 Then Festus conferred with [his] council [and] replied, “You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!”

25:13 [After] several days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice came down to Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus.

25:14 Since they were staying several days, Festus laid out Paul’s case before the king: “There is a certain man [whom] Felix left in prison.

25:15 While I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews presented their case [and] requested a judgment against him.

25:16 I told [them] it was not [the] Roman custom to hand a man {over} before [he] has [an] opportunity to face [his] accusers and defend himself against [their] charges.

25:17 So [when] they came here {with me}, I did not delay. The next [day] I sat on the judgment seat [and] ordered that the man be brought in.

25:18 [But when his] accusers rose to speak, they did not charge [him] with [any of the] crimes I had expected.

25:19 They only had some contentions with him regarding [their] own religion and a certain Jesus [who] had died, [but] whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

25:20 [Since] I was at a loss as to how to investigate these [matters], I asked if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried {there} on these [charges].

25:21 But [when] Paul appealed to be held over for the decision of the Emperor, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar.”

25:22 Then Agrippa [said] to Festus, “I would like to hear [this] man myself.” “Tomorrow you will hear him,” Festus declared.

25:23 The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the auditorium, along with [the] commanders and leading men of the city. And Festus ordered that Paul be brought in.

25:24 Then Festus said, “King Agrippa and all [who] are present with us, you see this [man]. The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about [him], both here and in Jerusalem, crying out [that] he ought not to live [any] longer.

25:25 But I found he had done nothing worthy of death, [and] since he has now appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send [him].

25:26 I have nothing definite to write to [our] sovereign one about [him]. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after this inquiry I may have something to write.

25:27 For it seems unreasonable to me to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him.”

26:1 Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out [his] hand [and] began his defense:

26:2 “King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today to defend myself against all the accusations of [the] Jews,

26:3 especially [since] you are acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. I beg [you], therefore, to listen to me patiently.

26:4 Surely all the Jews know how I have lived from [the] earliest days of [my] youth, among my own people and in Jerusalem.

26:5 They have known me for a long time [and] can testify, if they are willing, that I lived as a Pharisee, adhering to the strictest sect of our religion.

26:6 And now I stand on trial because of [my] hope in the promise [that] God made to our fathers,

26:7 [ the promise ] our twelve tribes are hoping to realize as they earnestly serve [ God ] day and night. [It is] because of [this] hope, O king, [that] I am accused by the Jews.

26:8 Why {would} any of you consider it incredible that God raises [the] dead?

26:9 So then, I [too] was convinced that I ought to do all [I could] to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

26:10 And [that] is what I did in Jerusalem. With authority from the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and [when] they were condemned to death, I cast my vote against [them].

26:11 I frequently had them punished in the synagogues [and] tried to make [them] blaspheme. In my raging fury against them, {I} even [went] to foreign cities to persecute [them].

26:12 In this [pursuit], I was on my way to Damascus with [the] authority and commission of the chief priests.

26:13 About noon, O king, [as I was] on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions.

26:14 We all fell to the ground, [and] I heard a voice say to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? [It is] hard for you to kick against [the] goads.�

26:15 ‘Who are You, Lord?’ I asked. ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied.

26:16 ‘But get up and stand on your feet. For I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen from Me and what I will show you.

26:17 I will rescue you from [your own] people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to [them]

26:18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, [that] they may receive forgiveness of sins and [an] inheritance among those sanctified by faith in Me.�

26:19 So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

26:20 First to those in Damascus and Jerusalem, then to everyone in the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I declared that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds worthy [of their] repentance.

26:21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple courts [and] tried to kill [me].

26:22 [But] I have had God’s help to this day, [and] I stand [here] to testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen:

26:23 that Christ would suffer, [and as the] first to rise from [the] dead, He would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles.”

26:24 At this stage of [Paul’s] defense, Festus exclaimed in a loud voice, “You are insane, Paul! [Your] great learning is driving you to madness!”

26:25 But Paul answered vvv, “I am not insane, most excellent Festus; I am speaking words of truth and sobriety.

26:26 For the king knows about these [matters], and I can speak freely to [him]. I am confident that none of this has escaped his [notice], because [it] was not done in a corner.

26:27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you [do].”

26:28 Then Agrippa [said] to Paul, “Can you persuade me in such a short [time] to become a Christian?”

26:29 “Short [time] [or] long,” Paul [replied], “I wish to God that not only you but all who hear me this day may become what I am, except for these chains.”

26:30 Then the king and the governor rose, along with Bernice and those seated with them.

26:31 On their way out, they said to one another, “This man has done nothing worthy of death or imprisonment.”

26:32 And Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

27:1 When it was decided [that] we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, [who belonged to the] Augustan Regiment.

27:2 We boarded an Adramyttian ship about to sail for ports along [the coast of] Asia, [and] we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

27:3 The next [day] we landed at Sidon, and Julius treated Paul with consideration, allowing [him] to visit his friends [and] receive [their] care.

27:4 [After] putting out from there, we sailed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us.

27:5 And [when] we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia.

27:6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, [and] he put us on [board].

27:7 [After] sailing slowly for many days, we arrived off Cnidus. [When] the wind impeded us, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone.

27:8 [After] we had moved along the coast with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near [the] town of Lasea.

27:9 By now much time had passed, and the voyage had already become dangerous because it was after the Fast. [So] Paul advised [them],

27:10 “Men, I can see that [our] voyage will be [filled] with disaster and great loss, not only to ship and cargo, but to our [own] lives as well.�

27:11 But contrary to Paul’s advice, the centurion was persuaded by the pilot and the owner of the ship.

27:12 Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided to sail on, if somehow they could reach Phoenix to winter [there]. [Phoenix was] a harbor in Crete facing [both] southwest and northwest.

27:13 [When] a {gentle} south wind began to blow, they thought they had [their] opportunity. [So] they weighed [anchor] [and] sailed along, hugging {the coast} of Crete.

27:14 But [it was] not long [before] a cyclone called the Northeaster swept down across [the island].

27:15 Unable to head into the wind, the ship was caught up. [So] we gave way [and] let ourselves be driven along.

27:16 Passing to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we barely managed to secure the lifeboat.

27:17 After hoisting it up, [the crew] used ropes to undergird the ship. Fearing they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor [and] were driven along.

27:18 We were tossed so violently [that] the next [day] [the men] began to jettison the cargo.

27:19 On the third [day], they threw the ship’s tackle {overboard} with [their] own hands.

27:20 [When] neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and [the great] storm continued to batter us, we abandoned all hope of being saved.

27:21 [After] [the men] had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up among them [and] said, “Men, you should have followed my advice not to sail from Crete. Then [you would have averted] this disaster and loss.

27:22 [But] now I urge you to keep up your courage, because you will not experience [any] loss of life, but only of the ship.

27:23 [Just last] night an angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, stood beside me

27:24 [and] said, ‘{Do} not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And look, God has granted you [the lives of] all who sail with you.’

27:25 So take courage, men, for I believe God that it will happen just as He told me.

27:26 However, we must run aground on some island.”

27:27 [On] the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea. About midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land.

27:28 They took soundings [and] found that [the water] [was] twenty fathoms [deep]. Going a little farther, they took another set of soundings that read fifteen fathoms.

27:29 Fearing that we would run aground on [the] rocks, they dropped four anchors from [the] stern [and] prayed for daybreak.

27:30 Meanwhile, the sailors attempted to escape from the ship. Pretending to lower anchors from [the] bow, they let the lifeboat {down} into the sea.

27:31 [But] Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these [men] remain with the ship, you cannot be saved.”

27:32 [So] the soldiers cut the ropes to the lifeboat and set it adrift.

27:33 Right up to daybreak, Paul kept urging them all to eat: “Today [is your] fourteenth day in constant suspense, without taking any food.

27:34 So for your [own] preservation, I urge you to eat something, because not a single hair of your head will be lost.”

27:35 [After] he had said this, [Paul] took bread [and] gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke [it] [and] began to eat.

27:36 They were all encouraged and took [some] food themselves.

27:37 Altogether there were 276 {} of us on [board].

27:38 [After] [the men] had eaten their fill, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

27:39 When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they sighted a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship {aground} if they could.

27:40 Cutting away the anchors, they left [them] in the sea as they loosened the ropes [that held] the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the [wind] [and] made for the beach.

27:41 But the vessel struck a sandbar [and] ran aground. The bow stuck fast [and] would not move, and the stern was being tattered by the pounding of the waves.

27:42 The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners so none of them could swim to freedom.

27:43 But the centurion, wanting to spare Paul’s [ life ], thwarted their plan. He commanded those who could swim to jump overboard first [and] get to land.

27:44 The rest [were to follow] on planks and various parts of the ship. In this way everyone was brought safely to land.

28:1 [Once] we were safely ashore, we learned that the island was called Malta.

28:2 The islanders showed us extraordinary kindness. They kindled a fire [and] welcomed all of us because [it was] raining and cold.

28:3 Paul gathered a bundle of sticks, and as he laid [them] on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened [itself] to his hand.

28:4 When the islanders saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “Surely this man is a murderer. [Although he] was saved from the sea, Justice {has} not allowed [him] to live.�

28:5 But [Paul] shook the creature {off} into the fire [and] suffered no ill effects.

28:6 [The islanders] were expecting him to swell up or suddenly drop dead. But after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds [and] said he was a god.

28:7 Nearby stood an estate belonging to the Publius, [the] chief official of the island. [He] welcomed us [and] entertained [us] hospitably [for] three days.

28:8 The father of Publius was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to [see] [him], and after praying [and] placing [his] hands on him, he healed [the man].

28:9 [After] this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured as well.

28:10 [The islanders] honored us in many ways and supplied [our] needs [when we were ready] to sail.

28:11 After three months we set sail in an Alexandrian ship that had wintered in the island. It had the Twin Brothers as a figurehead.

28:12 Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there three days.

28:13 From [there] we weighed anchor and came to Rhegium. After one day, a south wind came up, [and] on the second day we arrived at Puteoli.

28:14 [There] we found [some] brothers who invited us to spend [the week[ with them. And so we came to Rome.

28:15 The brothers there had heard about us [and] traveled as far as [the] Forum of Appius and [the] Three Taverns to meet us. [When} Paul saw [them], he was encouraged and gave thanks to God.

28:16 When we arrived in Rome, Paul was permitted to stay by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

28:17 After three days, he called together the leaders of the Jews. [When] they had gathered, he said to them, “Brothers, [although] I have done nothing against [our] people or the customs of our fathers, I was taken prisoner in Jerusalem [and] handed over to the Romans.

28:18 [They] examined me [and] wanted to release [me], because there was no basis for a death sentence against me.

28:19 But [when] the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, [even though] I have no [charge] to bring against my nation.

28:20 So for this reason I have called to see you and speak with [you]. [It is] because of the hope of Israel [that] I am bound with this chain.”

28:21 [The leaders] replied, “We have not received [any] letters about you from Judea, nor {have} any of the brothers [from there] reported or even mentioned anything bad about you.

28:22 But we consider your views {worth} hearing, because we know that [people] everywhere are speaking against this sect.”

28:23 So they set a day to [meet with Paul], [and] many [people] came to [the place] he was staying. He expounded to [them] from morning to evening, testifying about the kingdom of God and persuading them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and the Prophets.

28:24 Some [of them] were convinced by what he said, but [others] refused to believe.

28:25 They disagreed among [themselves] [and] began to leave [after] Paul had made [this final] statement: “The Holy Spirit was right when He spoke to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:

28:26 ‘Go to this people and say, “You will be ever hearing [but] never understanding; you will be ever seeing [but] never perceiving.”

28:27 For this people’s heart has grown callous; they hardly hear with [their] ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with [their] eyes, hear with [their] ears, understand with [their] hearts, and turn, and I would heal them.’

28:28 Be advised, therefore, that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!”

28:29 And he having said these things, the Jews went away, having much reasoning among themselves.

28:30 [Paul] stayed there two full years in his own rented house, welcoming all who came to [visit] him.

28:31 Boldly [and] freely he proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.