

# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## Prologue

Lk 1:1-4  
1:22  
Mt 28:19-20  
Lk 24:49  
Lk 24:51  
1 Tm 3:16  
10:40-41:  
13:31  
Mt 28:10  
1 In my earlier work,<sup>a</sup> Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and 1  
I taught from the beginning •until the day he gave his instructions to the 2  
apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit,<sup>b</sup> and was taken up to heaven.<sup>c</sup>  
He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: 3  
for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the  
kingdom of God.<sup>d</sup> •When he had been at table with them, he had told them not 4  
to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is'  
he had said 'what you have heard me speak about: •John baptised with water but 5  
you, not many days from now, will be baptised<sup>e</sup> with the Holy Spirit.'

19:8  
Lk 24:42-43  
||Lk 24:49  
2:33 +  
Ga 3:14  
Ep 1:13  
11:16  
Lk 3:16p

## The ascension

Now having met together,<sup>f</sup> they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are 6  
you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?'<sup>g</sup> •He replied, 'It is not for you to 7  
know times or dates<sup>h</sup> that the Father has decided by his own authority, •but 8  
you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you,<sup>i</sup> and then you will be  
my witnesses<sup>j</sup> not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and  
indeed to the ends of the earth'.<sup>k</sup>  
As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud<sup>l</sup> took him 9  
from their sight. •They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men 10  
in white were standing near them •and they said, 'Why are you men from Galilee 11  
standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into  
heaven, this same Jesus<sup>m</sup> will come back in the same way<sup>n</sup> as you have seen him  
go there.'

Dn 2:21  
Mt 24:36p  
1 Th 5:1-2  
Is 43:10  
Mt 28:19  
||Lk 24:47-48  
2 K 2:11  
Mk 16:19  
||Lk 24:50-51  
Jn 20:17  
Rm 10:6  
Ep 4:8-10  
1 P 3:22  
3:20  
Zc 14:4

## I. THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

### The group of apostles

So from the Mount of Olives, as it is called, they went back to Jerusalem, 12  
a short distance away, no more than a sabbath walk; •and when they reached 13  
the city they went to the upper room where they were staying; there were Peter  
and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew,  
James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Jude son of James.<sup>o</sup> •All 14  
these joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including  
Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.<sup>p</sup>

2:42,46; 6:4  
Rm 12:12  
Lk 23:49

### The election of Matthias

One day Peter stood up to speak to the brothers<sup>q</sup>—there were about a 15  
hundred and twenty persons in the congregation: •'Brothers, the passage of 16  
scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit, speaking through David,

1:20  
Ps 41:9  
Jn 13:18

foretells the fate of Judas, who offered himself as a guide to the men who  
 17 arrested Jesus—after having been one of our number and actually sharing this  
 18 ministry of ours. •As you know, he bought a field with the money he was paid  
 for his crime. He fell headlong and burst open, and all his entrails poured out.  
 19 Everybody in Jerusalem heard about it and the field came to be called the Bloody  
 20 Acre, in their language Hakeldama. •Now in the Book of Psalms it says:

*Let his camp be reduced to ruin,  
 Let there be no one to live in it.*

Lk 22:47

||Mt 27:3-10

Ws 4:19

Ps 69:25  
Jn 17:12

And again:

*Let someone else take his office.*

Ps 109:8

21 'We must therefore choose someone who has been with us the whole time that  
 22 the Lord Jesus was travelling round with us, •someone who was with us right  
 from the time when John was baptising until the day when he was taken up from  
 us—and he can act with us as a witness to his resurrection.'  
 23 Having nominated two candidates, Joseph known as Barsabbas, whose  
 24 surname was Justus, and Matthias, •they prayed, 'Lord, you can read everyone's  
 25 heart; show us therefore which of these two you have chosen •to take over this  
 ministry and apostolate, which Judas abandoned to go to his proper place'.  
 26 They then drew lots for them, and as the lot fell to Matthias, he was listed as  
 one of the twelve apostles.'

1:8 + 10:39

13:9 +

15:8  
Jr 11:20 +  
Lk 16:15  
Rv 2:23  
Ex 33:7 +  
1 S 14:41 +

1 a. The gospel of Luke.

b. This emphasises the part played by the Spirit in the first missionary activities of the apostles, vv. 5,8 and ch. 2, as in the opening of Christ's ministry, Lk 4:1,14,18.

c. The Western Text does not mention the ascension here.

d. The kingdom of God, Mt 4:17+, must be the main subject preached by the apostles, cf. Ac 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31, as it was the main thing preached by Christ, cf. Mt 3:2+.

e. The baptism of the Spirit foretold by John the Baptist, Mt 3:11p, and here promised by Jesus, will be initiated by the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, Ac 2:1-4. Subsequently, the apostles, obedient to Christ's command, Mt 28:19, will continue to make use of baptism in water, Ac 2:41; 8:12,38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5, as the ritual initiation into the messianic kingdom, cf. Mt 3:6+, but it will be 'in the name of Jesus', Ac 2:38+, and through belief in Christ as saviour, cf. Rm 6:4+, will be able to absolve from sins and to give the Spirit, Ac 2:38. Connected with this Christian baptism by water there is the companion rite of the imposition of hands, 1 Tm 4:14+, the purpose of which is to give the gifts of the Spirit in as manifest a way as they had been given at Pentecost, Ac 8:16-19; 9:17-18; 19:5-6 (but cf. 10:44-48); this is the origin of the sacrament of confirmation. Side by side with these Christian sacraments the baptism of John was for a time still being administered by certain of the less instructed early Christians, 19:3.

f. Ac 1:6 takes up the narrative broken off in Lk 24:49.

g. The apostles still identified the messianic kingdom with the political restoration of David's dynasty. Cf. Mt 4:17+.

h. Human history is the unfolding of salvation, and it develops through the 'times and dates', cf. Dn 2:21; 1 Th 5:1, that God has always foreseen (Rm 16:25+; 1 Co 2:7; Ep 1:4; 3:9,11; Col 1:26; 2 Tm 1:9; cf. Mt 25:34): first there are the 'times' of preparation, Heb 1:2; 9:9; 1 P 1:11, and of God's patience, Rm 3:26; Ac 17:30; then follows the appointed time Ga 4:4+, the moment long foretold for the Messiah to come and begin the era of salvation, Rm 3:26+; after this, the time that is to elapse before the *parousia* or final coming, 2 Co 6:2+; lastly, the great and final 'Day' 1 Co 1:8+ (preceded by the 'last days', 1 Tm 4:1+) and the Last Judgement itself, Rm 2:6+.

i. The Holy Spirit is a favourite theme of Luke

(Lk 4:1+); he talks mostly about the Holy Spirit as a Power, Lk 1:35; 24:49; Ac 1:8; 10:38; Rm 15:13 19; 1 Co 2:4,5; 1 Th 1:5; Heb 2:4, sent from God by Christ, Ac 2:33, to broadcast the Good News, 1. The Spirit gives the charismata, 1 Co 12:4f, that guarantee the message: the gift of tongues, Ac 2:4+, of miracles, 10:38, of prophecy, 11:27+; 20:23; 21:11, of wisdom, 6:3,5,10; 2. the Spirit gives strength to proclaim Jesus as Messiah in spite of persecution, 4:8,31; 5:32; 6:10; cf., Ph 1:19, and to bear witness to him, Mt 10:20; Jn 15:26; Ac 1:8; 2 Tm 1:7f, cf. following note; 3. the Spirit guides the Church in her major decisions: the admission of pagans, Ac 8:29,40; 10:19,44-47; 11:12-16; 15:8, without obligation to observe the Law, 15:28; Paul's mission to the pagan world, 13:2f; 16:6-7; 19:1 (Western Text), cf. Mt 3:16+. Ac also mentions the Spirit as received in baptism and forgiving sins 2:38; cf. Rm 5:5+.

j. The primary function of the apostles is to bear witness: not only to Christ's resurrection, Lk 24:48; Ac 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 13:31; 22:15, but also to the whole of his public life, Lk 1:21; Jn 15:27; Ac 1:22; 10:39f.

k. Nothing can limit the apostolic mission, Is 45:14+. The progress outlined here follows the geographical plan of Ac: Jerusalem was destined to receive the Good News, to be the centre from which it is now spreading, cf. Lk 2:38+.

l. The cloud is part of theophanies in O.T., Ex 13:22+, and in N.T. Lk 9:34-35p. In particular, Dn 7:13, it marks the coming, or *parousia*, of the Son of Man, Mt 24:30+; v. 11 of this passage; cf. 1 Th 4:17; Rv 1:7; 14:14-16.

m. Thus the Western Text. Text. Rec. 'this Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven'.

n. The glorious coming the *parousia* see notes on Mt 24 and Lk 17:22-37; 21:5-33.

o. 'Son' (of Alphaeus, of James) is not in the Greek. The apostle Jude is not the Jude 'brother' of Jesus, cf. Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3, and brother of James (Jude 1). Nor is it likely that the apostle James son of Alphaeus was James brother of the Lord, Ac 12:17; 15:13, etc.

p. Cousins of Jesus cf. Mt 12:46+.

q. The term means Christians, usually the laity as distinct from apostles and elders, cf. 11:1; 12:17; 17-18; Rm 1:13 etc.

r. 'he was listed as one of the twelve apostles' Western Text.

## Pentecost

Ex 23:14+ 2. When Pentecost day came round, they<sup>a</sup> had all met in one room, •when <sup>1</sup>  
 Ps 33:6; suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven,<sup>b</sup> the  
 104:30 noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; •and something <sup>3</sup>  
 Jn 3:8+; appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire;<sup>c</sup> these separated and came <sup>4</sup>  
 20:22  
 1:5+; 19:6 to rest on the head of each of them. •They were all filled with the Holy Spirit,  
 1:8+ and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit<sup>d</sup> gave them the gift of speech.  
 Ws 1:7  
 Lk 24:47 Now there were devout men<sup>e</sup> living in Jerusalem from every nation under <sup>5</sup>  
 Mt 28:19 heaven, •and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these <sup>6</sup>  
 Col 1:23 men speaking his own language.<sup>f</sup> •They were amazed and astonished. 'Surely' <sup>7</sup>  
 Gn 11:1-9 they said 'all these men speaking are Galileans? •How does it happen that each <sup>8</sup>  
 of us hears them in his own native language? •Parthians, Medes and Elamites; <sup>9</sup>  
 people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, •Phrygia <sup>10</sup>  
 and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; as well as visitors <sup>11</sup>  
 10:2+ from Rome—Jews and proselytes<sup>g</sup> alike—Cretans and Arabs; we hear them <sup>12</sup>  
 10:46 preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.' •Everyone was <sup>13</sup>  
 1 Co 14:23 amazed and unable to explain it; they asked one another what it all meant.  
 Some, however, laughed it off. 'They have been drinking too much new wine' <sup>14</sup>  
 they said.

## Peter's address to the crowd

3:4; 4:8; Then Peter stood up with the Eleven<sup>h</sup> and addressed them in a loud voice: <sup>14</sup>  
 5:8, 29; 'Men of Judaea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, make no mistake about <sup>15</sup>  
 10:5 this, but listen carefully to what I say. •These men are not drunk, as you <sup>16</sup>  
 2:33+ imagine; why, it is only the third hour of the day.<sup>i</sup> •On the contrary, this is <sup>17</sup>  
 what the prophet<sup>j</sup> spoke of:  
 Jl 3:1-5 In the days to come<sup>k</sup>—it is the Lord who speaks— <sup>18</sup>  
 Is 2:2 I will pour out my spirit on all mankind. <sup>19</sup>  
 Rm 7:5+ Their sons and daughters shall prophesy, <sup>20</sup>  
 Si 1:10 your young men shall see visions, <sup>21</sup>  
 11:27+; your old men shall dream dreams. <sup>22</sup>  
 21:9 Even on my slaves, men and women, <sup>23</sup>  
 5:12 in those days, I will pour out my spirit. <sup>24</sup>  
 Mt 24:29p I will display portents in heaven *above* <sup>25</sup>  
 and *signs* on earth *below*.  
 The sun will be turned into darkness <sup>26</sup>  
 and the moon into blood  
 before the great Day of the Lord dawns.<sup>l</sup>  
 Rm 10:9-13 All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.<sup>m</sup> <sup>27</sup>  
 1 Co 1:2  
 Mt 2:23+ 'Men of Israel, listen to what I am going to say:<sup>n</sup> Jesus the Nazarene was a <sup>28</sup>  
 10:38 man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that <sup>29</sup>  
 Lk 24:19 God worked through him when he was among you, as you all know. •This <sup>30</sup>  
 4:10 man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention<sup>o</sup> and foreknowledge <sup>31</sup>  
 1 Th 2:15 of God, you took and had crucified by men outside the Law.<sup>p</sup> You killed him, <sup>32</sup>  
 Ps 18:6 but God raised him to life, freeing him from the pangs of Hades;<sup>q</sup> for it was <sup>33</sup>  
 13:34-37 impossible for him to be held in its power since, •as David says of him:<sup>r</sup> <sup>34</sup>  
 Ps 16:8-11 *I saw the Lord before me always,* <sup>35</sup>  
*for with him at my right hand nothing can shake me.*  
*So my heart was glad* <sup>36</sup>  
*and my tongue cried out with joy;*  
*my body, too, will rest in the hope*  
*that you will not abandon my soul to Hades* <sup>37</sup>  
*nor allow your holy one to experience corruption.*  
*You have made known the way of life to me,* <sup>38</sup>  
*you will fill me with gladness through your presence.*

29 'Brothers, no one can deny that the patriarch David himself is dead and  
 30 buried: his tomb is still with us. •But since he was a prophet, and knew that  
 God *had sworn him an oath to make one of his descendants succeed him on the*  
 31 *throne*, •what he foresaw and spoke about was the resurrection of the Christ:  
 he is the one who was *not abandoned to Hades*, and whose body did not *experience*  
 32 *corruption*. •God raised this man Jesus to life, and all of us are witnesses to that.  
 33 Now raised to the heights by God's right hand,<sup>2</sup> he has received from the Father  
 the Holy Spirit, who was promised,<sup>3</sup> and what you see and hear is the outpouring  
 34 of that Spirit. •For David himself never went up to heaven;<sup>4</sup> and yet these  
 words are his:

2 S 7:12  
 Ps 132:11  
 Mt 9:27+

1:8+

1:4-5+  
 Ezk 36:27+

Mt 21:9,42  
 Ep 4:8-11

*The Lord said to my Lord:  
 Sit at my right hand  
 until I make your enemies  
 a footstool for you.*

Ps 110:1

36 'For this reason the whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made  
 this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.'<sup>5</sup>

2:23+; 9:22:  
 10:42; 13:  
 33  
 Rm 10:9  
 Ph 2:11+

2 a. Not the hundred and twenty 1:15-26, but the group mentioned in 1:13-14.

b. The Spirit is like the wind, and the same word is used for both 'spirit' and 'breath'.

c. The shape of the flames (Is 5:24; cf. Is 6:6-7) is here associated with the gift of tongues.

d. One element, vv. 4,11,13, of the Pentecost miracle is the gift of *glossolalia* common in the early Church: see 10:46; 11:15; 19:6; 1 Co 12-14; cf. Mk 16:17, cf. early prophecy in Israel. Nb 11:25-29; 1 S 10:5-6,10-13; 19:20-24; 1 K 22:10. Cf. the promise of Joel. 3:1-5, quoted by Peter, vv. 17f.

e. 'devout men' Sin. Western Text 'Now the Jews who were living in Jerusalem were men from every nation under heaven'. The other texts have both 'devout men' and 'Jews'.

f. A second characteristic of the Pentecost miracle: the apostles speak a universal language: the unity lost at Babel is restored. This symbolises and anticipates the apostles' worldwide mission.

g. Pagan converts to Judaism who joined the chosen race by being circumcised. These proselytes are not the same as the God-fearers, 10:2+, who admire the Jewish religion and attend the synagogue but do not accept circumcision or the ritual prescribed by the Law. Jews and proselytes are not here additional classes of people: the terms qualify the nations just enumerated.

h. Peter speaks as head of the apostolic body and occupies a leading position, cf. 1:15; 2:37; 3:4,6,12; 4:8,13; 5:3,8,9,15,29; cf. 10-11. See Mt 16:19+.

i. About 9 a.m.

j. Add. 'Joel'. Vv. 17-21 quoted as in Western Text; Alexandrian Text favours the LXX.

k. The messianic age.

l. The day of the Lord's coming in glory, the 'day of Yahweh'. Am 5:18+. In Christian preaching, this 'day' is that of Christ's return, Mt 24:1+.

m. The Christians style themselves 'those who invoke the name of the Lord', 9:14,21; 22:16; 1 Co 1:2; 2 Tm 2:22; the title 'Lord' no longer indicates Yahweh but Jesus, cf. Ph 2:11; Ac 3:16+. On Judgement day people will be received or rejected according as they have or have not invoked this name, i.e. acknowledged Jesus as Lord: see Ac 4:12 and Rm 10:9.

n. The content of the earliest apostolic preaching (the 'kerygma') is here summarised for the first time: cf. the five discourses of Peter, Ac 2:14-39; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; 10:34-43, and the discourse of Paul, 13:16-41. The kerygma is 1. a witness, 1:8+, to Christ's death and resurrection, 2:24+, and to his exaltation, 2:33+; 2:36+. 2. It also provides certain details of Christ's ministry: how it was heralded by John the Baptist, 10:37; 13:24, inaugurated by teaching and miracle, 2:22; 10:38, completed by the appearances of the risen Christ, 10:40,41; 13:31, and by the gift of the Spirit, 2:33; 5:32. 3. It places this story in its wider setting: it appeals to the past adducing the O.T.

prophecies, 2:23+; 2:25+, and it surveys the future, the advent of the messianic era, inviting Jews and pagans to repentance, 2:38+, so that Christ's glorious return may come the sooner, 3:20-21. The gospels, which are developments of the primitive preaching, adopt the same scheme.

o. The O.T. prophecies demonstrate this divine plan: Ac 3:18; 4:28; 13:29, cf. 8:32-35; 9:22; 10:43; 17:2-3; 18:5,28; 26:22-23,27; 28:23; Lk 18:31+; 22:22; 24:25-27,44.

p. In this case the Romans. The primitive kerygma accused the Jews in the same way and confronted them with that act of God which raised up Jesus, 2:32,36; 3:13-17; 4:10; 5:30-31; 7:52; 10:39-40; 13:27-30; 17:31; cf. Rm 1:4+; 1 Th 2:14+.

q. 'of Hades' Western Text; 'of death' Text. Rec. Cf. vv. 27 and 31. 'Hades' in LXX is *sheol*, Nb 16:33+; Mt 16:18+.

r. Quoted according to LXX. In the Hebr. text the psalmist prays only for deliverance from imminent death 'You will not allow your faithful one to see the pit'. Hence the argument presupposes the Greek version which, by translating 'pit' (=grave) as 'corruption', introduces a new idea.

s. Words borrowed from Ps 118 (v. 16 LXX 'The right hand of the Lord has raised me up') used in their preaching by the apostles who took it to be messianic: Ac 4:11; 1 P 2:7; Mt 21:9b,42p; 23:39; Lk 13:35; Jn 12:13; Heb 13:6. But it is possible to translate 'Having been raised up to the right hand of God' and to see in this an introduction to the quotation (v. 34) of Ps 110:1, which is another theme of apostolic preaching: Mt 22:44p; 26:64p; Mk 16:19; Ac 7:55,56; Rm 8:34; 1 Co 15:25; Ep 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 13:13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 P 3:22.

t. According to the prophets, the gift of the Spirit would characterise the messianic era. Ezk 36:27+ Peter explains the miracle his hearers have witnessed as the 'pouring out' of this spirit, foretold in Jl 3:1-2 by the risen Christ.

u. The argument is, apparently, that David lies in his tomb and therefore did not ascend into heaven; hence God's summons was addressed not to him but to the one who came out from the tomb. A variant reading 'for he himself says', in place of 'and yet these are his words' (i.e. it was said by, not to him), reduces the argument to that of Mt 22:43-45.

v. Conclusion of the argument from scripture: it is by his resurrection that Jesus has been constituted the 'Lord' of whom Ps 110 speaks and the 'Messiah' (Christ) to whom Ps 16 refers. From Ps 2:7 (Son of God), Ac 13:33+; Heb 1:5; 5:5; Rm 1:4+ develop a similar argument. Cf. also Ac 5:31 (leader and saviour); 10:42 and Rm 14:9 (Judge and Lord of living and dead); Ph 2:9-11 (glorified Lord).

### The first conversions

Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the apostles, 37  
 16:30 'What must we do, brothers?' • 'You must repent,'<sup>w</sup> Peter answered 'and every 38  
 Lk 3:10 one of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ<sup>x</sup> for the forgiveness of  
 1:5+ Mt 3:2+ 2:33+ your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. • The promise<sup>y</sup> that was 39  
 Is 57:19 made is for you and your children, and for all *those who are far away*,<sup>z</sup> for all  
 Jl 3:5 *those whom the Lord our God will call to himself.*' • He spoke to them<sup>aa</sup> for a long 40  
 Dt 32:5 time using many arguments, and he urged them, 'Save yourselves from this  
 Mt 17:17 Lk 9:41 perverse generation'. • They were convinced by his arguments, and they accepted 41  
 1:5+; 2:47 what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added  
 to their number.<sup>bb</sup>

### 4:32-35: The early Christian community<sup>cc</sup>

5:12-16 These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles,<sup>dd</sup> to the brotherhood,<sup>ee</sup> 42  
 1:14; 6:4 to the breaking of bread<sup>ff</sup> and to the prayers.<sup>gg</sup>  
 =5:11-12 The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep 43  
 impression on everyone.<sup>hh</sup>  
 =4:32,34-35 The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; • they sold 44  
 43 their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves  
 6:1 according to what each one needed.  
 5:12; 13:48 They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the 46  
 Lk 24:53 breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly<sup>ii</sup> and generously; • they praised 47  
 4:21,33; 5:13 God<sup>jj</sup> and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their  
 2:41+ community those destined to be saved.<sup>kk</sup>

### 14:8-10 The cure of a lame man

Lk 8:51 **3** Once, when Peter and John were going up to the Temple for the prayers at 1  
 the ninth hour,<sup>a</sup> • it happened that there was a man being carried past. He 2  
 was a cripple from birth; and they used to put him down every day near the  
 Temple entrance called the Beautiful Gate so that he could beg from the people  
 going in. • When this man saw Peter and John on their way into the Temple he 3  
 2:14+ begged from them. • Both Peter and John looked straight at him and said, 'Look 4  
 at us'. • He turned to them expectantly, hoping to get something from them, 5  
 but Peter said, 'I have neither silver nor gold, but I will give you what I have: 6  
 3:16+; 4:10 in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!'<sup>b</sup> • Peter then took him by 7  
 Mt 2:23+ the hand and helped him to stand up. Instantly his feet and ankles became firm,  
 Is 35:6 he jumped up, stood, and began to walk, and he went with them into the Temple, 8  
 Lk 7:22p walking and jumping and praising God. • Everyone could see him walking and 9  
 2:47+ praising God, • and they recognised him as the man who used to sit begging at 10  
 Lk 1:12+ the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. They were all astonished and unable to  
 5:5; 19:17 explain what had happened to him.

### Peter's address to the people

Everyone came running towards them in great excitement, to the Portico of 11  
 5:12 Solomon, as it is called, where the man was still clinging to Peter and John.  
 Jn 10:23 When Peter saw the people he addressed them, 'Why are you so surprised at 12  
 10:26; 14:15 this? Why are you staring at us as though we had made this man walk by our  
 Ex 3:6,15 own power or holiness? • You are Israelites, and it is *the God of Abraham, Isaac 13*  
 4:27 *and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, who has glorified his servant*<sup>c</sup> Jesus, the same  
 Is 52:13 Jesus you handed over<sup>d</sup> and then disowned<sup>e</sup> in the presence of Pilate after Pilate  
 2:23+ had decided to release him. • It was you who accused<sup>f</sup> the Holy One,<sup>g</sup> the Just 14  
 Lk 23:22+ One,<sup>h</sup> you who demanded the reprieve of a murderer • while you killed the prince 15  
 Lk 23:2,5 of life.<sup>i</sup> God, however, raised him from the dead, and to that fact we are the  
 19,25,47 witnesses; • and it is the name of Jesus which, through our faith in it, has 16  
 2:23+ brought back the strength of this man whom you see here and who is well known



to you. It is faith in that name that has restored this man to health, as you can all see.<sup>1</sup> 3:6; 4:10

- 17 'Now I know, brothers, that neither you nor your leaders had any idea what 13:27  
18 you were really doing;<sup>2</sup> •this was the way God carried out what he had foretold, 1 Co 2:8  
19 when he said through all his prophets that his Christ would suffer. •Now you 1 Tm 1:13  
20 must repent and turn to God,<sup>1</sup> so that your sins may be wiped out, •and so Lk 18:31  
21 that the Lord may send the time of comfort.<sup>m</sup> Then he will send you the Christ 2:38+  
22 he has predestined, that is Jesus,<sup>n</sup> •whom heaven must keep till the universal Mt 3:2+  
23 restoration<sup>o</sup> comes which God proclaimed, speaking through his holy prophets.<sup>p</sup> 2 P 3:11-13  
24 Moses, for example, said: *The Lord God will raise up a prophet like myself for you,*  
25 *from among your own brothers; you must listen to whatever he tells you. •The* Mt 3:23-24  
Mt 17:11  
7:37  
Dt 18:18,19  
Mt 16:14+  
Jn 1:21+

w. Each of the great apostolic discourses closes with a call to repentance (cf. Mt 3:2+) to obtain forgiveness of sins: Ac 3:19,26; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; cf. 17:30; 26:20; Lk 1:77; 3:8; 5:32; 13:3.

x. Baptism is administered 'in the name of Jesus Christ' (cf. 1:5+) and the recipient 'invokes the name of the Lord Jesus' (cf. 2:21+; 3:16+; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; 1 Co 1:13,15; 6:11; 10:2; Ga 3:27; Rm 6:3; cf. Jm 2:7. Such expressions are not necessarily the actual liturgical formulae of baptism, cf. Mt 28:19, they may simply indicate its significance, namely, that the baptised profess their faith in Christ, and Christ adopts those who thenceforth are dedicated to him.

y. The promise is addressed primarily to the Jews, 3:25-26; 13:46; Rm 9:4.

z. I.e. the pagans, alluding to Is 57:19 quoted and explained in Ep 2:13-17; cf. also Ac 22:21.

aa. Or 'he bore witness', cf. 8:25; 28:23.

bb. Luke repeatedly and deliberately notes the Church's numerical growth: v. 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1,7; 9:31+; 11:21,24; 16:5; cf. 12:24; 13:48-49; 19:20.

cc. Cf. this passage with 4:32-35 and 5:12-16. These three composite editorial 'summaries' paint similar pictures of life in the first Christian community.

dd. Not the proclamation of the Good News to non-Christians, cf. 15:35, but instructions for the newly converted in which the scriptures were explained in the light of the Christian Event.

ee. What constitutes this 'brotherhood' or 'fellowship' is a united purpose, cf. Ga 2:9; Phm 6; 1 Jn 1:3,6,7, and a care for the poorer members to the extent of holding all goods in common, cf. Rm 15:26; 2 Co 8:4; 9:13; Ph 1:5+. In a word: charity.

ff. See v. 46; 20:7,11; 27:35; Lk 24:30,35. In itself the phrase suggests a Jewish meal at which the one who presides pronounces a blessing before dividing the bread. For Christians, however, it implies the eucharistic ceremony, 1 Co 10:16; 11:24; Lk 22:19p; 24:35+. This, v. 46, was celebrated not in the Temple but in private houses; an ordinary meal would accompany it, cf. 1 Co 11:20-34.

gg. Prayers in common, with the apostles presiding, 6:4; 4:24-30. Is one example. Cf. 1:14,24; 12:5. There are many examples in Ac of the constant prayer Jesus recommended (Mt 6:5) and practised (Mt 14:23+). There is the prayer in common presided over by the apostles (1:14; 4:24-30; 6:4) with the breaking of bread as the central ceremony (2:42,46; 20:7,11); the prayer for special occasions like the election and ordination to office in the Church (1:24; 6:6; 13:3; 14:23—accompanied in the last two cases by fasting); the confirmation of the Samaritans (8:15); the prayer in time of persecution (4:24-30; 12:5,12). There are also individual prayers: that of Stephen for himself and his persecutors (7:59-60), the prayer of Paul after his vision (9:5), of Peter and Paul before they work miracles (9:40; 28:8), of Peter when God sends him to Cornelius (10:9; 11:5) who is himself a man of prayer (10:2,4,30-31), of Paul and Silas in prison (16:25), of Paul when he bids farewell at Miletus (20:36) and at Tyre. In most of these cases the prayer is a petition (see also the petition for forgiveness in 8:22-24), but there is also the prayer of praise (16:25) and thanksgiving (28:15). Prayer is evidence of faith: 'to invoke the name of Jesus Christ' is the mark of a Christian (2:21,38; 9:14,21; 22:16).

hh. Add. 'in Jerusalem, and upon all there was great fear'.

ii. Joy is the sequel of faith: 8:39; 13:48,52; 16:34; cf. 5:41; Lk 1:14+; Rm 15:13.

jj. Cf. 3:8,9; 4:21; 13:48; 21:20; Lk 2:20+.

kk. When judgement comes the members of the Christian community are assured of salvation, 2:21+, cf. 13:48 and St Paul's letters. The Church is thus identified with 'the remnant of Israel', Is 4:3+. Cf. Rm 9:27. 3. a. The time of evening sacrifice, cf. Ex 29:39,42; Lk 1:8-10+; Ac 10:3,30.

b. Var. 'get up and walk', cf. Lk 5:23-24, etc.

c. The Christians see in Jesus the mysterious 'servant' of Is 52:13-53:12 (quoted in part in Ac 8:32-33), cf. Is 42:1+. See below, v. 26; 4:27,30. His 'glorification' by God is his resurrection, v. 15. Cf. Jn 17:5+.

d. Cf. Is 53:12. Same allusion to the Servant Song in Rm 4:25; 8:32; Ga 2:20; Ep 5:2,25; Ac 7:52.

e. As they disowned Moses, 7:35, himself a figure of Christ.

f. Var. 'disowned'.

g. Cf. with Ac 4:27,30: Jesus is 'the holy servant of God'. He is also 'the holy one of God' and 'the holy one' *par excellence*: Ac 2:27; Lk 1:35; 4:34; Mk 1:24+; Jn 6:69; Rv 3:7.

h. Cf. Is 53:11; Ac 7:52; 22:14. See also Mt 27:19; Lk 23:47; 1 P 3:18; 1 Jn 2:1.

i. The one who leads his subjects to full life, imparting his own life to them. In the Roman liturgy the Easter Sequence borrows the expression *Dux vitae mortuus regnat vivus*. This same title of 'leader' is given, 7:27,35, to Moses who prefigures Christ. Cf. 5:31+; Heb 2:10.

j. The 'name', according to the ancients, is inseparable from the person and shares his prerogatives, see Ex 3:14+. By invoking the name of Jesus, 2:21+, 38+, his power is stirred to action, 3:6; 4:7,10,30; 10:43; 16:18; 19:13; Lk 9:49; 10:17; see also Jn 14:13,14; 15:16; 16:24,26; 20:31. Faith is of course required if this invocation is to be effective, cf. Ac 19:13-17; Mt 8:10+.

k. Apparently an allusion to Lk 23:34; cf. Ac 7:60.

l. By 'repentance' man 'comes back' to God, cf. Mt 3:2+. The pagans must return to God by forsaking idols; see 1 Th 1:9; Ga 4:9; 1 Co 10:7,14; Ac 14:15; 15:19; 26:18,20; the Jews must turn to the Lord by acknowledging Jesus as Lord: cf. 2 Co 3:16; Ac 9:35. The expression of Lk 1:16; Ac 11:21; cf. 1 P 2:25 is somewhat different. Cf. also Is 6:10, quoted in Ac 28:27; Mt 13:15; Mk 4:12; cf. Jn 12:40.

m. This epoch coincides with that of Christ's coming and of 'the restoration of all things', cf. 1:7+; Rm 2:6+, a period which, as the apostles thought, would see the re-establishment of the kingdom in Israel, Ac 1:6-7. Repentance and conversion hasten its coming, cf. 2 P 3:12.

n. Or 'Jesus who has been appointed Christ for you' cf. 2:36+. When the time comes, Christ who became King Messiah through his resurrection will return to establish his kingdom for ever and to make all creation new, v. 21, cf. Rm 8:19+.

o. Term used by the prophets for the return from Exile (foretaste of the messianic age), Jr 15:19, etc.

p. Add. 'from ancient times'.

Mt 17:5p *man who does not listen to that prophet is to be cut off from the people.* •In fact, 24  
Lk 24:25 all the prophets that have ever spoken, from Samuel onwards, have predicted these days.<sup>a</sup>

Si 44:19-21 'You are the heirs of the prophets, the heirs of the covenant God made with 25  
Rm 9:4; 15:8 our ancestors when he told Abraham, *in your offspring all the families of the earth*  
Gn 12:3+; will be blessed. •It was for you in the first place that God raised up<sup>a</sup> his servant 26  
22:18 and sent him to bless you<sup>a</sup> by turning every one of you from your wicked  
Ga 3:8-29 ways.'<sup>a</sup>

### Peter and John before the Sanhedrin

Lk 22:4+ 4 While they were still talking to the people the priests came up to them, accom- 1  
5:17-18,24 panied by the captain of the Temple and the Sadducees.<sup>a</sup> •They were extremely 2  
23:6-8; 24: annoyed at their teaching the people the doctrine of the resurrection from the  
15:21 dead by proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus. •They arrested them, but as it 3  
1 Co 15: was already late, they held them till the next day. •But many of those who had 4  
20-23 listened to their message became believers, the total number of whom had now  
2:41+ risen to something like five thousand.

The next day the rulers, elders and scribes<sup>b</sup> had a meeting in Jerusalem •with 5  
5:17 Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, Jonathan,<sup>c</sup> Alexander and all the members 6  
Lk 3:2+ of the high-priestly families. •They made the prisoners stand in the middle and 7  
Lk 20:2 began to interrogate them, 'By what power, and by whose name have you men  
1:8+; done this?' •Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, addressed them, 'Rulers of 8  
2:14+, the people, and elders! •If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness 9  
22+ to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, •"then I am glad to tell you all, 10  
Mt 10:20 and would indeed be glad to tell the whole people of Israel, that it was by the  
3:6,16+ name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the one you crucified, whom God raised  
2:23-24+ from the dead, by this name and by no other that this man is able to stand up  
Ps 118:22 perfectly healthy, here in your presence, today. •This is *the stone rejected* by you 11  
2:33+ *the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone.* •For of all the names in the 12  
Mt 21:42p *world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.*<sup>c</sup>

They were astonished at the assurance shown by Peter and John, considering 13  
Lk 12:11- they were uneducated laymen; and they recognised them as associates of Jesus; 14  
12p; 21: but when they saw the man who had been cured standing by their side, they could 15  
12-15p find no answer. •So they ordered them to stand outside while the Sanhedrin had 16  
Jn 7:15 a private discussion. •'What are we going to do with these men?' they asked. 17  
Jn 11:47-48 'It is obvious to everybody in Jerusalem that a miracle has been worked through 18  
them in public, and we cannot deny it. •But to stop the whole thing spreading 19  
14:15+ any further among the people, let us caution them never to speak to anyone in this name again.'

So they called them in and gave them a warning<sup>d</sup> on no account to make 20  
5:28,40 statements or to teach in the name of Jesus. •But Peter and John retorted, 'You 21  
5:29 must judge whether in God's eyes it is right to listen to you and not to God. •We 22  
1:8+; cannot promise to stop proclaiming what we have seen and heard.' •The court 23  
Jr 20:9 repeated the warnings and then released them; they could not think of any way  
1 Co 9:16 to punish them, since all the people were giving glory to God for what  
2 Co 13:8 had happened. •The man who had been miraculously cured was over forty years 24  
2 Tm 1:7-8 old.

### The apostles' prayer under persecution

As soon as they were released they went to the community and told them 25  
everything the chief priests and elders had said to them. •When they heard it 26  
14:15+ they lifted up their voice to God all together. 'Master,' they prayed 'it is you 27  
who made heaven and earth and sea, and everything in them; •you it is who said 28  
through the Holy Spirit and speaking through our ancestor David, your servant:'<sup>e</sup>

Ps 2:1-2  
Mt 26:3

*Why this arrogance among the nations,  
these futile plots among the peoples?*

26

*Kings on earth setting out to war,  
princes making an alliance,  
against the Lord and against his Anointed.<sup>h</sup>*

- 27 'This is what has come true: in this very city Herod and Pontius Pilate' made Lk 23:12  
28 an alliance with the pagan nations and the peoples of Israel, against your holy  
29 servant Jesus whom you anointed,<sup>i</sup> •but only to bring about the very thing that you 3:13+; 10:38  
29 in your strength and your wisdom<sup>k</sup> had predetermined should happen. •And 2:23+  
now, Lord, take note of their threats and help your servants to proclaim your 18:9-10;  
30 message with all boldness, •by stretching out your hand to heal and to work 28:31  
31 miracles and marvels through the name of your holy servant Jesus.' •As they Ep 6:19  
prayed, the house where they were assembled rocked; they were all filled with 4:33  
the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim the word of God boldly.<sup>l</sup> 3:16+  
1:8+

### The early Christian community<sup>m</sup>

- 32 The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed for 2:42-47;  
his own use anything that he had, as everything they owned was held in common. 5:12-16  
33 The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with Jn 17:11.21  
great power,<sup>n</sup> and they were all given great respect.<sup>o</sup> Ph 1:27  
= 2:44-45  
34 None of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or 1:8+  
35 houses would sell them, and bring the money from them, •to present it to the 4:30  
apostles; it was then distributed to any members who might be in need. Dt 15:4  
Lk 12:33  
2:44-45

### The generosity of Barnabas

- 36 There was a Levite of Cypriot origin called Joseph whom the apostles surnamed  
37 Barnabas (which means 'son of encouragement').<sup>p</sup> •He owned a piece of land 11:22; 13:1  
and he sold it and brought the money, and presented it to the apostles. 1 Co 9:6  
Ga 2:1

### The fraud of Ananias and Sapphira

- 1 5 There was another man, however, called Ananias. He and his wife, Sapphira,  
2 agreed to sell a property; •but with his wife's connivance he kept back part of  
3 the proceeds, and brought the rest and presented it to the apostles. •'Ananias,' Peter Jn 22:3  
said 'how can Satan have so possessed you that you should lie to the Holy Spirit Jn 13:2,27  
4 and keep back part of the money from the land? •While you still owned the land, Dt 23:22-24  
wasn't it yours to keep, and after you had sold it wasn't the money yours to do  
with as you liked? What put this scheme into your mind? It is not to men that

Jos 7

q. The earliest Christian preaching made a point of showing how Jesus fulfilled O.T. prophecy: he was a descendant of David, 2:30; 13:34, he appeared as a prophet, Moses' successor, 3:22f, cf. Mt 16:14+; Jn 1:21+, he suffered, Ac 2:23+, he was the stone rejected by the builders (the Jews) but now set in a place of honour, 4:11, he rose again, 2:25-31; 13:33-37, and is at God's right hand, 2:34f.

r. Thus implementing the promise recalled in v. 22, because the Greek verb means both 'to raise up' and 'to raise up again'. God by raising Christ from the dead fulfils the promises made to the fathers, 13:32-34; 24:14-15; 26:6-8.

s. Cf. 26:23; 2 Tm 1:10; Ga 3:14. Christ by his resurrection brought to the world the blessing promised to Abraham, v. 25.

t. Others translate 'so long as each of you turns from your wicked ways'.

4 a. The priestly aristocratic faction opposed the Pharisees who were the pious and popular party, see Mt 3:7+. The Sadducees are always represented as denying the doctrine of resurrection, Ac 23:6-8; Lk 20:27-38p. More than once the mutual hostility of these two parties produces an alliance of Pharisees with Christians, cf. Ac 5:34; 23:8-9; 26:5-8; Lk 20:39.

b. The Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, Israel's supreme court.

c. Cf. Lk 22:66+. Var. 'John'.

d. For vv. 10-12 we follow the Western Text.

e. 'Jesus' means 'God saves', Mt 1:21.

f. Apparently a solemn legal warning. In matters of this kind the accused (unless they were rabbis) could not be imprisoned except for a second offence (the case in 5:28).

g. Text corrupt, translation uncertain.

h. 'Anointed': the Greek word is 'Christ'; it is explained here, v. 27, according to its etymological sense.

i. Representing respectively the 'kings' and 'princes' the Psalm mentions, For 'Herod', cf. Lk 23:6-16.

j. The 'anointing' that has constituted him King Messiah, 'the Christ', cf. Mt 3:16+.

k. Lit. 'your hand and counsel'.

l. A miniature Pentecost, cf. the earlier one, 2:1f.

m. A summary like that of 2:42-47. The prevailing idea is here the pooling of resources; this precludes two examples: Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira. The emphasis on sacrificing possessions is characteristic of Luke's religious outlook.

n. A power that showed itself by miracles. Cf. 2:22; 3:12; 4:7; 6:8; 8:13; 10:38; 1 Th 1:5; 1 Co 2:4-5.

o. By the populace: cf. 2:47; 4:21; 5:13.

p. The Greek word means both 'consolation' and 'encouragement'. Cf. 11:23. 'son of', a semitic expression here meaning 'with an aptitude for'. On Barnabas, see 9:27; 11:22-30; 12:25; ch. 13-15; 1 Co 9:6; Ga 2: Col 4:10.



you have lied, but to God.' •When he heard this Ananias fell down dead. This 5  
 3:10+ made a profound impression on everyone present. •The younger men got up, 6  
 wrapped the body in a sheet, carried it out and buried it.

About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had taken place. 7  
 2:14+ Peter challenged her, 'Tell me, was this the price you sold the land for?' 'Yes,' 8  
 she said 'that was the price.' •Peter then said, 'So you and your husband have 9  
 Nb 21:5-6  
 1 Co 10:9;  
 11:30-32 agreed to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test! What made you do it? You hear  
 those footsteps? They have just been to bury your husband; they will carry you out,  
 too.' •Instantly she dropped dead at his feet. When the young men came in they 10  
 found she was dead, and they carried her out and buried her by the side of her  
 20:28  
 Lk 1:12+ husband.<sup>a</sup> •This made a profound impression on the whole Church<sup>b</sup> and on all 11  
 1 Co 1:2 who heard it.

#### 2:42-47; 4:32-35 The general situation<sup>c</sup>

2:46; They all<sup>d</sup> used to meet by common consent in the Portico of Solomon. •No one 12b  
 3:11 else ever dared to join them, but the people were loud in their praise •and the 13  
 2:47 numbers of men and women who came to believe in the Lord increased steadily.<sup>e</sup> 14  
 2:41 So many signs and wonders were worked among the people at the hands of the 12a  
 2:19 apostles •that the sick were even taken out into the streets and laid on beds and 15  
 Mk 6:56 sleeping-mats in the hope that at least the shadow of Peter might fall across some 16  
 19:12 of them as he went past. •People even came crowding in from the towns round 16  
 8:6-8;  
 28:8-9 about Jerusalem, bringing with them their sick and those tormented by unclean 16  
 Lk 4:40-41 spirits, and all of them were cured.

#### The apostles' arrest and miraculous deliverance

4:6 Then the high priest<sup>f</sup> intervened with all his supporters from the party of the 17  
 4:1-3 Sadducees. Prompted by jealousy, •they arrested the apostles and had them put 18  
 13:45 in the common gaol.  
 12:7-10; But at night the angel of the Lord opened the prison gates and said as he led 19  
 16:25-26 them out, •'Go and stand in the Temple, and tell the people all about this new 20  
 Mt 1:20+ Life'.<sup>g</sup> •They did as they were told; they went into the Temple at dawn and 21  
 13:26, 46+ began to preach.

#### A summons to appear before the Sanhedrin

When the high priest arrived, he and his supporters convened the Sanhedrin  
 —this was the full Senate<sup>h</sup> of Israel—and sent to the gaol for them to be brought.  
 But when the officials arrived at the prison they found they were not inside, so  
 they went back and reported, •'We found the gaol securely locked and the warders  
 on duty at the gates, but when we unlocked the door we found no one inside'.  
 4:1+ When the captain of the Temple and the chief priests heard this news they 24  
 wondered what this could mean. •Then a man arrived with fresh news. 25  
 'At this very moment' he said 'the men you imprisoned are in the Temple.  
 They are standing there preaching to the people.' •The captain went with his 26  
 Lk 20:19p; men and fetched them. They were afraid to use force in case the people stoned 26  
 22:2p them.

When they had brought them in to face the Sanhedrin, the high priest 27  
 demanded an explanation. •'We gave you a formal warning' he said 'not to 28  
 4:18+ preach in this name,<sup>i</sup> and what have you done? You have filled Jerusalem with 28  
 Mt 27:25 your teaching, and seem determined to fix the guilt of this man's death on us.'  
 2:14+; In reply Peter and the apostles said, 'Obedience to God comes before obedience 29  
 4:19 to men; •it was the God of our ancestors who raised up Jesus, but it was you 30  
 2:23+ who had him executed by hanging on a tree.<sup>j</sup> •By his own right hand God has 31  
 Ps 118:16 now raised him up to be leader and saviour,<sup>k</sup> to give repentance and forgiveness 32  
 2:33+ of sins through him to Israel. •We are witnesses to all this, we and the Holy 32  
 38+; 4: Spirit<sup>l</sup> whom God has given to those who obey him.' •This so infuriated them 33  
 12+; 1:8+ that they wanted to put them to death.  
 Jn 15:27  
 15:28  
 Jn 7:39

### Gamaliel's intervention

- 34 One member of the Sanhedrin, however, a Pharisee called Gamaliel, who was 22:3  
a doctor of the Law and respected by the whole people,<sup>m</sup> stood up and asked  
35 to have the men taken outside for a time. •Then he addressed the Sanhedrin,  
36 'Men of Israel, be careful how you deal with these people. •There was Theudas 23:9  
who became notorious not so long ago. He claimed to be someone important, Jn 7:50f  
and he even collected about four hundred followers; but when he was killed,  
37 all his followers scattered and that was the end of them. •And then there was  
Judas the Galilean, at the time of the census, who attracted crowds of supporters; Lk 2:2+-  
38 but he got killed too, and all his followers dispersed.<sup>n</sup> •What I suggest, therefore,  
is that you leave these men alone and let them go. If this enterprise, this movement Mt 15:13  
39 of theirs, is of human origin it will break up of its own accord; •but if it does in Lk 20:4  
fact come from God you will not only be unable to destroy them, but you might  
find yourselves fighting against God.'<sup>o</sup> 2 M 7:19
- 40 His advice was accepted; •and they had the apostles called in, gave orders  
for them to be flogged, warned them not to speak in the name of Jesus and 22:19  
41 released them. •And so they left the presence of the Sanhedrin glad to have had Mt 10:17  
the honour of suffering humiliation for the sake of the name.<sup>p</sup> 4:18  
Mt 5:10-11
- 42 They preached every day both in the Temple and in private houses, and their 1 Co 4:9f  
proclamation of the Good News of Christ Jesus was never interrupted. Ph 2:9-10  
18:5+

## II. THE EARLIEST MISSIONS

### The institution of the Seven

- 1 **6** About this time, when the number of disciples<sup>a</sup> was increasing, the Hellenists 2:41+  
made a complaint against the Hebrews:<sup>b</sup> in the daily distribution their own 2:45

5 a. Prompted by love of money, Ananias and Sapphira tried to deceive the apostles and the Holy Spirit which was leading and directing them; this was their sin.

b. The meaning of this term, adopted from the O.T., cf. Ac 7:38, to signify the messianic community, Mt 16:18+, expanded as Christianity developed. It originally indicated the mother church in Jerusalem, Ac 8:1; 11:22, etc.; later the individual churches throughout Judaea, Ga 1:22; 1 Th 2:14; cf. Ac 9:31, and among the pagans, Ac 13:1; 14:23; 15:41; 16:5; Rm 16:1,4; 1 Co 1:2+, etc.; Jm 5:14; 3 Jn 9; Rv 1:4; 2:1, etc., referring to their 'gatherings', 1 Co 11:18; 14:23,34, etc., cf. Ac 19:32; Phm 2, or to their regions, Rm 16:5; 1 Co 16:19; Col 4:15. Lastly, it stands for the Church united under God, Ac 20:28; 1 Co 10:32; 12:28, etc., for the Church as Body and Bride of Christ, Col 1:18+; Ep 5:23-32, and for the Church as including the whole cosmos, Ep 1:23+.

c. This third 'summary' stresses the miraculous power of the apostles, cf. 2:43; 4:33. Vv. 12b-14 interrupt the development of this theme.

d. Here, it seems, not the apostles but all the faithful.

e. Rather than 'More and more joined (the community) as believers in the Lord'. Cf. 11:24.

f. Var. 'Annas the high priest', cf. 4:6.

g. Lit. 'all the words (cf. v. 32; 10:37) of this Life'. This means the same thing as 'the message of salvation', 13:26. The purpose of Christian preaching is the 'salvation', cf. 4:12; 11:14; 15:11; 16:17,30-31, and 'life', cf. 3:15; 11:18; 13:46,48, promised to those 'who invoke the name of the Lord', 2:21,40,47; 4:12.

h. The terms 'Sanhedrin' and 'Senate' both indicate the same council, the Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, cf. Lk 22:66+.

i. Western Text " 'Did we not expressly forbid you to preach in that name? And now...' Then Peter answered, 'Which must we obey? God or man?' 'God' he said. And Peter then replied, 'The God of our ancestors...' "

j. The phrase is repeated in 10:39 (cf. 13:29). It

recalls Dt 21:23, quoted in Ga 3:13, cf. 1 P 2:24.

k. The title matches 'Prince of life', 3:15+; it also corresponds to 'Prince and Redeemer' applied to Moses as a prefiguring of Christ, 7:35 (cf. 7:25). See also Heb 2:10; 12:2. There is an implicit comparison of Jesus with Moses.

l. Cf. Mt 10:20p; Jn 15:26-27; Ac 1:8.

m. Gamaliel I, Paul's teacher, 22:3, belonged to the school of Hillel and was the leading exponent of the more liberal and humane interpretation of the Law. The policy he urges here is in line with that of the Pharisaic party, cf. 4:1+.

n. Josephus mentions the revolts of Theudas and of Judas the Galilean but the dates he gives seem improbable. Both must have taken place about the time Jesus was born.

o. A variant introduces the idea of ritual purity '...leave them alone and do not dirty your hands. For if ... God, not only you but kings and tyrants will be powerless to destroy them. Do not therefore touch these men lest you find yourselves at war with God.'

p. The name for whose sake the apostles suffer, cf. 21:13; 1 P 4:14; 3 Jn 7, the name they preach, 4:10,12,17,18; 5:28,40; cf. 3:6,16; 8:12,16; 9:15,16,27,28, and which the Christians invoke, 2:21; 4:12; 9:14,21; 22:16, is the name, i.e. the person, of Jesus, 3:16+, the name he received at his resurrection, 2:36+, 'the name above all other names'. This name was 'Lord', hitherto reserved to God, Ph 2:9-11+.

6 a. 'Disciples': a new use of the term, peculiar to Ac, to indicate the Christians who are thus associated with the small circle of those first adherents of Jesus who are called by this name in the gospels.

b. 'Hellenists': Jews from outside Palestine; in Jerusalem they had their own synagogues where the Bible was read in Greek. The 'Hebrews' were native Palestinian Jews; their language was Aramaic but in their synagogues the Bible was read in Hebr. This distinction made its way into the early Church. Missionary initiative was to come from the hellenistic group.

widows were being overlooked. •So the Twelve called a full meeting of the 2  
disciples and addressed them, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the word  
of God so as to give out food; •you, brothers, must select<sup>c</sup> from among yourselves 3  
seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom; we will  
hand over this duty to them, •and continue to devote ourselves to prayer and 4  
to the service of the word'.<sup>d</sup> •The whole assembly approved of this proposal and 5  
elected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, together with Philip,  
Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus of Antioch, a convert to  
Judaism.<sup>e</sup> •They presented these to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands 6  
on them.<sup>f</sup>

The word of the Lord continued to spread:<sup>g</sup> the number of disciples in Jeru- 7  
salem was greatly increased, and a large group of priests made their submission  
to the faith.

### Stephen's arrest

Stephen was filled with grace and power and began to work miracles and 8  
great signs among the people. •But then certain people came forward to debate 9  
with Stephen, some from Cyrene and Alexandria who were members of the  
synagogue called the Synagogue of Freedmen,<sup>h</sup> and others from Cilicia and Asia.  
They found they could not get the better of him because of his wisdom, and 10  
because it was the Spirit that prompted what he said. •So they procured some 11  
men to say, 'We heard him using blasphemous language against Moses and against  
God'. •Having in this way turned the people against him as well as the elders 12  
and scribes, they took Stephen by surprise, and arrested him and brought him  
before the Sanhedrin. •There they put up false witnesses to say, 'This man 13  
is always making speeches against this Holy Place and the Law. •We have heard 14  
him say that Jesus the Nazarene is going to destroy this Place and alter the  
traditions that Moses handed down to us.'<sup>i</sup> •The members of the Sanhedrin all 15  
looked intently at Stephen, and his face appeared to them like the face of an  
angel.<sup>j</sup>

### Stephen's speech

7 The high priest asked, 'Is this true?' •He replied,<sup>a</sup> 'My brothers, my fathers, 1/2  
listen to what I have to say. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham,  
while he was in Mesopotamia before settling in Haran,<sup>b</sup> •and said to him, "*Leave 3  
your country and your family and go to the land I will show you*". •So he left 4  
Chaldaea and settled in Haran; and after his father died God made him leave  
Haran and come to this land where you are living today. •God did not give him 5  
a single square foot of this land to call his own, yet he promised to *give it to him 6  
and after him to his descendants, childless though he was*. •The actual words God  
used when he spoke to him are that *his descendants would be exiles in a foreign land, 7  
where they would be slaves and oppressed for four hundred years*. •"*But I will pass 7  
judgement on the nation that enslaves them*" God said "*and after this they will leave, 8  
and worship me in this place*."<sup>c</sup> •Then he made the covenant of circumcision: so  
when his son Isaac was born he circumcised him on the eighth day. Isaac did the  
same for Jacob, and Jacob for the twelve patriarchs.  
•The patriarchs were *jealous of Joseph and sold him into slavery in Egypt*. But 9  
God was with him, •and rescued him from all his miseries by making him wise 10  
enough to attract the attention of Pharaoh king of Egypt, who *made him governor 11  
of Egypt* and put him in charge of the royal household. •Then a famine came that  
caused much suffering throughout Egypt and Canaan, and our ancestors could  
find nothing to eat. •When Jacob heard that there was grain for sale in Egypt, 12  
he sent our ancestors there on a first visit, •but it was on the second that Joseph 13  
made himself known to his brothers, and told Pharaoh about his family. •Joseph 14  
then sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, a total of *seventy-five people*.  
Jacob went down into Egypt and after he and our ancestors had died there, 15

- 16 their bodies were brought back to Shechem and buried in the tomb that Abraham had bought and paid for from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem.<sup>d</sup> Gn 50:13
- 17 'As the time drew near for God to fulfil the promise he had solemnly made  
18 to Abraham, our nation in Egypt *grew larger and larger, •until a new king came* Ex 1:7,8  
19 *to power in Egypt who knew nothing of Joseph. •He exploited our race, and ill-* Ex 1:10,11  
20 *treated our ancestors, forcing them to expose their babies to prevent their* Ex 1:22  
21 *surviving. •It was at this period that Moses was born, a fine child and favoured* Ex 2:2  
22 *by God. He was looked after for three months in his father's house, •and after* Heb 11:23f  
23 *he had been exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up* Ex 2:5,10  
24 *as her own son. •So Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians and* Lk 24:19  
25 *became a man with power both in his speech and his actions.* Ex 2:11
- 26 'At the age of forty' he decided to visit *his countrymen, the sons of Israel. •When*  
27 *he saw one of them being ill-treated he went to his defence and rescued the man by* Ex 2:12  
28 *killing the Egyptian. •He thought his brothers realised that through him God* Ex 2:13  
29 *would liberate them, but they did not. •The next day, when he came across* Ex 2:14  
30 *some of them fighting, he tried to reconcile them. 'Friends,' he said 'you are*  
31 *brothers; why are you hurting each other?' •But the man who was attacking his*  
32 *fellow countryman pushed him aside. 'And who appointed you' he said 'to be our*  
33 *leader and judge?' •Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'*  
34 *Moses fled when he heard this<sup>e</sup> and he went to stay in the land of Midian, where* Ex 2:15  
35 *he became the father of two sons.*
- 36 'Forty years later, *in the wilderness near Mount Sinai, an angel appeared to him* Ex 3:1-2  
37 *in the flames of a bush* that was on fire. •Moses was amazed by what he saw.  
38 *As he went nearer to look at it the voice of the Lord was heard, •"I am the God of* Ex 3:4,6  
39 *your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob". Moses trembled and did not*  
40 *dare to look any more. •The Lord said to him, "Take off your shoes; the place where* Ex 3:5  
41 *you are standing is holy ground. •I have seen the way my people are ill-treated in* Ex 3:7-8  
42 *Egypt, I have heard their groans, and I have come down to liberate them. So come*  
43 *here and let me send you into Egypt."* Ex 3:10
- 44 'It was the same Moses that they had disowned<sup>h</sup> when they said, "*Who* Ex 2:14  
*appointed you to be our leader and judge?*"' who was now sent to be both leader

c. Var. 'We shall select'.

d. When the community met for public worship the apostles had two functions: they recited the prayers and were responsible also for the *catechesis* (the doctrinal elaboration of the Good News).

e. Luke does not call the chosen seven 'deacons', but twice uses the word *diakonía* ('service' v. 4; translated 'distribution' in v. 1). All seven have Greek names; the last is a proselyte, cf. 2:11+. The hellenistic Christians now have their own organisation independent of the Hebrew group.

f. Lit. 'and they prayed and laid their hands on them': possibly a gesture of the community, cf. 13:1-3. more probably (v. 3) of the apostles.

g. A fresh formula, see also 12:24; 19:20; cf. Lk 1:80+, here juxtaposed with the earlier one, see Ac 2:41+.

h. Probably the descendants of Jews carried off to Rome by Pompey in 63 B.C. who were sold into slavery and later released.

i. The 'false witnesses' at the trial of Jesus similarly objected that he 'would destroy the Temple'. There is also a similarity in the climax of the two trials, Ac 7:56-57; Mt 26:62-66. The allegations concerning Mosaic practice will be made in Paul's case also, Ac 15:1,5; 21:21,28; 25:8; 28:17.

j. The sight of an angel induces religious awe, cf. Jg 13:6. The face of Moses, reflecting the glory of God as he came down from Sinai, produced the same effect, Ex 34:29-35; 2 Co 3:7-18; so also the appearance of Jesus was changed, Mt 17:2; Lk 9:29. The members of the Sanhedrin in their turn witness a transfiguration, that of Stephen as he contemplates the glory of God, Ac 7:55-56. The narrative, interrupted by the insertion of Stephen's discourse, 7:1-54, is resumed in 7:55.

7 a. The discourse opens with a summary of the stories of Abraham and Joseph, vv. 2-16; it goes on to

expound the history of Moses, vv. 17-43 (cf. the charge made against Stephen, 6:11). With Moses' divine mission of salvation Stephen contrasts the attitude of Israel: rejection, disobedience, faithlessness—traditional themes (cf. Dt) but here elaborated with the Christian Event in mind. When Stephen speaks of Moses he is thinking of Christ whom Moses prefigured: the Jews react now as the Israelites did then. From the subsequent history of Israel Stephen selects only the building of the Temple; his purpose is to point out that God does not dwell in man-made temples, vv. 44-50 (cf. the allegation in 6:13). The speech ends with a fierce diatribe, vv. 51-53, which uses one of the themes of the earliest Christian preaching, cf. 2:23+.

b. According to Gn 11:31 the apparition took place at Haran. Stephen follows a non-biblical tradition.

c. Mt. Horeb, but Stephen says 'this place' (i.e. the Jerusalem Temple) instead.

d. 'father of Shechem': this detail is taken from Gn 33:19. Var. 'from the sons of Hemor, son of Shechem', 'from the sons of Emmor at Shechem', 'from the sons of Emmor (inhabitants) of Shechem'. V. 16 follows a non-biblical tradition.

e. According to Jewish traditions.

f. By raising up Jesus from the dead God has appointed him 'leader', cf. 5:31, and 'judge', cf. 10:42; 17:31.

g. In Ex 2:15 Moses runs away because he is afraid of Pharaoh; here it is because his compatriots reject him.

h. The Bible does not apply this verb to Moses, but in Ac 3:13-14 it is applied to Jesus. Nor does the Bible give the name 'redeemer' to Moses. The image of Christ shades into that of Moses who prefigured him.

and redeemer through the angel who had appeared to him in the bush. •It was 36  
 Ex 7:3 Moses who, after performing *miracles and signs in Egypt*, led them out across the 37  
 Nb 14:33 Red Sea and *through the wilderness for forty years*. •It was Moses who told the 37  
 Am 5:25 sons of Israel, "*God will raise up a prophet like myself for you from among* 38  
 Dt 4:10; your own brothers".<sup>1</sup> •When they held the assembly<sup>1</sup> in the wilderness it was only 38  
 9:10;18:16 through Moses that our ancestors could communicate with the angel who had 39  
 Jn 1:17 spoken to him on Mount Sinai;<sup>k</sup> it was he who was entrusted with words of life<sup>l</sup>  
 Ga 3:19+ to hand on to us. •This is the man that our ancestors refused to listen to: they 39  
 Nb 14:3 pushed him aside, *turned back to Egypt* in their thoughts,<sup>m</sup> •and said to Aaron, 40  
 Ex 32:1,23 "*Make some gods to be our leaders; we do not understand what has come over this* 41  
 Ex 32:4,6 *Moses who led us out of Egypt*". •It was then that *they made a bull calf and offered* 41  
*sacrifice to the idol*. They were perfectly happy with something they had made 42  
 for themselves. •God turned away from them and abandoned them to the 42  
 worship of the army of heaven,<sup>n</sup> as scripture says in the book of the prophets:

Am 5:25-27  
(LXX)

*Did you bring me victims and sacrifices in the wilderness  
 for all those forty years, you House of Israel?*

*No, you carried the tent of Moloch on your shoulders  
 and the star of the god Rephan,  
 those idols that you had made to adore.*

*So now I will exile you even further than Babylon.*

43

•While they were in the desert our ancestors possessed the Tent of Testimony 44  
 that had been constructed according to the instructions God gave Moses, telling 45  
 Ex 25:40 him to *make an exact copy of the pattern* he had been shown. •It was handed 45  
 Heb 8:5 down from one ancestor of ours to another until Joshua brought it into the 46  
 country we had conquered from the nations which were driven out by God as 46  
 Ps 132:5 asked permission to *have a temple built for the House<sup>o</sup> of Jacob*, •though it was 47  
 1 K 6:2 *Solomon* who actually *built God's house* for him. •Even so the Most High does 48  
 17:24 not live in a house that human hands have built: for as the prophet says: 48  
 Heb 9:11,24

Is 66:1-2

*With heaven my throne  
 and earth my footstool,  
 what house could you build me,  
 what place could you make for my rest?  
 Was not all this made by my hand?*

49

50

•You stubborn people, with your pagan hearts and pagan ears. You are always 51  
 Ex 33:3+ resisting the Holy Spirit,<sup>p</sup> just as your ancestors used to do. •Can you name 52  
 2 Ch 30:7-8; 36:14-16 a single prophet your ancestors never persecuted? In the past they killed those 52  
 Is 63:10; Jr 4:4+ who foretold the coming of the Just One, and now you have become his 53  
 Mt 23:34-35 betrayers, his murderers. •You who had the Law brought to you by angels are 53  
 Jn 8:44 the very ones who have not kept it.<sup>q</sup>

They were infuriated when they heard this, and ground their teeth at him. 54

### The stoning of Stephen. Saul as persecutor

But Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory 55  
 Ex 24:16+ of God, and Jesus standing at God's right hand.<sup>q</sup> •'I can see heaven thrown open' 56  
 Mt 26:64p+ he said 'and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.' •At this all the 57  
 Dn 7:13; Mt 8:20+ members of the council shouted out and stopped their ears with their hands; then 58  
 Heb 13:12+ they all rushed at him, •sent him out of the city and stoned him. The wit- 58  
 22:20; 26:10 nesses<sup>r</sup> put down their clothes at the feet of a young man called Saul.<sup>s</sup> •As they 59  
 Ga 1:13+ were stoning him, Stephen said in invocation,<sup>t</sup> 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'. 59  
 Ps 31:5; Lk 23:46 Then he knelt down and said aloud, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them'; 60  
 Lk 23:34 and with these words he fell asleep. 8 <sup>a</sup>Saul entirely approved of the killing. 1

That day a bitter persecution started against the church in Jerusalem, and 61  
 everyone<sup>b</sup> except the apostles fled to the country districts of Judaea and Samaria.<sup>c</sup>



2 There were some devout people, however, who buried Stephen and made great mourning for him.

3 Saul then worked for the total destruction of the Church; he went from house to house arresting both men and women and sending them to prison.

9:1-2; 22:4;  
26:10-11  
1 Co 15:9  
Ga 1:13  
Ph 3:6  
1 Tm 1:13

### Philip in Samaria

4 Those who had escaped went from place to place preaching the Good News.  
5 One of them was Philip who went to a Samaritan town<sup>d</sup> and proclaimed the Christ to them.<sup>e</sup> •The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw  
7 them for themselves. •There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured.  
8 As a result there was great rejoicing in that town.

=11:19  
6:5; 21:8  
18:5+  
5:16  
Mt 8:29+  
28:8-9  
2:46+

### Simon the magician

9 Now a man called Simon had already practised magic arts in the town and astounded the Samaritan people. He had given it out that he was someone  
10 momentous, •and everyone believed what he said; eminent citizens and ordinary  
11 people alike had declared, 'He is the divine power that is called Great'.<sup>f</sup> •They had only been won over to him because of the long time he had spent working  
12 on them with his magic. •But when they believed Philip's preaching of the Good News about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were  
13 baptised, both men and women, •and even Simon himself became a believer. After his baptism Simon, who went round constantly with Philip, was astonished when he saw the wonders and great miracles that took place.

1:5+

14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word  
15 of God, they sent Peter and John to them, •and they went down there, and  
16 prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, •for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.  
17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

11:1,22  
Jn 4:38  
Lk 8:51+  
1:5+; 19:2,6  
10:44  
1:5+  
1 Tm 4:14+

i. A messianic text already cited, 3:22. One other than Moses—the Messiah—is to play a similar part, Mt 16:14+; Jn 1:21+.

j. Lit. 'at the time of the assembly'. The word also means 'church', cf. 5:11+. Dt uses 'day of assembly' to mean the final occasion when the Law was promulgated, Ex 19:10-25. From the earliest days Christians have seen the Church as the successor to this solemn 'assembly' of the chosen people in the desert.

k. Moses acted as mediator between 'the angel' and the people. 'The angel of Yahweh' in the earliest texts is identical with Yahweh as manifesting himself, Gn 16:7+, cf. Mt 1:20+. Later, a distinction was made between Yahweh and his angel in order to emphasise the divine transcendence. Thus Moses is represented as in immediate touch not with God but with one or several angels. There are traces of this idea in Ga 3:19; Heb 2:2.

l. To obey the Law is to live, Dt 4:1; 8:1,3; 30:15-16, 19-20; 32:46-47; Lv 18:5, quoted in Ga 3:12; Rm 10:5; the Law therefore is referred to as 'the statutes of life' Ezk 33:15; Ba 3:9. For the Christian, the gospel preaching is 'the word of life', Ph 2:16; cf. Ac 5:20, i.e. 'the word of salvation', Ac 13:26. Since life springs from God's word, this word is itself 'living': cf. Heb 4:12; 1 P 1:23. And Jesus is himself 'the Word of life': 1 Jn 1:1. m. Cf. Nb 14:3 and Ez 16:3. Cf. Ezk 20:8-14.

n. Biblical phrase for the stars, often worshipped as gods.

o. Var. 'for the God'.

p. Who spoke through Moses and the prophets.

q. Stephen's vision is to be related to his transfiguration, 6:15+.

r. The false witnesses mentioned in 6:13-14. It was for the hostile witnesses to initiate the execution of the sentence, Dt 17:7.

s. St Paul.

t. A good example of 'invoking the name of the Lord', 2:21+.

8 a. Vv. 1-4 are made up of a number of brief remarks: Stephen's burial (v. 2), the natural conclusion of the foregoing narrative; Saul's campaign against the Christians (vv. 1a and 3) which links the account of the stoning of Stephen, cf. 7:58b, with what appears to be its sequel, namely Paul's conversion. 9:1-30; finally a note on the Church persecuted and scattered (vv. 1b-4) which introduces the narrative of Philip's mission, 8:5-40, and that of Peter, 9:32-11:18; v. 4 is found again in 11:19. We have here, therefore, a preliminary sketch of the various themes developed in the following chapters up to ch. 12.

b. 'everyone': a very general statement. The persecution in fact seems to have been directed principally against the Hellenists, cf. 6:1,5, and it was this group, scattered by persecution, that gave the church its first missionaries, cf. v. 4; 11:19-20.

c. Second stage of the Church's expansion, cf. 1:8. The third begins with the foundation of the church of Antioch, 11:20.

d. Var. 'the town of Samaria', 'the town of Caesarea'. The reference is probably not to the town called Samaria, by this time a hellenistic city and known as Sebaste, but to the province: those who are evangelised are the 'Samaritans' in the Jewish sense of the word, i.e. akin in blood and religion but cut off from Israel's community and living in heresy, cf. Jn 4:9+; Mt 10:5-6+.

e. The Samaritans, too, expected the Messiah, cf. Jn 4:25.

f. Or, less probably, 'that is called Megalich' (Aramaic for 'Revealing'). Evidently it was thought that Simon's supernatural power issued from some indwelling force of the high God.

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the imposition of hands 18  
by the apostles, he offered them some money. •'Give me the same power' he said 19  
'so that anyone I lay my hands on will receive the Holy Spirit.' •Peter answered, 20  
13:10 'May your silver be lost forever, and you with it, for thinking that money could  
Jn 4:10 buy what God has given for nothing!<sup>o</sup> •You have no share, no rights, in this: 21  
Is 55:1 God can see how your heart is warped. •Repent of this wickedness of yours, and 22  
Mt 10:8 pray to the Lord; you may still be forgiven for thinking as you did; •it is plain 23  
Dt 29:17 to me that you are trapped in the bitterness of gall and the chains of sin.'<sup>a</sup>  
Pr 5:22 'Pray to the Lord for me yourselves' Simon replied ' so that none of the things 24  
Jr 4:18 you have spoken about may happen to me.'<sup>t</sup>  
Heb 12:16  
1:8+ Having given their testimony and proclaimed the word of the Lord, they went 25  
back to Jerusalem, preaching the Good News to a number of Samaritan villages.

### Philip baptises a eunuch

Mt 1:20+ The angel of the Lord<sup>i</sup> spoke to Philip saying, 'Be ready to set out at noon'<sup>t</sup> 26  
along the road that goes from Jerusalem down to Gaza, the desert road'. •So he 27  
1 K 8:41f set off on his journey. Now it happened that an Ethiopian<sup>i</sup> had been on pilgrimage  
Ps 68:31 to Jerusalem; he was a eunuch and an officer at the court of the kandake, or  
Is 56:3-7 queen, of Ethiopia, and was in fact her chief treasurer. •He was now on his way 28  
home; and as he sat in his chariot he was reading the prophet Isaiah. •The 29  
1:8+ Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and meet that chariot'. •When Philip ran up, he 30  
heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, 'Do you understand what you  
Rm 10:14 are reading?' •'How can I' he replied 'unless I have someone to guide me?' So 31  
he invited Philip to get in and sit by his side. •Now the passage of scripture he 32  
was reading was this:<sup>m</sup>

Is 53:7-8  
Lk 18:31+

*Like a sheep that is led to the slaughter-house,  
like a lamb that is dumb in front of its shearers,  
like these he never opens his mouth.  
He has been humiliated and has no one to defend him.  
Who will ever talk about his descendants,  
since his life on earth has been cut short !*

33

The eunuch turned to Philip and said, 'Tell me, is the prophet referring to 34  
Lk 24:27 himself or someone else?' •Starting, therefore, with this text of scripture Philip 35  
proceeded to explain the Good News of Jesus to him.

Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'Look, 36  
10:47; 16:33 there is some water here; is there anything to stop me being baptised?'<sup>n</sup> •He 38  
1:5+ ordered the chariot to stop, then Philip and the eunuch both went down into  
the water and Philip baptised him. •But after they had come up out of the water 39  
1 K 18:12+ again Philip was taken away by the Spirit of the Lord,<sup>o</sup> and the eunuch never  
Lk 24:31-32 saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. •Philip found that he had reached 40  
2:46+ Azotus and continued his journey proclaiming the Good News in every town as far  
21:8 as Caesarea.

### The conversion of Saul<sup>a</sup>

=22:5-16  
=26:10-18

8:3  
Ga 1:12-17

9:21; 19:9  
23: 22:4;  
24:14, 22

2 P 2:2

9 Meanwhile Saul was still breathing threats to slaughter the Lord's disciples. 1  
He had gone to the high priest •and asked for letters addressed to the 2  
synagogues in Damascus, that would authorise him to arrest and take to Jerusalem  
any followers of the Way,<sup>b</sup> men or women, that he could find.<sup>c</sup>

Suddenly, while he was travelling to Damascus and just before he reached 3  
the city, there came a light from heaven all round him. •He fell to the ground, 4  
and then he heard a voice saying, 'Saul, Saul,<sup>d</sup> why are you persecuting me?'  
Mt 25:40 'Who are you, Lord?' he asked, and the voice answered, 'I am Jesus, and you 5  
1 Co 8:12 are persecuting me.' •Get up now and go into the city, and you will be told what 6  
you have to do.' •The men travelling with Saul stood there speechless, for 7  
Dn 10:7 though they heard the voice they could see no one. •Saul got up from the ground, 8

but even with his eyes wide open he could see nothing at all, and they had to lead him into Damascus by the hand. •For three days he was without his sight, and took neither food nor drink.

- 10 A disciple called Ananias who lived in Damascus had a vision in which he  
11 heard the Lord say to him, 'Ananias!' When he replied, 'Here I am, Lord', •the Lord said, 'You must go to Straight Street and ask at the house of Judas for someone called Saul, who comes from Tarsus. At this moment he is praying,  
12 having had a vision/ of a man called Ananias coming in and laying hands on him to give him back his sight.'
- 13 When he heard that, Ananias said, 'Lord, several people have told me about  
14 this man and all the harm he has been doing to your saints<sup>g</sup> in Jerusalem. •He has only come here because he holds a warrant from the chief priests to arrest  
15 everybody who invokes your name.' •The Lord replied, 'You must go all the same, because this man is my chosen instrument to bring my name before pagans  
16 and pagan kings and before the people of Israel;<sup>h</sup> •I myself will show him how  
17 much he himself must suffer for my name'. •Then Ananias went. He entered the house, and at once laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, I have been sent by the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on your way here so that you may  
18 recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit'.<sup>i</sup> •Immediately it was as though scales fell away from Saul's eyes and he could see again. So he was  
19 baptised there and then, •and after taking some food he regained his strength.

### Saul's preaching at Damascus

- 20 After he had spent only a few days with the disciples in Damascus, •he began  
21 preaching in the synagogues, 'Jesus is the Son of God'.<sup>j</sup> •All his hearers were amazed. 'Surely' they said 'this is the man who organised the attack in Jerusalem

g. The Holy Spirit is supremely the Gift of God, cf. 2:38; 10:45; 11:17; Lk 11:9,13; the idea recurs in the *Veni Creator*.

h. 'Simony' (trafficking in sacred things) gets its name from this incident.

i. Western Text adds 'and he wept bitterly without ceasing'.

j. Referred to as 'the Spirit' in vv. 29 and 39.

k. Or 'towards the south'.

l. 'Ethiopia' began beyond the first cataract of the Nile; Nubia or the Sudan. It was ruled by queens bearing the generic name 'kandake'.

m. Quoted from the LXX, here somewhat obscure and deriving from a Hebr. text itself obscure and probably corrupt. On the use of Is 53 in early Christian preaching, see 3:13+.

n. V. 37 is a very ancient gloss preserved in the Western Text and suggested by the baptismal liturgy "And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may'. And he replied, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'."

o. Var. West. 'the Holy Spirit came down on the eunuch and the angel of the Lord carried Philip away'.

9 a. Crucial event in the Church's history. Luke gives three accounts whose discrepancies of detail are explained by their differing literary forms: the second and third accounts are found in Paul's discourses. See also Ga 1:12-17. The incident took place probably in 36 A.D., about 12 years (14 if we reckon as the ancients did) before the council of Jerusalem, Ga 2:1f; cf. Ac 15, held in 49.

b. The 'Way' is the way of life characteristic of the Christian community; the term is used, by extension, for the community itself. When men follow this 'Way' God is served as he wishes to be served, Mt 22:16p, cf. 7:13-14; 21:32; 1 Co 12:31; 2 P 2:2; Ps 119:1f; Pr 4:10f; Jr 12:16, etc. This unqualified use of the word is peculiar to Ac, 18:25,26; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22.

c. The Roman authority recognised the high priest's jurisdiction over the members of Jewish communities even outside Palestine; according to 1 M 15:21 this even included right of extradition.

d. Aramaic ('Hebrew', 26:14) form of Saul's name.

e. Whatever is done to the disciples for the sake

of the name of Jesus is done to Jesus himself, Mt 10:40+.

f. Lit. 'having seen'; var. 'having seen in a vision'.  
g. Since God is the Holy One *par excellence*, Is 6:3, those consecrated to his service are called 'holy', Lv 17:1+. The term, applied originally to the people of Israel, Ex 19:6+, and in particular to the community of the messianic era, Dn 7:18+, is especially apt for the Christians who are the new 'holy race', 1 P 2:5,9, called, Rm 1:7; 1 Co 1:2; Ep 1:4; 2 Tm 1:9, by their baptismal consecration, Ep 5:26f, to a blameless life, 1 Co 7:34; Ep 1:4; 5:3; Col 1:22, which makes them holy as God is holy, 1 P 1:15f, cf. 1 Jn 3:3, and like Jesus himself, 'the Holy One of God', Mk 1:24+. In the early community it becomes the usual term for the Christians, in Palestine first, Ac 9:13,32,41; Rm 15:26,31; 1 Co 16:1,15; 2 Co 8:4; 9:1,12, and then in all the churches, Rm 8:27; 12:13; 16:2,15; 1 Co 6:1f; 14:33; 2 Co 13:12; Ep 1:15; 3:18; 4:12; 6:18; Ph 4:21f; Col 1:4; 1 Tm 5:10; Phm 5,7; Heb 6:10; 13:24; Jude 3 (and in the introductory formulae of the letters 2 Co 1:1, etc.). In Rv 5:8; 8:3 etc. the word is used more specifically of the Christians who witness by their death. At times its application may be restricted to the leaders, the 'apostles and prophets', Ep 3:5 and Col 1:26; Ep 3:8; 4:12; Rv 18:20. Lastly, as in the O.T., Jb 5:1+, it may indicate the angels, Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26; Ac 10:22; Jude 14; Rv 14:10, and in some cases it is doubtful whether the reference is to angels or to the saints in glory, Ep 1:18; Col 1:12; 1 Th 3:13; 2 Th 1:10.

h. Cf. Jr 1:10. Paul's mission is 'to all men', Ac 22:15, to the pagan nations, 26:17; this agrees with what Paul himself writes in Ga 1:16, cf. Rm 1:5; 11:13; 15:16-18; Ga 2:2,8,9; Ep 3:8; Col 1:27; 1 Tm 2:7. On the 'kines', cf. Ac 26:2+.

i. Characteristic Lucan phrase, Lk 1:15,41,67; Ac 2:4; 4:8,31; 9:17; 13:9. Cf. Lk 4:1+.

j. 'Son of God' corresponds to 'Christ' in v. 22. Cf. Mt 4:3+. We meet the title 'Son of God' only once more in Ac, 13:33. It is characteristic of Pauline Christology, Ga 1:16; 2:20; 4:4,6; Rm 1:3-4,9; 1 Th 1:10; cf. Rm 9:5+.

10:3  
Gn 22:1+  
9:17; 28:8  
1 Tm 4:14+  
9:41-42;  
26:10  
Rm 1:7;  
12:13;  
1 Co 1:2; 6:2  
2 Co 1:1  
2:21+  
22:27  
Rm 1:8  
1 Co 9:16-17  
15:26; 21:13  
Mt 10:22+  
1 Co 4:9-13+  
22:14; 26:16  
1 Co 9:1;  
15:8  
Tb 11:10-15  
1:5+  
Ga 1:16-17

13:33

against the people who invoke this name, and who came here for the sole  
 9:2 purpose of arresting them to have them tried by the chief priests?" •Saul's power 22  
 increased steadily, and he was able to throw the Jewish colony at Damascus into  
 2:36+; complete confusion by the way he demonstrated that Jesus was the Christ.  
 18:5,28

Some time passed,<sup>k</sup> and the Jews worked out a plot to kill him, •but news of 23  
 2 Co 11:32- it reached Saul. To make sure of killing him they kept watch on the gates day 24  
 33  
 Jos 2:15 and night, •but when it was dark the disciples' took him and let him down from 25  
 the top of the wall, lowering him in a basket.

#### Ga 1:18-19 Saul's visit to Jerusalem<sup>m</sup>

12:17 When he got to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all 26  
 4:36-37 afraid of him; they could not believe he was really a disciple. •Barnabas, 27  
 however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how  
 the Lord had appeared to Saul and spoken to him on his journey, and how he  
 had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. •Saul now started to go 28  
 13:46+ round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord.  
 5:41+ But after he had spoken to the Hellenists,<sup>n</sup> and argued with them, they became 29  
 =22:17-21 determined to kill him. •When the brothers knew, they took him to Caesarea, 30  
 11:25 and sent him off from there to Tarsus.<sup>o</sup>

#### A lull

The churches<sup>p</sup> throughout Judaea, Galilee and Samaria were now left in peace, 31  
 2:41+; building themselves up, living in the fear of the Lord, and filled with the consola-  
 20:32  
 1 Co 8:1 tion of the Holy Spirit.<sup>q</sup>

#### Peter cures a paralytic at Lydda

Peter visited one place after another and eventually came to the saints living 32  
 down in Lydda. •There he found a man called Aeneas, a paralytic who had been 33  
 bedridden for eight years. •Peter said to him, 'Aeneas, Jesus Christ cures you: 34  
 19:17 get up and fold up your sleeping mat'. Aeneas got up immediately;<sup>r</sup> •everybody 35  
 who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they were all converted to the Lord.

#### Peter raises a woman to life at Jaffa

13:9+ At Jaffa there was a woman disciple called Tabitha, or Dorcas in Greek,<sup>s</sup> 36  
 Lk 12:33+ who never tired of doing good or giving in charity. •But the time came when she 37  
 1 K 17:19 got ill and died, and they washed her and laid her out in a room upstairs. •Lydda 38  
 is not far from Jaffa, so when the disciples heard that Peter was there, they sent  
 two men with an urgent message for him, 'Come and visit us as soon as possible'.

Peter went back with them straightaway, and on his arrival they took him 39  
 to the upstairs room, where all the widows stood round him in tears, showing  
 him tunics and other clothes Dorcas had made when she was with them. •Peter 40  
 Mk 5:40-41 sent them all out of the room and knelt down and prayed. Then he turned to  
 the dead woman and said, 'Tabitha, stand up'. She opened her eyes, looked at  
 Peter and sat up. •Peter helped her to her feet, then he called in the saints and 41  
 9:13+; widows and showed them she was alive. •The whole of Jaffa heard about it and 42  
 20:10  
 19:17 many believed in the Lord.

Lk 9:4 Peter stayed on some time in Jaffa, lodging with a leather-tanner called Simon. 43

#### 15:7 Peter visits a Roman centurion<sup>a</sup>

Lk 7:2,4-5 10 One of the centurions of the Italica cohort stationed in Caesarea was 1  
 Ga 2:12  
 2:11+ called Cornelius. •He and the whole of his household were devout and 2  
 Lk 12:33+ God-fearing,<sup>b</sup> and he gave generously to Jewish causes and prayed constantly  
 Lk 18:1 to God.

27:23 One day at about the ninth hour he had a vision in which he distinctly saw 3  
 Mt 1:20+ the angel of God come into his house and call out to him, 'Cornelius!' •He stared 4  
 9:10+  
 Lk 1:12+ at the vision in terror and exclaimed, 'What is it, Lord?' 'Your offering of prayers

- 5 and alms' the angel answered 'has been accepted by God.' •Now you must send  
6 someone to Jaffa and fetch a man called Simon, known as Peter, •who is lodging  
7 with Simon the tanner whose house is by the sea.' •When the angel who said  
this had gone, Cornelius called two of the slaves and a devout soldier of his staff,  
8 told them what had happened, and sent them off to Jaffa.
- 9 Next day, while they were still on their journey and had only a short distance  
to go before reaching Jaffa, Peter went to the housetop at about the sixth hour  
10 to pray. •He felt hungry and was looking forward to his meal, but before it was  
11 ready he fell into a trance •and saw heaven thrown open and something like a big  
12 sheet being let down to earth by its four corners;<sup>d</sup> •it contained every possible  
13 sort of animal and bird, walking, crawling or flying ones. •A voice then said  
14 to him, 'Now, Peter; kill and eat!' •But Peter answered, 'Certainly not, Lord;  
15 I have never yet eaten anything profane or unclean'. •Again, a second time, the  
voice spoke to him, 'What God has made clean, you have no right to call  
16 profane'.<sup>e</sup> •This was repeated three times, and then suddenly the container was  
drawn up to heaven again.
- 17 Peter was still worrying over the meaning of the vision he had seen, when the  
men sent by Cornelius arrived. They had asked where Simon's house was and  
18 they were now standing at the door, •calling out to know if the Simon known as  
19 Peter was lodging there. •Peter's mind was still on the vision and the Spirit<sup>f</sup> had  
20 to tell him, 'Some men<sup>g</sup> have come to see you. •Hurry down, and do not hesitate  
21 about going back with them; it was I who told them to come.' •Peter went down  
22 and said to them, 'I am the man you are looking for; why have you come?' •They  
said, 'The centurion Cornelius, who is an upright and God-fearing man, highly  
regarded by the entire Jewish people, was directed by a holy angel to send for you  
23 and bring you to his house and to listen to what you have to say'. •So Peter  
asked them in and gave them lodging.
- Next day, he was ready to go off with them, accompanied by some of the  
24 brothers from Jaffa. •They reached Caesarea the following day, and Cornelius  
was waiting for them. He had asked his relations and close friends to be there,  
25 and as Peter reached the house Cornelius went out to meet him, knelt at his feet  
26 and prostrated himself. •But Peter helped him up. 'Stand up,' he said 'I am only  
27 a man after all!' •Talking together they went in to meet all the people assembled  
28 there, •and Peter said to them, 'You know it is forbidden for Jews to mix with  
people of another race and visit them, but God has made it clear to me that  
29 I must not call anyone profane or unclean. •That is why I made no objection
- 2:14+  
16:9  
11:5-17  
Lv 11  
Ezk 4:14  
Gn 1:31+  
1:8+  
Lk 7:4-5  
3:12; 14:15  
Rv 19:10  
11:3; 15:9  
Ga 2:12,  
15-16

k. Three years, according to Ga 1:17-18; Paul's stay in Arabia belongs to this period. Luke's statement is not detailed.

l. Var. 'his disciples'.

m. Paul mentionst his visit, Ga 1:18-19. He observes that at that time the churches in Judaea did not yet know him by sight, but says nothing of the part Barnabas played. He states that, of the apostles, he saw none but Peter, and James the brother of the Lord; Ac, generalising, speaks vaguely of 'the apostles'.

n. Var. 'the Greeks' (i.e. the pagans); same variant in 11:20. The hellenistic Christians (cf. 6:1+) are the most active proselytisers, just as the hellenistic Jews were the most active opponents of Christian propaganda, 6:9f; 7:58; 9:1; 21:27; 24:19.

o. Where Barnabas later finds him, 11:25. Compare this with Ga 1:18-21 and with Ac 22:17-21.

p. 'the churches' Western and Antiochene Texts; 'the Church' Alexandrian Text.

q. Joy in the faith, 2:46+. Others render 'they thrived through the comfort (or: by the help; or: thanks to the encouragement) of the Holy Spirit'.

r. For similar miracles: Lk 5:18-26p; 13:11-13; Jn 5:1-14; Ac 3:1-10 (and 4:22); 14:8-10.

s. I.e. 'gazelle'.

10 a. For Luke, Cornelius' conversion has a wide application. Its significance for the Church at large appears from the narrative itself and from its emphasis on the visions of Peter and of Cornelius, but especially

from the way the author deliberately links this incident to the decision of the 'Council of Jerusalem', cf. 15: 7-11, 14. There seem to be two separate lessons here. First, God himself has made it clear that the pagans are to be received into the Church without being forced to obey the Law, cf. 10:34-35,44-48a; 11:1,15-18; 15:7-11,14; and Ga 2:1-10. Secondly, God himself has shown Peter that he must accept the hospitality of the uncircumcised. The problem of social relations between Christians converted from Judaism and Christians converted from paganism underlies the narrative, cf. 10:10-16,28-29; 11:2-14; and Ga 2:11-21.

b. The expressions 'fearing God', 10:2,22,35; 13:16,26, and 'worshipping God', 13:43,50; 16:14; 17:4,17; 18:7, are technical terms for admirers and followers of the Jewish religion who stop short of circumcision, cf. 2:11+.

c. Lit. 'has ascended as a memorial before God'. The expression recalls the 'memorial' sacrifice, cf. Lv 2: 2,9,16, to which Tb 12:12 compares prayer.

d. Following Western Text.

e. Peter is to throw off his scruples of legal purity, 11:9. Cf. Mt 15:1-20p; Rm 14:14,17. The immediate practical conclusion is that Peter must not fear contact with the uncircumcised, Ac 10:27-28.

f. The intervention of the Spirit is like that of the angel of the Lord, cf. 8:26,29.

g. Var. 'Three men', cf. 11:11.



to coming when I was sent for; but I should like to know exactly why you sent for me.' •Cornelius replied, 'Three days ago I was praying<sup>a</sup> in my house at the ninth hour, when I suddenly saw a man in front of me in shining robes. He said, "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been accepted as a sacrifice in the sight of God; •so now you must send to Jaffa and fetch Simon known as Peter who is lodging in the house of Simon the tanner, by the sea". •So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Here we all are, assembled in front of you to hear what message God has given you for us.'

### Peter's address in the house of Cornelius

Then Peter addressed them: 'The truth I have now come to realise' he said 'is that God does not have favourites, •but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him.'

'It is true, God sent his word<sup>i</sup> to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ—but Jesus Christ is Lord of all men. •You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea;<sup>k</sup> about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism.<sup>l</sup> •God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil. •Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself; and also to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a tree, •yet three days afterwards God raised him to life<sup>m</sup> and allowed him to be seen, •not by the whole people but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those witnesses—we have eaten and drunk with him<sup>n</sup> after his resurrection from the dead—and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people<sup>o</sup> and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead.<sup>p</sup> •It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.'

### 15:8 Baptism of the first pagans

While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit came down<sup>q</sup> on all the listeners. Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were all astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on the pagans too, •since they could hear them speaking strange languages and proclaiming the greatness of God. Peter himself then said, 'Could anyone refuse the water of baptism to these people, now they have received the Holy Spirit just as much as we have?' •He then gave orders<sup>r</sup> for them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterwards they begged him to stay on for some days.<sup>s</sup>

### Jerusalem: Peter justifies his conduct

**11** The apostles and the brothers in Judaea heard that the pagans too had accepted the word of God, •and when Peter came up to Jerusalem the Jews criticised him<sup>a</sup> •and said, 'So you have been visiting the uncircumcised and eating with them, have you?' •Peter in reply gave them the details point by point: 'One day, when I was in the town of Jaffa,' he began 'I fell into a trance as I was praying and had a vision of something like a big sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners. This sheet reached the ground quite close to me. I watched it intently and saw all sorts of animals and wild beasts—everything possible that could walk, crawl or fly. •Then I heard a voice that said to me, "Now, Peter; kill and eat!" •But I answered: Certainly not, Lord; nothing profane or unclean has ever crossed my lips. •And a second time the voice spoke from heaven, "What God has made clean, you have no right to call profane". •This was repeated three times, before the whole of it was drawn up to heaven again.

'Just at that moment, three men stopped outside the house where we were

- 12 staying; they had been sent from Caesarea to fetch me, •and the Spirit told me 1:8+  
to have no hesitation about going back with them. The six brothers here came  
13 with me as well, and we entered the man's house. •He told us he had seen an angel  
standing in his house who said, "Send to Jaffa and fetch Simon known as Peter;  
14 he has a message for you that will save you and your entire household". 2:47+;  
16:15+  
15 'I had scarcely begun to speak when the Holy Spirit came down on them 10:44+  
16 in the same way as it came on us at the beginning, •and I remembered that the  
Lord had said, "John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy  
17 Spirit". •I realised then that God<sup>b</sup> was giving them the identical thing he gave to us 1:5  
when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; and who was I to stand in God's way?'<sup>c</sup> 15:8-9  
18 This account satisfied them, and they gave glory to God. 'God' they said 'can 10:47; 15:9  
evidently grant even the pagans the repentance that leads to life.' Mt 16:23+  
2:47; 21:20  
13:46f; 14:  
27; 17:30;  
26:20

### Foundation of the church of Antioch

- Those who had escaped<sup>d</sup> during the persecution that happened because of 8:14  
19 Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch,<sup>e</sup> but they usually 21:3  
proclaimed the message only to Jews. •Some of them, however, who came from  
20 Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch where they started preaching to the Greeks,<sup>f</sup>  
proclaiming the Good News of the Lord Jesus<sup>g</sup> to them as well. •The Lord helped 1k 1:66  
21 them, and a great number believed and were converted to the Lord. 2:41+;  
3:19+  
4:36+; 8:14  
The church in Jerusalem<sup>h</sup> heard about this and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.  
22 There he could see for himself that God had given grace, and this pleased him, 13:43; 14:22  
23 and he urged<sup>i</sup> them all to remain faithful to the Lord<sup>j</sup> with heartfelt devotion;  
for he was a good man, filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. And a large 6:5  
24 number of people were won over to the Lord. 2:41+  
25 9:30  
26 Barnabas then left for Tarsus to look for Saul, •and when he found him he

h. Var. 'I was fasting and praying'.

i. The language of sacrifice (cf. v. 4). The unblemished victim and its offerer are both 'acceptable' to God, Lv 1:3; 19:5; 22:19-27. Isaiah (56:7) had prophesied that when the fullness of time came, the pagans' sacrifices would be 'acceptable' to God; see Mt 1:10-11. Cf. Rm 15:16; Ph 4:18; 1 P 2:5.

j. Var. 'The word that God has sent'.

k. Vv. 37-42 sum up the gospel story, cf. 1:21-22; 2:22+, emphasising the same points as Luke brought out in his own gospel.

l. Lit. 'Jesus from Nazareth, how he began (var. 'how it [all] began') in Galilee after the baptism proclaimed by John'.

m. Lit. 'raised him on the third day': stereotyped formula of the Christian preaching and faith. It appears as early as 1 Co 15:4 (a first stage of the creed) with the addition 'according to the scriptures'. The formula echoes Jon 2:1 (cf. Mt 12:40); see also Ho 6:2. It recurs in Mt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:64; Lk 9:22; 18:33; 24:7,46.

n. Add. (West.) 'and were his companions for forty days after his resurrection from the dead'.

o. I.e. the Chosen People, Israel, 10:2; 21:28.

p. Those still alive at the glorious coming and those who have died before the coming but then rise for judgement. See 1 Th 4:13-5:10. By raising up Jesus, God has solemnly invested him as supreme Judge, Ac 17:31; Jn 5:22,27; 2 Tm 4:1; 1 P 4:5; to proclaim the resurrection is therefore to invite men to repentance, cf. Ac 17:30-31.

q. 'The Pentecost of the pagans'. As Peter notes, v. 47; 11:15; 15:8, it resembles the first Pentecost.

r. It was not usual for the apostles to administer baptism themselves, cf. 19:5; 1 Co 1:14,17. See also 1 Jn 4:2.

s. That Peter should lodge with the uncircumcised seems to the Jerusalem 'Hebrews' even more shocking and contrary to the Law than that he should authorise their baptism (11:2-3; cf. 10:28). This same question gave rise to the Antioch incident, Ga 2:11f.

11 a. Western Text 'So after some time Peter determined to set out for Jerusalem. After speaking to the

brothers and encouraging them, he set out, delivering many sermons throughout the countryside and instructing the people. When he reached them and told them of the favour God had granted, the circumcised brothers remonstrated with him.'

b. 'God' omitted by Western Text (because it is Christ who gives the Spirit).

c. Peter explains why he allowed a pagan to be baptised; he does not answer the objection that he had lodged with the uncircumcised, cf. v. 3, see 10:1+. According to Luke, Peter was considered to have been the first to receive pagans into the Church, in spite of the episode of the Ethiopian eunuch, 8:26-39, and the date of the evangelisation of Antioch to which Luke does not refer till later, vv. 19f. Against this background the council of Jerusalem, 15:5-29, appears as a kind of sequel to, or repetition of, the discussion in 11:1-18.

d. V. 19 takes up from 8:1 and 8:4 and then presents the episode of the Antiochene church's foundation as an immediate sequel to Stephen's martyrdom from which it has been separated by the insertion of the Acts of Philip, 8:5-40, and of Peter, 9:31-11:18. Nevertheless, the narrative presupposes the story of Saul's vocation, 9:1-30, itself concerned with Stephen's martyrdom.

e. Antioch on the Orontes, capital of the Roman province of Syria third city of the empire after Rome and Alexandria.

f. Var. 'Hellenists', cf. 9:29. 'Greeks', as opposed to 'Jews', v. 19, includes all the uncircumcised.

g. Not 'Christ', a title more suited to a Jewish audience with its messianic expectation; in preaching to pagans Jesus was called 'Lord', cf. 25:26+. He is 'Lord' because, in virtue of his elevation to the Father's right hand, he rules over the kingdom in this fullness of time, cf. 2:21,36; 7:59-60; 10:36; 1 Th 4:15-17; 2 Th 1:7-12; Rm 10:9-13.

h. Which enjoyed right of supervision over the other churches, cf. 8:14; 11:1, and see Ga 2:2+.

i. Apparently a play on the name 'Barnabas', 'son of exhortation', 4:36.

j. Var. 'in the Lord'

brought him to Antioch. As things turned out they were to live together in that church<sup>k</sup> a whole year, instructing a large number of people. It was at Antioch that the disciples were first called 'Christians'.<sup>l</sup>

1 P 4:16

### Barnabas and Saul sent as deputies to Jerusalem

2:17; 13:1;  
15:32; 19:6  
1:8+; 21:10

11:25

20:17  
Ga 2:1  
Ti 1:5+  
1 P 5:1

While they were there some prophets<sup>m</sup> came down to Antioch from Jerusalem,<sup>n</sup> and one of them whose name was Agabus, seized by the Spirit, stood up and predicted that a famine would spread over the whole empire. This in fact happened before the reign of Claudius came to an end.<sup>o</sup> •The disciples decided to send relief, each to contribute what he could afford, to the brothers living in Judaea. They did this and delivered their contributions to the elders<sup>p</sup> in the care of 30 Barnabas and Saul.

### Peter's arrest and miraculous deliverance<sup>a</sup>

Mt 20:22-23

Ex 12:1+

5:18-24;  
16:25-40

5:19  
Mt 1:20+  
1 K 19:5-7

**12** It was about this time that King Herod started persecuting certain members of the Church. •He beheaded James the brother of John, •and when he saw that this pleased the Jews he decided to arrest Peter as well. •This was during the days of Unleavened Bread, and he put Peter in prison, assigning four squads of four soldiers each to guard him in turns. Herod meant to try Peter in public after the end of Passover week. •All the time Peter was under guard the Church prayed to God for him unremittingly.

On the night before Herod was to try him, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, fastened with double chains,<sup>b</sup> while guards kept watch at the main entrance to the prison. •Then suddenly the angel of the Lord stood there, and the cell was filled with light. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him. 'Get up!' he said 'Hurry!'—and the chains fell from his hands. •The angel then said, 'Put on your belt and sandals'. After he had done this, the angel next said, 'Wrap your cloak round you and follow me'. •Peter followed him, but had no idea that what the angel did was all happening in reality; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed through two guard posts one after the other, and reached the iron gate leading to the city. This opened of its own accord; they went through it<sup>c</sup> and had walked the whole length of one street when suddenly the angel left him. It was only then that Peter came to himself. 'Now I know it is all true' he said. 'The Lord really did send his angel and has saved me from Herod and from all that the Jewish people were so certain would happen to me.'

13:9+; 15:37  
Col 4:10  
1 P 5:13

As soon as he realised this he went straight to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark,<sup>d</sup> where a number of people had assembled and were praying. •He knocked at the outside door and a servant called Rhoda came to answer it. •She recognised Peter's voice and was so overcome with joy that, instead of opening the door, she ran inside with the news that Peter was standing at the main entrance. They said to her, 'You are out of your mind', but she insisted that it was true. Then they said, 'It must be his angel!'<sup>e</sup> •Peter, meanwhile, was still knocking, so they opened the door and were amazed to see that it really was Peter himself. With a gesture of his hand he stopped them talking, and described to them how the Lord had led him out of prison. He added, 'Tell James' and the brothers'. Then he left and went to another place.

1:15+;  
15:13;  
21:17  
1 Co 15:7  
16:27;  
27:42

When daylight came there was a great commotion among the soldiers, who could not imagine what had become of Peter. •Herod put out an unsuccessful search for him; he had the guards questioned, and before leaving Judaea to take up residence in Caesarea he gave orders for their execution.<sup>f</sup>

### 2 M 9:5-28 The death of the persecutor

Now Herod was on bad terms with the Tyrians and Sidonians. However, they sent a joint deputation which managed to enlist the support of Blastus, the king's chamberlain, and through him negotiated a treaty, since their country depended for its food supply on King Herod's territory. •A day was fixed, and Herod,

wearing his robes of state and enthroned on a dais, made a speech to them. The people acclaimed him with, 'It is a god speaking, not a man!', and at that moment the angel of the Lord struck him down, because he had not given the glory to God. He was eaten away with worms and died.<sup>a</sup>

Mt 1:20+  
2 M 9:9

### Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch

The word of God continued to spread and to gain followers. Barnabas and Saul completed their task and came back from Jerusalem,<sup>c</sup> bringing John Mark with them.

6:7+; 11:29-30  
12:12+

## III. THE MISSION OF BARNABAS AND PAUL THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

### The mission sent out

<sup>1</sup> 13 In the church at Antioch the following were prophets and teachers:<sup>a</sup> Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, who had

11:27+  
4:36+

k. Meaning doubtful. Possibly 'they worked together', 'they were received (by the church)', i.e. were guests of the church.

l. I.e. supporters or followers of Christus (or Chrestus). The nickname shows that the pagans of Antioch took the title 'Christ' (anointed) for a proper name.

m. Like the O.T. prophets, Dt 18:18+; 2 P 1:21; Mt 5:12, those of the N.T. are charismatics, 1 Co 12:1+, who speak in God's name, being inspired by his Spirit. Under the New Covenant this charisma is bestowed even more generously, Ac 2:17-18, and at times it is enjoyed by the faithful at large, Ac 19:6; 1 Co 11:4-5; 14:26,29-33,37. But particular individuals are so specially endowed with the charisma that they are always referred to as 'prophets', Ac 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:9,10. These normally occupy the second place after the apostles in the order of charisma, 1 Co 12:28-29; Ep 4:11; but cf. 1 Co 12:10; Rm 12:6; Lk 11:49; this is because they are the appointed witnesses of the Spirit, Rv 2:7, etc., 1 Th 5:19-20, whose 'revelations' they communicate, 1 Co 14:6,26,30; Ep 3:5; Rv 1:1, just as the apostles are witnesses to the risen Christ, Rm 1:1+; Ac 1:8+, and proclaim the kerygma, Ac 2:22+. They do not simply foretell the future, Ac 11:28; 21:11, or read hearts, 1 Co 14:24-25; cf. 1 Tm 1:18. When they 'edify, exhort, console', 1 Co 14:3; cf. Ac 4:36; 11:23-24, they do so by a supernatural revelation; in this they resemble those who 'speak strange languages', Ac 2:4+; 19:6, but their gift is greater because their speech is intelligible, 1 Co 14. Their chief work was evidently to explain the oracles of scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, especially those of the O.T. prophets, 1 P 1:10-12, and thus expound the 'mystery' of the divine plan, 1 Co 13:2; Ep 3:5; Rm 16:25+. For this reason they are named with the apostles as the foundation of the Church, Ep 2:20+. The Revelation of St John is a typical example of this N.T. 'prophecy', Rv 1:3; 10:11; 19:10; 22:7-10,18-19. For all its dignity, the prophetic charisma communicates knowledge that is imperfect and provisional, being bound up with faith, Rm 12:6, which is itself destined to vanish in face of the beatific vision, 1 Co 13:8-12.

n. Western Text adds 'and there was great rejoicing. While we were together, one of them ...' If this reading is correct, this is the first of the 'We-sections', cf. 16:10.

o. In the reign of Claudius (41-54) famine swept through the empire (49-50), through Greece first, and later Rome. Josephus puts it in the time of Tiberius Alexander the procurator (46-48).

p. The apostles are not mentioned, unlike 15:2, etc.; they had perhaps left Jerusalem. According to Ac 9:26; 11:29f; 15:2, it would seem that Paul made three journeys to Jerusalem before his two visits to Galatia,

16:6; 18:23. Paul himself, however, in Ga 1:18; 2:1f; cf. 4:13, mentions only two. The impression produced by Ac arises perhaps from Luke's method of combining his sources. It may be that the journey of 11:29 is the same as that of 15:2. The 'help' which is the purpose of the journey is probably to be distinguished from that which Paul supplied later, Ac 24:17, when the great collection, made at the appeal of the Jerusalem church, was completed, Ga 2:10; cf. 1 Co 16:1+; 2 Co 8:4; 9:1,12,13; Rm 15:31.

12 a. This episode, which 11:30 and 12:25 seem to place at the same time as the visit of Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem, must in fact have preceded it, for Herod Agrippa I (called 'king' to distinguish him from his uncle Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of the Passion story, and awarded the royal title by Caligula in 37) was not actually king of Judaea and Samaria until 41; he died in 44. The events here described took place, therefore, between 41 and 44. The narrative has been rather clumsily fitted into its present literary context.

b. Each one to a soldier on either side.

c. Add. 'went down the seven steps'.

d. John Mark is mentioned again in 12:25; 13:5,13; 15:37,39; he was cousin to Barnabas, Col 4:10. During Paul's first Rome captivity Mark was with him, Col 4:10; Phm 24, and shortly before he died Paul asked for Mark's assistance, 2 Tm 4:11. Mark was also a disciple of Peter, 1 P 5:13, and tradition names him as author of the second gospel.

e. It was popularly believed that guardian angels were a kind of spiritual 'double' of their charges.

f. 'James' without qualification means the 'brother of the Lord'. At the time of Paul's first visit to Jerusalem, Ga 1:19 (i.e. in 38-39, cf. Ac 9:1+) and afterwards, James was leader of the 'Hebrew' section of the Jerusalem Christians. After Peter's departure he was in charge of the mother church. See Ac 15:13; 21:18; 1 Co 15:7. The Letter of James appears under his name.

g. Soldiers were liable to the punishment intended for their escaped prisoners, cf. 16:27; 27:42.

h. Var. 'When he had come down from the tribune he became food for worms even while he still lived; and so he died'.

i. Var. 'to Jerusalem', but cf. 11:29.

13 a. On the 'prophets', see 11:27+. The charisma of the teacher, or *didaskalos*, was his ability to instruct others on matters of morality and doctrine, instruction usually based on the scriptures. Cf. 1 Co 12:14+. The five prophets and teachers here named represent the governing body of the church of Antioch; cf. the list of the Twelve, Ac 1:13, and of the Seven, 6:5. Like the latter, the Antiochene Five are, it seems, hellenistic Jews.

13:9+ been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. •One day while they were 2  
 1:8+ offering worship<sup>b</sup> to the Lord and keeping a fast, the Holy Spirit said, 'I want  
 14:25-26 Barnabas and Saul set apart for the work to which I have called them'. •So it was 3  
 6:6; 14:23; 15:40 that after fasting and prayer they laid their hands on them<sup>c</sup> and sent them off.

### Cyprus: the magician Elymas

So these two, sent on their mission by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia 4  
 and from there sailed to Cyprus.<sup>d</sup> •They landed at Salamis and proclaimed the 5  
 12:12+; word of God in the synagogues of the Jews;<sup>e</sup> John acted as their assistant.  
 13:15,46; 14:1; 16: 13:17-1; 2:10,17; 18:4,6 They travelled the whole length of the island, and at Paphos they came in 6  
 contact with a Jewish magician called Bar-jesus. •This false prophet was one 7  
 of the attendants of the proconsul Sergius Paulus who was an extremely intelligent  
 man. The proconsul summoned Barnabas and Saul and asked to hear the word 8  
 of God, •but Elymas Magos—as he was called in Greek—tried to stop them 9  
 so as to prevent the proconsul's conversion to the faith. •Then Saul, whose other 9  
 8:20-23 name is Paul,<sup>f</sup> looked him full in the face •and said, 'You utter fraud, you 10  
 Jn 8:44 impostor, you son of the devil, you enemy of all true religion, why don't you  
 stop twisting the straightforward ways of the Lord? •Now watch how the hand 11  
 of the Lord will strike you: you will be blind, and for a time you will not see the  
 sun.' That instant, everything went misty and dark for him, and he groped about  
 to find someone to lead him by the hand. •The proconsul, who had watched 12  
 Mt 22:33; Lk 4:32 everything, became a believer, being astonished by what he had learnt about  
 the Lord.

### They arrive at Antioch in Pisidia

Paul and his friends went by sea from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia where 13  
 15:38 John left them to go back to Jerusalem. •The others carried on from Perga till they 14  
 reached Antioch in Pisidia. Here they went to synagogue on the sabbath and took  
 13:5+ their seats. •After the lessons from the Law and the Prophets had been read, 15  
 28:23 the presidents of the synagogue sent them a message: 'Brothers, if you would  
 like to address some words of encouragement<sup>g</sup> to the congregation, please do so'.  
 Paul stood up, held up a hand for silence and began to speak: 16

### Paul's preaching before the Jews<sup>h</sup>

2:22+; 10:2+ 'Men of Israel, and fearers of God,<sup>i</sup> listen! •The God of our nation Israel<sup>j</sup> 17  
 Is 1:2 chose our ancestors, and made our people great when they were living as foreigners  
 Ex 1:7 in Egypt; then by divine power he led them out, •and for about forty years took 18  
 Dt 1:31 care of<sup>k</sup> them in the wilderness. •When he had destroyed seven nations in Canaan, 19  
 Dt 7:1+ he put them in possession of their land •for about four hundred and fifty years.<sup>l</sup> 20  
 Gn 15:13 After this he gave them judges, down to the prophet Samuel. •Then they 21  
 Ex 12:40-41 demanded a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of  
 I S 8-10 Benjamin.<sup>m</sup> After forty years, •he deposed him and made David their king, of 22  
 1 S 13:14 whom he approved in these words, "*I have selected David son of Jesse, a man after*  
 Ps 89:20 *my own heart, who will carry out my whole purpose*". •To keep his promise, God 23  
 Is 44:28 has raised up<sup>n</sup> for Israel one of David's descendants, Jesus, as Saviour, •whose 24  
 13:32 coming was heralded by John when he proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the  
 19:3-4 whole people of Israel. •Before John ended his career he said, "I am not the one<sup>o</sup> 25  
 Mt 3:11+; Lk 1:76 you imagine me to be; that one is coming after me and I am not fit to undo his  
 Jn 1:20 sandal".

•My brothers, sons of Abraham's race, and all you who fear God, this message 26  
 5:20+ of salvation is meant for you.<sup>p</sup> •What the people of Jerusalem and their rulers 27  
 2:23+; 3:17+ did, though they did not realise it, was in fact to fulfil the prophecies read on every  
 Lk 18:31+ sabbath. <sup>q</sup> •Though they found nothing to justify his death,<sup>r</sup> they condemned him 28  
 13:14f; 15:21 and asked Pilate to have him executed.<sup>s</sup> •When they had carried out everything 29  
 5:30+ that scripture foretells about him they took him down from the tree and buried  
 him in a tomb.<sup>t</sup> •But God raised him from the dead, •and for many days he 30  
 31



appeared to those who had accompanied him from Galilee to Jerusalem: and it is these same companions of his who are now his witnesses before our people.

- 32 'We have come here to tell you the Good News. It was to our ancestors that  
33 God made the promise but 'it is to us, their children,' that he has fulfilled it,  
by raising Jesus from the dead. As scripture says in the first psalm: *'You are my  
34 son: today I have become your father.'* • The fact that God raised him from the  
dead, never to return to corruption, is no more than what he had declared: *To  
35 you I shall give the sure and holy things promised to David.*<sup>2</sup> • This is explained by  
36 another text: *You will not allow your holy one to experience corruption.* • Now when  
David in his own time had served God's purposes he died; he was buried with  
37 his ancestors and has certainly *experienced corruption.* • The one whom God has  
raised up, however, has not *experienced corruption.*  
38 'My brothers, I want you to realise that it is through him that forgiveness of  
your sins is proclaimed. Through him justification from all sins which the Law  
39 of Moses was unable to justify • is offered to every believer.  
40 'So be careful—or what the prophets say will happen to you.

- 41 *Cast your eyes around you, mockers;  
be amazed, and perish!  
For I am doing something in your own days  
that you would not believe if you were to be told of it.'*<sup>3</sup>

- 42 As they left they were asked to<sup>2</sup> preach on the same theme the following

13 b. The use of the term for Christian prayer in common puts this on a level with the sacrificial worship of the Old Law, cf. Rm 1:9+.

c. It seems, to judge by 14:26 (cf. 15:40), that by this act the community commends to God's grace the new missionaries chosen, v. 2, and sent, v. 4, by the Holy Spirit. The significance of the rite is not, therefore, exactly the same as that of 6:6 by which the Seven receive their commission from the apostles. Cf. 1 Tm 4:14+.

d. Barnabas' native country, 4:36.

e. Paul's regular policy, 17:2, is to approach the Jews first, cf. 13:14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:10,17; 18:4,19; 19:8; 28:17,23, on the principle that the Jews have first claim, see 3:26; 13:46; Rm 1:16; 2:9-10; Mk 7:27; only after their refusal does Paul turn to the pagans, cf. Ac 13:46; 18:6; 28:28.

f. The Jews, and the eastern peoples in general, adopted names familiar in the Graeco-Roman world: John took 'Mark', 12:12, Joseph-Barsabbas took 'Justus', 1:23, Simeon 'Niger', 13:1, Tabitha 'Dorcas', 9:36, etc. Luke has given Paul his Roman name for the first time and does not use 'Saul' again. He also gives prominence now to Paul who is no longer a subordinate of Barnabas but the real missionary leader, v. 13.

g. I.e. a sermon based upon the scriptures, cf. Rm 15:4. The synagogue custom mentioned here was followed also when Christians met for worship: the sermons were preached by the 'prophets' or teachers, cf. 1 Co 14:3,31; 1 Tm 4:13; Heb 13:22; Ac 11:23; 14:22; 15:32; 16:40; 20:1,2.

h. The great inaugural discourse of Paul which Luke offers as typical of the apostle's preaching to the Jews. It falls into two parts; vv. 16-25 are a summary of the history of salvation (cf. Stephen's sermon, ch. 7) with an appendix recalling John the Baptist's testimony; vv. 26-39 claim that Jesus who died and has risen is the expected Messiah (thus closely resembling Peter's discourses, though this discourse ends with a suggestion of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith). The conclusion, vv. 40-41, is a grave warning taken from the scriptures, cf. 28:26-27.

i. The two classes of listeners: Jews by birth and 'God-fearers', 10:2+.

j. Lit. 'the God of this people Israel'.

k. Var. 'upheld' (or: 'bore with').

l. Western (and Antiochene) Text 'For about four

hundred and fifty years he gave them judges'. The text is obscure.

m. Paul's own name, and he too was of the tribe of Benjamin, Rm 11:1; Ph 3:5.

n. Or 'raised from the dead'. The Greek verb can mean either, and this ambivalence is exploited in the argument, as in 3:20-26: the 'promise' finds fulfilment in Christ's resurrection, vv. 32-33; see also 26:6-8; moreover, it is by his resurrection that Jesus is established as saviour, cf. 5:31; see also 2:21; 4:12; Rm 5:9-10; Ph 3:20, etc. Thus the verb which means 'raise up' in v. 22 unequivocally means 'raise from the dead' from v. 30 onwards. In v. 23 it is transitional and ambiguous.

o. Var. 'what'.

p. Var. 'for us'.

q. Following Western Text. Current text 'For those who live in Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognise him or (understand) the prophecies read on every sabbath: but they fulfilled the prophecies by condemning him'.

r. A recurring element of the Christian plea: the innocence and unjust condemnation of Jesus, cf. 3:13-14; Lk 23:16,22,47; Mt 27:3-10,19,23-24.

s. 'asked Pilate to have him executed', alternatively (the textual witnesses vary) 'that (he) should be executed'; or 'that (they might) execute him'. Var. 'handed him over to Pilate that he might be executed'.

t. Western Text '... foretells about him, after he had been crucified they asked Pilate for permission to take him down from the tree, and when they received it they took him down and buried him in a tomb'.

u. Var. 'for our children'.

v. 'first psalm' Western reading (following the ancient custom of reading Ps 1 and 2 as one); var. 'second psalm'.

w. By his resurrection Christ was enthroned as Messiah, and from then on his human nature enjoyed all the privileges of the Son of God. Cf. Rm 1:4+.

x. The quotation from Is introduces the reference to Ps 16 (the 'holy things promised to—lit. 'of'—David' are explained as the assurance to David in Ps 16 that 'the holy one of God' would not experience corruption).

y. The disbelief and rejection of the Jews (cf. Mt 21:33+; 22:1+) are a favourite theme of Luke, cf. Ac 13:5+; he uses it again as a conclusion to Ac 28:26-27.

z. Var. 'When they left they felt it appropriate to'.

1:3

1:8+

2:24-31;  
13:23

Ps 2:7

2:36+; 9:  
20+

Is 55:3

Ps 16:9

2:38+

Rm 8:3

15:11

Rm 1:16+;

3:20+

28:26-27

Hab 1:5

10:2+; 17:4 sabbath. •When the meeting broke up many Jews and devout converts<sup>aa</sup> joined 43  
Paul and Barnabas,<sup>bb</sup> and in their talks with them Paul and Barnabas urged  
11:23; 14:22 them to remain faithful to the grace God had given them.<sup>cc</sup>

### Paul and Barnabas preach to the pagans

The next sabbath almost the whole town assembled to hear the word of God.<sup>dd</sup> 44  
5:17; 17:5 When they saw the crowds, the Jews, prompted by jealousy, used blasphemies 45  
1 Th 2:14+ and contradicted everything Paul said. •Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out 46  
13:5+; 18: boldly.<sup>ee</sup> 'We had to proclaim the word of God to you first, but since you have  
6; 28:24 rejected it, since you do not think yourselves worthy of eternal life, we must turn  
1:8 to the pagans. •For this is what the Lord commanded us to do when he said: 47

*I have made you a light for the nations,  
so that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth.'*<sup>ff</sup>

Is 49:6  
Jn 8:12+  
15:14; 26:23

2:46-47+ It made the pagans very happy to hear this and they thanked the Lord for his 48  
Rm 8:28 message;<sup>gg</sup> all who were destined for eternal life became believers.<sup>hh</sup> •Thus the 49  
3:15+ word of the Lord spread through the whole countryside.

6:7+ But the Jews worked upon some of the devout women of the upper 50  
10:2+ classes and the leading men of the city and persuaded them to turn against Paul  
18:6 and Barnabas and expel them from their territory. •So they shook the dust 51  
Lk 9:5; from their feet in defiance and went off to Iconium; •but the disciples were filled 52  
10:11+ with joy and the Holy Spirit.  
Mt 10:14

### Iconium evangelised

13:5+ **14** At Iconium they went to the Jewish synagogue, as they had at Antioch,<sup>a</sup> 1  
and they spoke so effectively that a great many Jews and Greeks became  
believers.<sup>b</sup>

17:13 Some of the Jews, however, refused to believe, and they poisoned the minds 2  
1 Th 2:14+ of the pagans against the brothers.<sup>c</sup>

4:29-30; Accordingly Paul and Barnabas stayed on for some time, preaching fearlessly 3  
13:46+ for the Lord; and the Lord supported all they said about his gift of grace, allowing  
20:24,32 signs and wonders to be performed by them.  
Mk 16:17-20

The people in the city were divided,<sup>d</sup> some supported the Jews, others the 4  
apostles, •but eventually with the connivance of the authorities a move was 5  
made by pagans as well as Jews to make attacks on them and to stone them.  
2 Tm 3:11 When the apostles came to hear of this, they went off for safety to Lycaonia where, 6  
in the towns of Lystra and Derbe and in the surrounding country,<sup>e</sup> •they preached 7  
the Good News.

### 3:1-10 Healing of a cripple

A man sat there<sup>f</sup> who had never walked in his life, because his feet were 8  
crippled from birth; •and as he listened to Paul preaching, he managed to catch 9  
his eye. Seeing that the man had the faith to be cured,<sup>g</sup> •Paul said in a loud voice, 10  
'Get to your feet—stand up', and the cripple jumped up and began to walk.

When the crowd saw what Paul had done they shouted in the language of 11  
28:6 Lycaonia, 'These people are gods who have come down to us disguised as men'.  
They addressed Barnabas as Zeus, and since Paul was the principal speaker they 12  
called him Hermes.<sup>h</sup> •The priests of Zeus-outside-the-Gate,<sup>i</sup> proposing that all 13  
the people should offer sacrifice with them, brought garlanded oxen to the gates.  
When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard what was happening they tore their 14  
clothes,<sup>j</sup> and rushed into the crowd, shouting, •'Friends, what do you think you 15  
3:12; 10:26 are doing? We are only human beings like you. We have come with good news  
2:38+; 3: to make you turn from these empty idols to the living God<sup>k</sup> who made heaven  
19+ and earth and the sea and all that these hold.'<sup>l</sup> •In the past he allowed each nation 16  
17:22-30+ to go its own way; •but even then he did not leave you without evidence of himself 17  
Ps 147:20 in the good things he does for you: he sends you rain from heaven, he makes your  
Ws 13:1  
Jr 5:24

18 crops grow when they should, he gives you food and makes you happy.' •Even this speech, however, was scarcely enough to stop the crowd offering them sacrifice.

### The mission is disrupted

19 Then some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium, and turned the people against the apostles. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the town, thinking he was dead. •The disciples came crowding round him but, as they did so, he stood up and went back to the town. The next day he and Barnabas went off to Derbe.

21 Having preached the Good News in that town and made a considerable number of disciples, they went back through Lystra and Iconium to Antioch. •They put fresh heart into the disciples,<sup>m</sup> encouraging them to persevere in the faith. 'We all have to experience many hardships' they said 'before we enter the kingdom of God.' •In each of these churches they appointed elders,<sup>n</sup> and with prayer and fasting they commended them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.

25 They passed through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. •Then after proclaiming the word<sup>o</sup> at Perga they went down to Attalia •and from there sailed for Antioch, where they had originally been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.

27 On their arrival they assembled the church and gave an account of all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith<sup>p</sup> to the pagans. 28 They stayed there with the disciples for some time.

### Controversy at Antioch

1 **15** •Then some men came down from Judaea<sup>b</sup> and taught the brothers, 'Unless you have yourselves circumcised in the tradition of Moses you cannot be

aa. 'converts' or 'proselytes', here in the wide sense, is equivalent to 'those who feared God' or 'those who worshipped God', cf. 10:2+.

bb. Add. 'considering it fitting to accept baptism'.

cc. Add. West. 'And in this way the word of God spread through the whole town'.

dd. Var. 'the word of the Lord', or '(to hear) Paul who spoke for a long time about the Lord'.

ee. The 'courage' and 'confidence' of the apostles has been already stressed, 4:13,29,31; Luke repeatedly attributes these qualities to Paul, 9:27-28; 14:3; 19:8; 26:26; 28:31, and Paul himself lays emphasis on them, 1 Th 2:2; 2 Co 3:12; 7:4; Ph 1:20; Ep 3:12; 6:19-20.

ff. LXX text quoted freely. The words may be taken either as referring to Paul himself (cf. 26:17-18), apostle and teacher of the pagans (cf. Rm 11:13; 1 Tm 2:7; Ep 3:8, etc.), or to the risen Christ (see Ac 26:23 which also, it seems, is based on Is 49:6; and see Lk 2:32, dependent on Is 49:6,9); Christ is the light of the pagans, but since only the apostles' witness can spread this light, cf. Ac 1:8+, Paul considers this prophecy as a command that he must carry out.

gg. Var. 'the word of God'.

hh. 'eternal life', cf. v. 46, i.e. the life of the world to come, cf. 3:15+; only those achieve it whose names are 'written in heaven', Lk 10:20, in 'the book of life', Ph 4:3; Rv 20:12+. 'Destined for the life of the world to come' was a common rabbinic expression. In Christian teaching the first prerequisite of this predestination to glory is faith in Christ, see Jn 10:26+; Rm 8:28-30, and earlier in Ac 2:39.

14 a. Lit. 'At Iconium they went to the Jewish synagogue in the same way (or: together)'.

b. V. 1 is continued in v. 3.

c. Refusal to believe becomes in a short time active opposition, cf. 19:9; 28:24 and 9:23; 13:45,50; 17:5-8,13; 18:6,13.

d. Continuation of v. 2.

e. Lystra, a Roman colony, Timothy's home town, cf. 16:1-2. The events of vv. 8-19 take place in Lystra; Paul is not in Derbe until v. 20.

f. All the MSS have 'in Lystra' but this is evidently

an addition, cf. v. 20b.

g. Others translate 'to be saved'. The condition for the miracle is faith, cf. Mt 8:10+.

h. Hermes (the Latin 'Mercury') was the gods' mouthpiece.

i. His temple was outside the walls.

j. Sign of displeasure, cf. Mt 26:65.

k. In preaching against polytheism it was customary to contrast the true God with the false, the living God with helpless idols, and to make an appeal for conversion. For a summary of Paul's preaching to the pagans see 1 Th 1:9-10 and Ga 4:9; cf. Ac 15:19; 26:18,20.

l. That God creates the universe shows that he is a living God: this proposition is found in Jewish creeds, Cf. Ex 20:11; Ne 9:6; Ps 146:6; Ac 4:24; 17:24; Rv 10:6; 14:7.

m. Cf. Rm 1:11; 1 Th 3:2,13; Lk 22:32.

n. The elders, cf. 11:30+, are here chosen by the apostles, not by the community; so also Tt 1:5.

o. Add. 'of the Lord' or 'of God'.

p. Paul uses a similar metaphor, 1 Co 16:9; 2 Co 2:12; Col 4:3.

15 a. The events of this chapter raise several difficulties: 1. vv. 5-7a repeat vv. 1-2a as if the author, having two different accounts of how the controversy started, decided to give both as they stood. 2. V. 6 gives the impression that the community leaders held a private meeting, but vv. 12,22 suggest the debate took place before the whole Christian assembly. 3. The meeting issues a decree about how Christian converts from paganism must observe purity rites, and it entrusts this decree to Paul, vv. 22f; later, however (in 21:25), James seems to assume that Paul was then being informed of this decree for the first time. Paul himself does not speak of the decree either in Ga 2:6 (speaking of the Jerusalem meeting) or in 1 Co 8-10; Rm 14 (discussing similar problems). 4. Though the decree of Ac 15:29 was primarily intended for the churches of Syria and Cilicia, 15:23, Luke has nothing to say about Paul publishing it when he travelled through those

1 Th 2:14+

2 Co 11:25

2 Tm 3:11

15:32,41;

18:23

11:23; 13:43

Mt 10:22;

24:13

Rm 5:3-4

2 Th 1:4f

2 Tm 2:12;

3:12

Heb 10:36

13:3

13:2-3

14:3; 15:4,

12; 21:19

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saved'. • This led to disagreement, and after Paul and Barnabas had had a long 2 argument with these men it was arranged that Paul and Barnabas and others of the church<sup>e</sup> should go up to Jerusalem and discuss the problem with the apostles<sup>d</sup> and elders.

All the members of the church saw them off,<sup>e</sup> and as they passed through 3 Phoenicia and Samaria they told how the pagans had been converted, and this news was received with the greatest satisfaction by the brothers. • When they 4 arrived in Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church and by the apostles and 21:19 elders, and gave an account of all that God had done with them.

### Controversy at Jerusalem

15:1 But certain members of the Pharisees' party who had become believers 5 objected,<sup>f</sup> insisting that the pagans should be circumcised and instructed to keep the Law of Moses.<sup>g</sup> • The apostles and elders<sup>h</sup> met to look into the matter, • and 6 2:14+ after the discussion had gone on a long time, Peter stood up<sup>i</sup> and addressed them.

### Peter's speech

10:1-11:18+ 'My brothers,' he said 'you know perfectly well that in the early days God made his choice among you: the pagans were to learn the Good News from me and so become believers. • In fact God, who can read everyone's heart, showed his 8 10:44-47: approval of them by giving the Holy Spirit to them just as he had to us. • God 9 11:15-17 made no distinction between them and us, since he purified their hearts by faith.<sup>j</sup> It would only provoke God's anger<sup>k</sup> now, surely, if you imposed on the disciples 10 the very burden that neither we nor our ancestors were strong enough to support? Remember, we believe that we are saved in the same way as they are: through 11 Rm 7 Ga 3:10-12 the grace of the Lord Jesus.<sup>l</sup>'

This silenced the entire assembly,<sup>m</sup> and they listened to Barnabas and Paul 12 14:3,27: describing all the signs and wonders God had worked through them among the 21:19 pagans. Ga 2:7

### James' speech

12:17+ When they had finished it was James<sup>n</sup> who spoke. 'My brothers,' he said 13 13:47: 18:10 'listen to me. • Simeon<sup>o</sup> has described how God first arranged to enlist a people 14 15:9-12: for his name out of the pagans. • This is entirely in harmony with the words of the 15 16:26 prophets, since the scriptures say:<sup>p</sup>

Am 9:11-12 *After that I shall return 16  
and rebuild the fallen House of David;  
I shall rebuild it from its ruins  
and restore it.  
Then the rest of mankind, 17  
all the pagans who are consecrated to my name,<sup>q</sup>  
will look for the Lord,  
says the Lord who made this • known so long ago.<sup>r</sup> 18*

3:19+: 'I rule, then,<sup>s</sup> that instead of making things more difficult for pagans who 19 21:25 turn to God, • we send them a letter telling them merely to abstain from anything 20 polluted by idols,<sup>t</sup> from fornication,<sup>u</sup> from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.<sup>v</sup> • For Moses has always had his preachers in every town, and is 21 13:27 read aloud in the synagogues every sabbath.'

### The apostolic letter

Then the apostles and elders decided to choose delegates to send to Antioch 22 with Paul and Barnabas; the whole church concurred with this. They chose 15:40 Judas known as Barsabbas<sup>w</sup> and Silas,<sup>x</sup> both leading men in the brotherhood, 1 Th 1 and gave them this letter to take with them: 23 2 Th 1:1 1 P 5:12 16:4 'The apostles and elders, your brothers, send greetings to the brothers of pagan

24 birth in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. •We hear that some of our members have  
 25 disturbed you with their demands and have unsettled your minds. They acted Ac 15:1  
Ga 2:12  
 without any authority from us, •and so we have decided unanimously to elect  
 delegates and to send them to you with Barnabas and Paul, men we highly respect  
 26 who have dedicated their lives to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. •Accord- 9:15-16  
 27 ingly we are sending you Judas and Silas, who will confirm by word of mouth  
 28 what we have written in this letter. •It has been decided by the Holy Spirit and by 1:8 +; 5:32;  
21:25  
 29 ourselves not to saddle you with any burden beyond these essentials: •you  
 are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of  
 strangled animals and from fornication. Avoid these, and you will do what is  
 right.<sup>v</sup> Farewell.'

### The delegates at Antioch

30 The party left and went down to Antioch, where they summoned the whole  
 31 community and delivered the letter. •The community read it and were delighted 11:27 +  
 32 with the encouragement it gave them. •Judas and Silas, being themselves prophets, 14:22  
 33 spoke for a long time, encouraging and strengthening the brothers. •These two  
 spent some time there, and then the brothers wished them peace and they went  
 35 back to those who had sent them.<sup>z</sup> •Paul and Barnabas, however, stayed on in 14:28  
2:42 +  
 Antioch, and there with many others they taught and proclaimed the Good News,  
 the word of the Lord.

provinces, 15:41. Luke does mention it when speaking about Lycaonia, 16:4, but the terms of 15:19-21; 21:25 suggest that the decree was for all regions. All these difficulties may be explained by supposing that Luke has combined two distinct controversies and their varying solutions (Paul distinguishes them more clearly in Ga 2). One controversy was about the obligations of convert pagans to observe the Law, and Peter and Paul both took part, cf. Ga 2:1-10; the other controversy which took place later was about the social relations between the groups of Christian converts, those from Judaism and those from paganism, cf. Ga 2:11-14. In this James, in Peter's absence, took the leading part. Any contact with pagans involved legal impurity for Jews: cf. Ac 15:20+.

15 b. In Ga 2:12 there are several of them and they come from James

c. Ga 2:1-3 mentions Titus who had pagan blood.

d. The apostles, who are not mentioned either in 11:30 or in 21:18, are grouped here with the elders. cf. Ga 2:2-9 where Peter and John are grouped with James, 'brother of the Lord', as authorities in the Jerusalem church.

e. Others translate 'provided them with all they needed for the journey'. cf. 1 Co 16:11; Ti 3:13.

f. In the current text there seems to be no connection between the Pharisees' intervention at Jerusalem and the events that happened at Antioch. The Western Text links them together 'But those who had told them to go up to the elders then stood up...'

g. According to Ga 2:3-5 they are thinking particularly of Titus who had accompanied Paul to Jerusalem.

h. Add. West. 'and the assembly'. cf. v. 12.

i. Add. West. '(inspired by the Spirit)'.

j. An interpretation of God's message to Peter, 10:15; 11:9; cf. 10:28; Si 38:10.

k. Lit. 'put God to the test': i.e. to ask God for a miracle to prove his will when this has been made known already—a blasphemous frame of mind. In the present case God had made his attitude clear by sending the Spirit to Cornelius and his family.

l. A straight answer to the assertion in v. 1. The doctrine is that of Ga 2:15-21; 3:22-26; Rm 11:32; Ep 2:1-10; etc. On this score the Jews' position is not privileged, cf. Ac 13:38; Ga 5:6; 6:15.

m. Western Text 'When the elders had expressed their agreement with what Peter had said, this silenced...'

n. Ga 2:9 witnesses to the importance of the part played by James.

o. Simon Peter's semitic name, cf. 2 P 1:1.

p. The text is quoted according to the LXX; the argument depends on variants peculiar to that version and probably comes from hellenistic circles, though here it is ascribed to the leader of the 'Hebrew' party.

q. Lit. 'on whom my name has been invoked' (or 'over whom ... pronounced'). To invoke the name of Yahweh over a people, cf. 2 Ch 7:14, or over a place, cf. 2 Ch 6:34, is to consecrate it to him.

r. Lit. 'says the Lord who makes these things known from of old'. Var. 'says the Lord who does these things. From of old the Lord knows his work.'

s. James settles the discussion, and the terms of the apostolic letter are those of his own pronouncement. Ga 2:9 also suggests that James at this period occupied the first place in the Jerusalem church, cf. Ac 12:17+. A variant reduces this impression 'And so, for my part...'

t. The flesh of animals slain for pagan sacrifice, cf. v. 29 and 21:25. See 1 Co 8:10.

u. This word probably refers to all the irregular marriages listed in Lv 18.

v. Western Text omits 'the meat of strangled animals' and adds, after 'blood': 'and not to do to others what one would not have done to oneself' (so also in v. 29). Another omits 'fornication'. The ritual exceptions mentioned by James show clearly the sort of thing that was at issue and answer the question asked in Ac 11:3 and Ga 2:12-14: what must hellenistic Christians do for Judaeo-Christians to mix with them without incurring legal impurity? James decides to keep only those prescriptions for purity that have a fundamentally religious meaning: 1, to eat idol-meats implies sharing in sacrilegious worship, cf. 1 Co 8:10, 2. Blood symbolises life, and that belongs to God alone. The severity with which the Law forbids it, Lv 15:1+, explains the Jews' reluctance to dispense pagans from this prohibition. 3, As blood remains in strangled animals, this is part of the previous prohibition. 4. The table of irregular marriages is only included here because they involved legal impurity, not by way of moral judgement.

w. Not mentioned elsewhere, cf. 1:23.

x. Silas, missionary companion of Paul, 15:40-18:5, is the same as the Silvanus mentioned in 1 Th 1:1; 2 Th 1:1; 2 Co 1:19; 1 P 5:12.

y. Western Text adds 'under the guidance of the Holy Spirit'.

z. Western Text adds v. 34 'But Silas decided to stay there'. Several MSS further add 'Jude set out by himself'.



## IV. PAUL'S MISSIONS

**Paul separates from Barnabas and recruits Silas**

On a later occasion Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us go back and visit all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord, so that we can see how the brothers are doing'. •Barnabas suggested taking John Mark, •but Paul was not in favour of taking along the very man who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had refused to share in their work.

After a violent quarrel they parted company, and Barnabas sailed off with Mark to Cyprus. •Before Paul left, he chose Silas to accompany him and was commended by the brothers to the grace of God.<sup>aa</sup>

**Lycaonia: Paul recruits Timothy**

He travelled through Syria and Cilicia, consolidating the churches.<sup>bb</sup>

**16** From there he went to Derbe, and then on to Lystra. Here there was a disciple called Timothy,<sup>a</sup> whose mother was a Jewess who had become a believer; but his father was a Greek. •The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy, •and Paul, who wanted to have him as a travelling companion, had him circumcised. This was on account of the Jews in the locality<sup>b</sup> where everyone knew his father was a Greek.

As they visited one town after another, they passed on the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, with instructions to respect them.

So the churches grew strong in the faith, as well as growing daily in numbers.

**The crossing into Asia Minor**

They travelled through Phrygia and the Galatian country,<sup>c</sup> having been told by the Holy Spirit not to preach the word in Asia. •When they reached the frontier of Mysia they thought to cross it into Bithynia, but as the Spirit of Jesus<sup>d</sup> would not allow them, •they went through<sup>e</sup> Mysia and came down to Troas.

One night Paul had a vision: a Macedonian appeared and appealed to him in these words, 'Come across to Macedonia and help us'. •Once he had seen this vision we<sup>f</sup> lost no time in arranging a passage to Macedonia, convinced that God had called us to bring them the Good News.

**Arrival at Philippi**

Sailing from Troas we made a straight run for Samothrace; the next day for Neapolis, •and from there for Philippi, a Roman colony and the principal city of that particular district of Macedonia.<sup>g</sup> After a few days in this city •we went along the river outside the gates as it was the sabbath and this was a customary place for prayer.<sup>h</sup> We sat down and preached to the women who had come to the meeting. •One of these women was called Lydia, a devout woman from the town of Thyatira who was in the purple-dye trade. She listened to us, and the Lord opened her heart to accept what Paul was saying. •After she and her household had been baptised<sup>i</sup> she sent us an invitation: 'If you really think me a true believer in the Lord,' she said 'come and stay with us'; and she would take no refusal.<sup>j</sup>

**Imprisonment of Paul and Silas**

One day as we were going to prayer, we met a slave-girl who was a soothsayer<sup>k</sup> and made a lot of money for her masters by telling fortunes. •This girl started following Paul and the rest of us and shouting, 'Here are the servants of the Most High God; they have come to tell you how to be saved!' •She did this every day afterwards until Paul lost his temper one day and turned round and said to the spirit, 'I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to leave that woman'. The spirit went out of her there and then.

When her masters saw that there was no hope of making any more money

out of her, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the law courts in the market place •where they charged them before the magistrates and said, 'These people are causing a disturbance in our city. They are Jews •and are advocating practices which it is unlawful for us as Romans to accept or follow.'<sup>1</sup> •The crowd joined in and showed its hostility to them, so the magistrates had them stripped and ordered them to be flogged. •They were given many lashes and then thrown into prison, and the gaoler was told to keep a close watch on them. •So, following his instructions, he threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Ph 1:30  
1 Th 2:2

2 Co 11:25

### The miraculous deliverance of Paul and Silas

Late that night Paul and Silas were praying and singing God's praises, while the other prisoners listened. •Suddenly there was an earthquake that shook the prison to its foundations. All the doors flew open and the chains fell from all the prisoners. •When the gaoler woke and saw the doors wide open he drew his sword and was about to commit suicide, presuming that the prisoners had escaped. •But Paul shouted at the top of his voice, 'Don't do yourself any harm; we are all here'. The gaoler called for lights, then rushed in, threw himself trembling<sup>m</sup> at the feet of Paul and Silas, •and escorted them out, saying, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' •They told him, 'Become a believer in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, and your household too'. •Then they preached the word of the Lord<sup>n</sup> to him and to all his family. •Late as it was, he took them to wash their wounds, and was baptised then and there with all his household. •Afterwards he took them home and gave them a meal, and the whole family celebrated their conversion to belief in God.

When it was daylight the magistrates sent the officers with the order: 'Release those men'.<sup>o</sup> •The gaoler reported the message to Paul, 'The magistrates have sent an order for your release; you can go now and be on your way'.<sup>p</sup> •'What!' Paul replied 'They flog Roman citizens<sup>q</sup> in public and without trial and throw us into prison, and then think they can push us out on the quiet! Oh no! They must come and escort us out themselves.'

The officers reported this to the magistrates, who were horrified to hear the men were Roman citizens. •They came and begged them to leave the town.<sup>r</sup>

Col 3:16

4:31

12:6-11

12:18-19;  
27:42

2:21+;  
16:15+

1:5+; 8:36;  
38

2:46+

22:25

22:29

aa. Var. 'the grace of the Lord'.

bb. Western Text adds 'passing on to them the injunctions of the elders', cf. 16:4.

16 a. Timothy became Paul's constant companion, cf. 17:14f; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; 1 Th 3:2,6; 1 Co 4:17; 16:10; 2 Co 1:19; Rm 16:21, and one of his most faithful disciples to the very end (see 1 Tm and 2 Tm which are addressed to him).

b. Paul opposed circumcision for converts from paganism, Ga 2:3; 5:1-12, but Timothy had a Jewish mother and so, by Jewish law, was an Israelite.

c. Galatia strictly so called, cf. Introduction to the Letters of St Paul. When he left Iconium therefore, Paul intended to travel westwards to Ephesus. But the Spirit intervened and he turned N, into Phrygia, then in a north-westerly direction to 'Galatian country', where illness kept him for a time, Ga 4:13-15, preached the gospel in these places and returned later to visit the disciples there, Ac 18:23.

d. Om. 'of Jesus'.

e. Preferable to 'they skirted'.

f. Sudden transition to first person plural: the first 'We-section' of Ac, but see 11:27+. Cf. Introduction.

g. Philippi, a town in the principal district of the province of Macedonia; it had become a Roman colony and was a completely Latin city, its administration modelled on that of Rome.

h. The Jews had no synagogue in Philippi; they met by the side of the river (for ritual ablutions).

i. Lydia's conversion brought her household to the faith; cf. 10:33; 16:31,34; 18:8; 1 Co 1:16.

j. Unusual for Paul; cf. 20:33-35; 1 Th 2:9; 2 Th 3:8; 1 Co 9, though on a later occasion the Philippians

persuaded him to accept help again, cf. Ph 4:10-18. He would have accepted it from no one else; it is the greatest compliment to the charity of Lydia and of the other Philippian Christians.

k. Lit. 'who had a Python-spirit', so called from the serpent Python of the ancient Delphic oracle.

l. The practices referred to are Jewish, cf. 6:14; 15:1; 21:21; 26:3; 28:17; Jn 19:40: the accusers make no distinction between Christian and Jew. The precise charge is proselytism: though the Jews were allowed to practise their religion, they had no right to proselytise Romans. Christian propaganda was therefore against the law.

m. This new fear comes from his realising that he has treated as criminals men who are envoys of God.

n. Var. 'the word of God'

o. Var. 'When it was daylight the magistrates met in the market place; remembering the earthquake that had taken place they were afraid and sent the officers to say: Release the men you arrested yesterday.'

p. Add. 'in peace'.

q. The *lex Porcia* forbade (under heavy penalties) the scourging of a Roman citizen.

r. Alex. (and Antiochene) Text 'They came to apologise, and when they had taken them out they asked them to leave the town'. Western Text 'And going with a number of friends to the prison, they urged them to go out, saying: We had not realised what you wanted and that you were holy men. When they had taken them out, they begged them: Get out of this town in case those who shouted against you get another mob together.'

From the prison they went to Lydia's house where they saw all the brothers and gave them some encouragement; then they left. 40

### Thessalonika: difficulties with the Jews

Ph 4:16 17 Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they eventually reached 1  
13:5+ Thessalonika, where there was a Jewish synagogue. •Paul as usual intro- 2  
Lk 24:25-27, 46-47 duced himself and for three consecutive sabbaths developed the arguments from 3  
2:23+; 18: 5+ scripture for them, •explaining and proving how it was ordained that the Christ 4  
13:43 I am proclaiming to you.' •Some of them<sup>a</sup> were convinced and joined Paul and 5  
10:2+ Silas, and so did a great many God-fearing people and Greeks,<sup>b</sup> as well as a number of rich women.

13:45+ The Jews, full of resentment, enlisted the help of a gang from the market place, 5  
1 Th 2:14+ stirred up a crowd, and soon had the whole city in an uproar. They made for 6  
Rm 16:21 Jason's house,<sup>c</sup> hoping to find them there and drag them off to the People's 7  
24:5 Assembly; •however, they only found Jason and some of the brothers, and these 8  
Lk 23:2 turning the whole world upside down have come here now; •they have been 9  
Jn 19:12-15 staying at Jason's. They have broken every one of Caesar's edicts by claiming 10  
that there is another emperor,<sup>d</sup> Jesus.' •This accusation alarmed the citizens 11  
and the city councillors •and they made Jason and the rest give security before 12  
setting them free.

### Fresh difficulties at Beroea

When it was dark the brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away to Beroea,<sup>e</sup> 10  
13:5+ where they visited the Jewish synagogue as soon as they arrived. •Here the Jews 11  
Jn 5:39 were more open-minded than those in Thessalonika, and they welcomed the word 12  
very readily; every day they studied the scriptures to check whether it was true. 13  
Many Jews became believers, and so did many Greek women from the upper 14  
classes and a number of the men.

When the Jews of Thessalonika heard that the word of God was being preached 15  
14:2+ by Paul in Beroea as well, they went there to make trouble and stir up the people. 16  
1 Th 3:2 So the brothers arranged for Paul to go immediately as far as the coast, leaving 17  
Silas and Timothy behind. •Paul's escort took him as far as Athens, and went 18  
18:5 back with instructions for Silas and Timothy to rejoin Paul as soon as they could.<sup>f</sup>

### Paul in Athens

Paul waited for them in Athens and there his whole soul was revolted at the 19  
13:5+ sight of a city given over to idolatry.<sup>g</sup> •In the synagogue he held debates with the 20  
10:2+ Jews and the God-fearing, but in the market place he had debates every day with 21  
anyone who would face him.<sup>h</sup> •Even a few Epicurean and Stoic philosophers<sup>i</sup> 22  
argued with him. Some said, 'Does this parrot know what he's talking about?'<sup>j</sup> 23  
And, because he was preaching about Jesus and the resurrection,<sup>k</sup> others said, 24  
'He sounds like a propagandist for some outlandish gods'.<sup>l</sup>

1 Co 1:22 They invited him to accompany them to the Council of the Areopagus,<sup>m</sup> where 25  
they said to him, 'How much of this new teaching you were speaking about are 26  
we allowed to know? •Some of the things you said seemed startling to us and we 27  
2 Tm 3:7 would like to find out what they mean.' •The one amusement the Athenians and 28  
the foreigners living there seem to have, apart from discussing the latest ideas, 29  
is listening to lectures about them.

So Paul stood before the whole Council of the Areopagus and made this 30  
speech:

### Paul's speech before the Council of the Areopagus<sup>n</sup>

'Men of Athens, I have seen for myself how extremely scrupulous you are 31  
in all religious matters, •because I noticed, as I strolled round admiring your 32

sacred monuments, that you had an altar inscribed: To An Unknown God.<sup>o</sup> Well, the God whom I proclaim is in fact the one whom you already worship without knowing it.

- 24 'Since the God who made the world and everything in it<sup>p</sup> is himself Lord of heaven and earth, he does not make his home in shrines made by human hands.  
25 Nor is he dependent on anything that human hands can do for him, since he can never be in need of anything; on the contrary, it is he who gives everything—  
26 including life and breath—to everyone. •From one single stock<sup>q</sup> he not only created the whole human race so that they could occupy the entire earth, but he decreed how long each nation should flourish and what the boundaries of its  
27 territory should be.<sup>r</sup> •And he did this so that all nations might seek the deity<sup>s</sup> and, by feeling their way towards him, succeed in finding him. Yet in fact he is not  
28 far from any of us, •since it is in him that we live, and move, and exist,<sup>t</sup> as indeed some of your own writers<sup>u</sup> have said:

1 K 8:27  
Is 42:5  
14:15+  
7:48-50  
2 M 7:23;  
14:35  
Ps 50:12  
Gn 10  
Dt 32:8  
Jb 12:33  
Dt 4:29  
Ps 145:18  
Ws 13:6  
Is 55:6  
Rm 1:19  
Ps 104

"We are all his children".<sup>v</sup>

2 P 1:4

- 29 'Since we are the children of God, we have no excuse for thinking that the deity looks like anything in gold, silver or stone that has been carved and designed by a man.<sup>w</sup>  
30 'God overlooked that sort of thing when men were ignorant, but now he is  
31 telling everyone everywhere that they must repent, •because he has fixed a day when the whole world will be judged, and judged in righteousness,<sup>x</sup> and he has appointed a man to be the judge. And God has publicly proved this by raising this man from the dead.<sup>y</sup>  
32 At this mention of rising from the dead, some of them burst out laughing;  
33 others said, 'We would like to hear you talk about this again'.<sup>z</sup> •After that Paul

19:26  
Is 40:18  
Rm 1:22-23  
Rm 3:25-26  
2:38+  
Lk 24:47  
10:42+  
24:25

17 a. Aristarchus, one of Paul's most faithful companions, cf. 20:4; Col 4:10, was probably one of them.

b. Var. 'Greek worshippers of God'. The reading here preferred distinguishes 'those who worship God', 10:2+, from 'Greeks' not previously influenced by Jewish proselytism. Most of the conversions in Thessalonika were made from paganism, cf. 1 Th 1:9-10, etc.

c. Possibly the Jason of Rm 16:21.

d. Actually, the Christians deliberately avoided calling Jesus by the emperor's title *basileus* ('king'); they preferred 'Christ' (Messiah) and 'Lord'.

e. Despite their departure the persecution at Thessalonika went on, cf. 1 Th 2:14.

f. Luke is summarising and simplifying. Timothy must have gone with Paul because Paul later sends him from Athens to Thessalonika, 1 Th 3:1f.

g. Athens was the intellectual metropolis of pagan hellenism, and to Luke was a symbol. This is evident from the fact that Paul's sermon there, the only sample of his preaching to the pagans, is the only one in which he argues philosophically.

h. The one explicit mention in Ac of this kind of preaching (though cf. 14:7f).

i. The two prevailing philosophical systems.

j. Lit. 'What does this seed-picker want to say?'

The local Athenian word *spermologos* was used of birds that peck, crows etc. It came to mean 'beggar', one who picks up food wherever he can find it, and also a garrulous man who speaks in clichés, parrot-wise.

k. Cf. v. 32. They assume *Anastasis* ('Resurrection') is the name of a goddess, consort of Jesus.

l. Socrates was accused of the same thing.

m. A hill to the S. of the Agora. The word means also the Athenian supreme council which held its sessions there. The text may be understood in two ways: either the philosophers lead Paul 'on to (the hill of) the Areopagus', away from the city centre for easier listening, or (preferably) they lead him 'before (the Council of) the Areopagus'.

n. Paul preaches on the knowledge of God, a theme very popular in the propaganda of contemporary hellenistic Judaism. The pagans are accused of not knowing God, v. 23, the proof being that they worship idols v. 29. This ignorance is culpable, v. 30, since all

men are capable of knowing God as creator and controller of the cosmos, vv. 24-29. Cf. the same line of argument in 14:15-17; Ws 13-14; Rm 1:19-25; Ep 4:17-19.

o. The pagans used to dedicate altars 'to the unknown gods' lest they provoke the vengeance of gods whose names they did not know. Paul turns the practice to his own purpose and thus parries the charge of preaching 'outlandish gods'.

p. This idea was common in Greek thought and hellenistic Judaism; it is a form of the old biblical theme in Am 5:21f.; 1 Ch 29:10f; Ps 50:9-13, etc.

q. Var. 'of one blood', 'of one nation', 'of one race'.

r. Alternative translations 'determining the division of times' or 'determining the order of the seasons (cf. 14:17) and the bounds of human habitation' (man was not to occupy the whole earth but only part of it). The general meaning is the same: the order of the cosmos is enough to lead to a knowledge of God.

s. Var. 'God' or 'the Lord'.

t. Expression suggested by the poet Epimenides of Cnossos (6th c. B.C.).

u. Lit. 'of your people'. Var. 'of your poets' or 'of your sages'.

v. Quotation from the *Phainomena* of Aratus, a poet of Cilician origin (3rd c. B.C.). Cleanthes the Stoic (3rd c.) used almost identical language.

w. This form of attack on idolatry has ancient precedent, cf. Is 40:20+.

x. Cf. Ps 9:8; 96:13; 98:9. The apostles set their appeal for repentance against the background of judgement, cf. especially 10:42-43; 1 Th 1:10.

y. Christ's resurrection justifies belief in his coming as judge and saviour at the end of time, cf. Rm 14:9; 2 Tm 4:1; 1 P 4:5.

z. In the Greek world, even among Christians, the doctrine of the resurrection met stubborn resistance from preconceived ideas, cf. 1 Co 15:12f. The Jerusalem Sanhedrists condemned and attacked this Christian dogma; the Athenians of the Areopagus were content to mock. Paul's failure in Athens was all but complete; from now on he refuses to use the devices of Greek philosophy, 1 Co 2:1-5.

left them, •but there were some who attached themselves to him and became 34  
believers, among them Dionysius the Areopagite<sup>aa</sup> and a woman called Damaris,  
and others besides.

### Foundation of the church of Corinth

Rm 16:3  
1 Co 16:19  
2 Tm 4:19

**18** After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth,<sup>a</sup> •where he met a Jew <sup>1</sup>  
called Aquila whose family came from Pontus. He and his wife Priscilla<sup>b</sup>  
had recently left Italy because an edict of Claudius had expelled all the Jews from  
Rome.<sup>c</sup> Paul went to visit them, •and when he found they were tentmakers, of the 3  
same trade as himself, he lodged with them, and they worked together.<sup>d</sup> •Every 4  
sabbath he used to hold debates in the synagogues, trying to convert Jews as well  
as Greeks.

17:15  
1 Th 3:5-7  
5:42; 8:5;  
9:22

After Silas and Timothy had arrived from Macedonia,<sup>e</sup> Paul devoted all his 5  
time to preaching, declaring to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.<sup>f</sup> •When they 6  
turned against him and started to insult him, he took his cloak and shook it out  
in front of them,<sup>g</sup> saying, 'Your blood be on your own heads; from now on I can  
go to the pagans with a clear conscience'. •Then he left the synagogue and moved 7  
to the house next door that belonged to a worshipper of God called Justus.<sup>h</sup>  
Crispus, president of the synagogue, and his whole household, all became believers 8  
in the Lord. A great many Corinthians who had heard him became believers and  
were baptised.<sup>i</sup> •One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, 'Do not be afraid 9  
to speak out, nor allow yourself to be silenced: •I am with you. I have so many 10  
people on my side in this city that no one will even attempt to hurt you.' •So Paul 11  
stayed there preaching the word of God among them for eighteen months.

13:51+  
Mt 27:24-25  
Ac 13:5+;  
13:46-47;  
51+; 20:  
26; 28:28

1 Co 1:14

1:5+

23:11  
Jr 1:8  
1 Co 2:3  
Jn 10:16

### The Jews take Paul to court

1 Th 2:14+

21:27-28

23:29; 25:  
18-19  
Jn 18:31

But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia,<sup>j</sup> the Jews made a concerted attack 12  
on Paul and brought him before the tribunal. •'We accuse this man' they said 13  
'of persuading people to worship God in a way that breaks the Law.'<sup>k</sup> •Before 14  
Paul could open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, 'Listen, you Jews. If this were  
a misdemeanour or a crime, I would not hesitate to attend to you; •but if it is 15  
only quibbles about words and names, and about your own Law, then you must  
deal with it yourselves—I have no intention of making legal decisions about things  
like that.' •Then he sent them out of the court, •and at once they all turned on 16  
Sosthenes,<sup>l</sup> the synagogue president, and beat him in front of the court house.  
Gallio refused to take any notice at all. 17

### Return to Antioch and departure for the third journey

After staying on for some time, Paul took leave of the brothers and sailed for 18  
Syria,<sup>m</sup> accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had his hair cut  
19:23 off, because of a vow he had made.<sup>n</sup>

When they reached Ephesus, he left them, but first he went alone to the 19  
13:5+ synagogue to debate with the Jews. •They asked him to stay longer but he declined, 20  
10:48 though when he left he said, 'I will come back another time, God willing'. Then 21  
Jm 4:15 he sailed from Ephesus.

He landed at Caesarea, and went up to greet the church.<sup>o</sup> Then he came down 22  
to Antioch •where he spent a short time before continuing his journey 23  
16:6+; through the Galatian country and then through Phrygia, encouraging all the  
14:22+ followers.

### 19:1 Apollos

1 Co 1:12;  
16:12  
Ti 3:13

9:2+

19:3-5

An Alexandrian Jew named Apollos<sup>p</sup> now arrived in Ephesus. He was an 24  
eloquent man, with a sound knowledge of the scriptures, and yet, •though he had 25  
been given instruction in the Way of the Lord and preached with great spiritual  
earnestness and was accurate in all the details he taught about Jesus, he had only  
experienced the baptism of John. •When Priscilla and Aquila heard him speak 26



boldly in the synagogue, they took an interest in him and gave him further instruction about the Way.<sup>a</sup> 13:46+ Rm 16:3

- 27 When Apollos thought of crossing over to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote asking the disciples to welcome him.<sup>r</sup> When he arrived there he was 2 Co 3:1  
28 able by God's grace to help the believers considerably • by the energetic way he refuted the Jews in public and demonstrated from the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. 9:22; 18:5+

### The disciples of John at Ephesus

- 1 19 While Apollos was in Corinth,<sup>a</sup> Paul made his way overland as far as 18:24  
2 Ephesus,<sup>b</sup> where he found a number of disciples. • When he asked, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?' they answered, 'No, 8:15-17 Jn 7:39  
3 we were never even told there was such a thing as a Holy Spirit'.<sup>c</sup> • Then how  
4 were you baptised?' he asked. 'With John's baptism' they replied. 'John's baptism' said Paul 'was a baptism of repentance; but he insisted that the people should believe in the one who was to come after him—in other words Jesus.'  
5 When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, • and 1:5+  
6 the moment Paul had laid hands on them the Holy Spirit came down on them, 8:15-17+ 1 Tm 4:14+ Ac 2:4+ 11:27+  
7 and they began to speak with tongues and to prophesy. • There were about twelve of these men.

### Foundation of the church of Ephesus<sup>d</sup>

- 8 He began by going to the synagogue, where he spoke out boldly and argued 13:5+; 46+  
9 persuasively about the kingdom of God. He did this for three months, • till the 1:3+; 20:25

aa. Luke's readers must have known him. He became the subject of legend, especially since the 5th c. when an author (the 'pseudo-Dionysius') published various mystical writings under his name. Later legend identifies him with St Denys, first Bishop of Paris (3rd c.).

18 a. Corinth, rebuilt by Julius Caesar, became capital of the Roman province of Achaia. Its population was largely Roman and Latin-speaking, but brisk trade had attracted people of all nations. It had a considerable Jewish colony. The immorality of Corinth was proverbial.

b. Also called Prisca, Rm 16:3; 1 Co 16:19; 2 Tm 4:19.

c. This edict, mentioned by Suetonius, was issued in 49 or 50. It was effective for a very short time, cf. Rm 16:3; Ac 28:17.

d. Though Paul acknowledges the missionary's right to sustenance, 1 Co 9:6-14; Ga 6:6; 2 Th 3:9; cf. Lk 10:7, he himself always practised a trade, 1 Co 4:12, not wishing to be a burden on anyone, 1 Th 2:9; 2 Th 3:8; 2 Co 12:13f, and in order to prove his singleness of purpose, Ac 20:33f; 1 Co 9:15-18; 2 Co 11:7-12. Only from the Philippians did he accept help, Ph 4:10-18; 2 Co 11:8f, cf. Ac 16:15+. He recommended his followers to 'do the same to supply their own needs, 1 Th 4:11f; 2 Th 3:10-12, and those of the poor, Ac 20:35; Ep 4:28.

e. It was after this that Paul wrote his two letters to the Thessalonians.

f. That Jesus was Messiah was the distinctive theme of the preaching to the Jews, cf. 2:36; 3:18,20; 5:42; 8:5,12; 9:22; 17:3; 18:28; 24:24; 26:23.

g. Symbolically breaking off relations. The following sentence is biblical, cf. Lv 20:9-16; 2 S 1:16, and means that the Jews must accept full responsibility for the consequences. Their 'blood', i.e. their punishment, is not Paul's affair; his conscience is clear (lit. 'I am clean').

h. Var. 'Titus Justus' or 'Titius Justus'.

i. Western Text add. 'believing in God through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ', cf. 8:36+. The converts had therefore been pagans.

j. An inscription from Delphi puts Gallio's proconsulate in 52. Paul's arraignment before Gallio must have been towards the end (v. 18) of his eighteen-month stay (v. 11) in Corinth: probably the spring of 52.

k. Ambiguous term capable of meaning the Roman law, cf. 16:21; 17:7, or the Jewish Law which was itself guaranteed by Roman law. Gallio chooses to see the charge as a question of the interpretation of Jewish Law (v. 15) in which he claims no competence.

l. Possibly the Sosthenes of 1 Co 1:1.

m. Back to Antioch, his headquarters.

n. The Greek is obscure, but apparently it was Paul, not Aquila, who took the vow. To take a vow was to be *nazir*, cf. Nb 6:1+, for the period it covered, usually thirty days, and among other obligations it meant leaving the hair uncut during that time. It is not known whether the vow was taken by Paul at Cenchreae or whether it expired there. Cf. Ac 21:23-27 where Paul and four other Jews perform the rites for the fulfilment of a vow.

o. Perhaps the church in Jerusalem.

p. For further information, cf. 1 Co: when he went to Corinth his enormous popularity soon developed into partisanship, cf. 1 Co 1:12; 3:4-11,22; see also Ti 3:13. These remarks about Apollos have something in common with the description of John the Baptist's admirers at Ephesus in the following passage: combining these two descriptions of an imperfectly informed Christianity, we may possibly get some idea of Christianity in the church of Alexandria at this time.

q. Add. 'of God'.

r. On the use of letters of reference in the early Christian communities, cf. Rm 16:1; 2 Co 3:1f; Col 4:10; 3 Jn 9-10,12.

19 a. An editorial link joining two items of information which are inserted in the account of the journey. The Western Text has 'When Paul, pursuing his own plan, wanted to set out for Jerusalem, the Spirit told him to go back to Asia. Consequently, he made his way...'

b. Ephesus at this time was regarded, with Alexandria, as one of the finest cities in the empire; it was a religious, political and commercial centre of mixed population.

c. They were unaware, not that the Spirit existed (evident from the O.T. to the most casual reader) but that the messianic promises had been fulfilled and the Spirit given in abundance, cf. 2:17-18,33.

d. Resumption of the narrative interrupted by the remarks about Apollos and the followers of John the Baptist: 19:8 follows on 18:23 and 19:1.

attitude of some of the congregation hardened into unbelief. As soon as they  
 9:2+ began attacking the Way in front of the others, he broke with them and took his  
 disciples apart to hold daily discussions in the lecture room of Tyrannus.<sup>e</sup> • This  
 10 went on for two years,<sup>f</sup> with the result that people from all over Asia,<sup>g</sup> both Jews  
 and Greeks, were able to hear the word of the Lord.

### The Jewish exorcists

So remarkable were the miracles worked by God at Paul's hands • that <sup>11</sup>  
 Lk 8:44-47<sup>d</sup> handkerchiefs or aprons which had touched him were taken to the sick, and they  
 were cured of their illnesses, and the evil spirits came out of them. <sup>12</sup>

But some itinerant Jewish exorcists<sup>h</sup> tried pronouncing the name of the Lord <sup>13</sup>  
 Lk 9:49<sup>d</sup> Jesus over people who were possessed by evil spirits; they used to say, 'I command  
 you by the Jesus whose spokesman is Paul'. • Among those who did this were <sup>14</sup>  
 16:17 seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest. • The evil spirit replied, 'Jesus <sup>15</sup>  
 I recognise, and I know who Paul is, but who are you?' • and the man with the <sup>16</sup>  
 evil spirit hurled himself at them and overpowered first one and then another,<sup>i</sup>  
 and handled them so violently that they fled from that house naked and badly  
 9:35,42 mauled. • Everybody in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, heard about this episode; <sup>17</sup>  
 3:10 they were all greatly impressed, and the name of the Lord Jesus came to be held  
 Lk 5:26 in great honour.

Some believers, too, came forward to admit in detail how they had used spells<sup>j</sup> <sup>18</sup>  
 and a number of them who had practised magic collected their books and made <sup>19</sup>  
 a bonfire of them in public. The value of these was calculated to be fifty thousand  
 silver pieces.

6:7+ In this impressive way the word of the Lord spread more and more widely <sup>20</sup>  
 and successfully.<sup>k</sup>

## V. A PRISONER FOR CHRIST

### Rm 15:22-32 1 Co 16:1-8 Paul's plans

When all this was over Paul made up his mind to go back to Jerusalem through <sup>21</sup>  
 11:30+ Macedonia and Achaia. 'After I have been there' he said 'I must go on to see  
 23:11 Rome as well.' • So he sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, ahead of <sup>22</sup>  
 Rm 1:13 him to Macedonia, while he remained for a time in Asia.  
 1 Co 4:17

### Ephesus: the silversmiths' riot<sup>l</sup>

It was during this time that a rather serious disturbance broke out in connection <sup>23</sup>  
 9:2+ with the Way. • A silversmith called Demetrius, who employed a large number <sup>24</sup>  
 16:19 of craftsmen making silver shrines of Diana, • called a general meeting of his own <sup>25</sup>  
 Ws 15:12 men with others in the same trade. 'As you men know,' he said 'it is on this  
 industry that we depend for our prosperity. • Now you must have seen and heard  
 how, not just in Ephesus but nearly everywhere in Asia, this man Paul has per-  
 suaded and converted a great number of people with his argument that gods made  
 17:29+ by hand are not gods at all. • This threatens not only to discredit our trade, but <sup>27</sup>  
 also to reduce the sanctuary of the great goddess Diana to unimportance. It could  
 end up by taking away all the prestige of a goddess venerated all over Asia, yes,  
 and everywhere in the civilised world.' • This speech roused them to fury, and they <sup>28</sup>  
 started to shout,<sup>m</sup> 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' • The whole town was in an <sup>29</sup>  
 uproar and the mob rushed to the theatre dragging along two of Paul's  
 20:4; Macedonian travelling companions, Gaius and Aristarchus.<sup>n</sup> • Paul wanted to <sup>30</sup>  
 27:2 make an appeal to the people, but the disciples refused to let him; • in fact, some <sup>31</sup>  
 Col 4:10 of the Asiarchs,<sup>o</sup> who were friends of his, sent messages imploring him not to  
 take the risk of going into the theatre.

By now everybody was shouting different things till the assembly itself had <sup>32</sup>  
 no idea what was going on; most of them did not even know why they had been

33 summoned. •The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and when some of the  
 34 crowd shouted encouragement<sup>p</sup> he raised his hand for silence in the hope of being  
 35 able to explain things to the people. •When they realised he was a Jew, they all  
 36 started shouting in unison, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' and they kept this  
 37 up for two hours. •When the town clerk eventually succeeded in calming the  
 38 crowd, he said, 'Citizens of Ephesus! Is there anybody alive who does not know  
 39 that the city of the Ephesians is the guardian of the temple of great Diana and  
 40 of her statue that fell from heaven? •Nobody can contradict this and there is no  
 41 need for you to get excited or do anything rash. •These men you have brought  
 here are not guilty of any sacrilege or blasphemy against our goddess. •If Deme-  
 trius and the craftsmen he has with him want to complain about anyone, there are  
 the assizes and the proconsuls; let them take the case to court. •And if you want  
 to ask any more questions you must raise them in the regular assembly. •We could  
 easily be charged with rioting for today's happenings: there was no ground for it  
 all, and we can give no reason for this gathering.' •When he had finished this  
 speech he dismissed the assembly.

### Paul leaves Ephesus

1 **20** When the disturbance was over,<sup>a</sup> Paul sent for the disciples and, after  
 2 speaking words of encouragement to them, said good-bye and set out for  
 3 Macedonia. •On his way through those areas<sup>b</sup> he said many words of encourage-  
 4 ment to them and then made his way into Greece, •where he spent three months.<sup>c</sup>  
 He was leaving by ship for Syria when<sup>d</sup> a plot organised against him by the Jews  
 5 made him decide to go back by way of Macedonia. •He was accompanied<sup>e</sup> by  
 6 Sopater, son of Pyrrhus, who came from Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus who  
 came from Thessalonika; Gaius from Doberus, and Timothy, as well as Tychicus  
 7 and Trophimus who were from Asia.<sup>f</sup> •They all went on to Troas where they  
 8 waited for us.<sup>g</sup> •We ourselves left Philippi by ship<sup>h</sup> after the days of Unleavened  
 Bread<sup>i</sup> and met them five days later at Troas, where we stopped for a week.<sup>j</sup>

### Troas: Paul raises a dead man to life

7 On the first day of the week<sup>k</sup> we met to break bread. Paul was due to leave 2:42+

e. Western Text adds 'from the fifth to the tenth hour' (11 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

f. 20:31 says three years. During this stay, Paul wrote the first Letter to the Corinthians, the Letter to the Galatians and, probably, the Letter to the Philippians.

g. Not the whole of proconsular Asia (the W. half of Asia Minor) but the region centred on Ephesus and including the seven towns of Rv 1:11. Epaphras of Colossae had been appointed by Paul to evangelise his own city, and his mission had spread to Laodicea and Hierapolis, Col 1:7; 4:12-13. Paul was also assisted by Timothy and Erastus, Ac 19:22, Gaius and Aristarchus, 19:29, Titus, whom Ac never mentions, and others, cf. 2 Co 12:18. Luke credits Paul with the achievements of his subordinates.

h. On Jewish exorcisms, cf. Mt 12:27. Jesus himself, and his apostles after him, cf. Ac 5:16; 16:18, frequently exorcised, cf. Mt 8:29+.

i. Or 'both' (two of their number).

j. Occult practices for which Ephesus was well-known.

k. Alex. Text 'Thus, through the power of the Lord, the word spread even more widely and impressively'.

l. The literary style of this narrative is unusual in Luke; he has taken it from a special source and linked it with his story of the evangelisation of Ephesus.

m. Western Text adds 'rushing into the street'.

n. Aristarchus, a native of Thessalonika, 20:4, was a companion of Paul during his imprisonment, 27:2; Col 4:10; Phm 24. Gaius is probably the one mentioned in Ac 20:4.

o. Members of the 'Asiatic assembly' which supervised the cult of Rome and the emperor on behalf

of the cities of Asia.

p. Others translate 'they made him stand away from the crowd'.

20 a. The narrative is resumed from 19:22.

b. From here he sent his second letter to the Christians in Corinth.

c. Paul was therefore able to carry out the proposal of 1 Co 16:5-6. During this period in Corinth he wrote the Letter to the Romans. Western Text 'When he had been there for three months and the Jews had plotted against him, he intended to set out for Syria, but the Spirit told him to go back through Macedonia'.

d. To take the proceeds of the collection to Jerusalem, cf. 19:21 and Rm 15:25+.

e. Add. 'as far as Asia'. Sopater is perhaps the Jew, Sosipater, of Rm 16:21. 'Doberus'; var. 'Derbe'.

f. Trophimus was an Ephesian, 21:29, cf. 2 Tm 4:20. Tychicus is mentioned several times in the letters, Ep 6:21; Col 4:7; 2 Tm 4:12; Tt 3:12.

g. Narrative in the first person: Paul met Luke again at Philippi; from then on they stayed together, cf. 16:10+.

h. From the port of Neapolis, cf. 16:11.

i. Passover week, cf. Ex 12:1+.

j. On Paul's previous ministry in this town (when on the way from Ephesus to Corinth: vv. 1-2) cf. 2 Co 12:12.

k. The first day of the Jewish week, which had become the Christians' day of assembly, cf. Mt 28:1+; 1 Co 16:2, the 'Lord's day' (*dies dominica*) Rv 1:10. This Sunday meeting was held when the *dies dominica* began, i.e. on the Saturday evening, because the day was reckoned in the Jewish fashion.

the next day, and he preached a sermon that went on till the middle of the night. A number of lamps were lit in the upstairs room where we were assembled, •and<sup>8</sup> as Paul went on and on, a young man called Eutychus who was sitting on the window-sill grew drowsy and was overcome by sleep and fell to the ground three<sup>9</sup> floors below. He was picked up dead. •Paul went down and stooped to clasp the<sup>10</sup> boy to him. 'There is no need to worry,' he said 'there is still life in him.' •Then<sup>11</sup> he went back upstairs where he broke bread and ate and carried on talking till he left at daybreak. •They took the boy away alive, and were greatly<sup>12</sup> encouraged.

### From Troas to Miletus

We were now to go on ahead by sea, so we set sail for Assos, where we were<sup>13</sup> to take Paul on board; this was what he had arranged, for he wanted to go by road. When he rejoined us at Assos we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. •The<sup>14</sup> next day we sailed from there and arrived opposite Chios. The second day we<sup>15</sup> touched at Samos and, after stopping at Trogyllium, made Miletus the next day. Paul had decided to pass wide of Ephesus so as to avoid spending time in Asia,<sup>16</sup> since he was anxious to be in Jerusalem, if possible, for the day of Pentecost.<sup>24:11</sup>

### Farewell to the elders of Ephesus

11:30+ From Miletus he sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus. •When they<sup>17</sup> arrived he addressed these words to them:<sup>18</sup>

1Th 1:5; 2:10-12  
Ph 2:3  
2 Co 1:8-9; 11:23-31  
13:5+  
2 Tm 4:2  
1:8+  
21:4,11  
Ph 2:16  
2 Tm 4:7  
26:16-18  
19:8; 20:38  
18:6+  
20:20  
5:11+  
Jn 21:15-17  
1 Co 1:2+  
Ep 1:14+  
1 Tm 4:16  
1 P 2:9+;  
5:1-3  
Mt 7:15  
2 P 2:1-2  
1 P 5:8-9  
19:10+  
14:23  
9:31  
Dt 33:3-4  
Ep 2:20-22  
18:3+  
1 Co 11:1  
Ep 4:28  
Si 4:31  
21:5  
Rm 16:16+  
20:25

'You know what my way of life has been ever since the first day I set foot among you in Asia, •how I have served the Lord in all humility, with all the sorrows and trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. •I have not hesitated to do anything that would be helpful to you; I have preached to you, and instructed you both in public and in your homes, •urging both Jews and Greeks to turn to God and to believe in our Lord Jesus.<sup>m</sup>

'And now you see me a prisoner already in spirit;<sup>n</sup> I am on my way to Jerusalem, but have no idea what will happen to me there, •except that the Holy Spirit, in town after town, has made it clear enough that imprisonment and persecution await me. •But life to me is not a thing to waste words on,<sup>o</sup> provided that when I finish my race I have carried out the mission the Lord Jesus gave me—and that was to bear witness to the Good News of God's grace.

'I now feel sure that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will ever see my face again.<sup>p</sup> •And so here and now I swear that my conscience is clear as far as all of you are concerned, •for I have without faltering put before you the whole of God's purpose.

'Be on your guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you the overseers, to feed the Church of God<sup>q</sup> which he bought with his own blood. •I know quite well that when I have gone fierce wolves will invade you and will have no mercy on the flock. •Even from your own ranks there will be men coming forward with a travesty of the truth on their lips to induce the disciples to follow them. •So be on your guard, remembering how night and day for three years I never failed to keep you right, shedding tears over each one of you. •And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace that has power<sup>r</sup> to build you up and to give you your inheritance among all the sanctified.

'I have never asked anyone for money or clothes; •you know for yourselves that the work I did earned enough to meet my needs and those of my companions. •I did this to show you that this is how we must exert ourselves to support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, who himself said, "There is more happiness in giving than in receiving".<sup>s</sup>

When he had finished speaking he knelt down with them all and prayed. •By now they were all in tears; they put their arms round Paul's neck and kissed him; what saddened them most was his saying they would never see his face again. Then they escorted him to the ship.<sup>36</sup><sup>37</sup>

### The journey to Jerusalem

- 1 **21** When we had at last torn ourselves away from them and put to sea, we set  
 2 a straight course and arrived at Cos; the next day we reached Rhodes, and  
 3 from there went on to Patara.<sup>a</sup> •Here we found a ship bound for Phoenicia, so we  
 4 went on board and sailed in her. •After sighting Cyprus and leaving it to port, 11:19; 15:3  
 5 we sailed to Syria and put in at Tyre, since the ship was to unload her cargo there.  
 6 We sought out the disciples and stayed there a week. Speaking in the Spirit,<sup>b</sup> 20:23; 21:11  
 7 they kept telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem, •but when our time was up we set  
 8 off. Together with the women and children they all escorted us on our way till we  
 9 were out of the town. When we reached the beach, we knelt down and prayed;  
 10 then, after saying good-bye to each other, we went aboard and they returned  
 11 home.  
 12 The end of our voyage from Tyre came when we landed at Ptolemais, where  
 13 we greeted the brothers and stayed one day with them. •The next day we left and  
 14 came to Caesarea. Here we called on Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven, and  
 15 stayed with him. •He had four virgin daughters who were prophets. •When we  
 16 had been there several days a prophet called Agabus arrived from Judaea •to see  
 17 us. He took Paul's girdle, and tied up his own feet and hands,<sup>c</sup> and said, 'This  
 18 is what the Holy Spirit says, "The man this girdle belongs to will be bound like  
 19 this by the Jews in Jerusalem, and handed over to the pagans"'.<sup>d</sup> •When we heard  
 20 this, we and everybody there implored Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. •To  
 21 this he replied, 'What are you trying to do—weaken my resolution by your tears?  
 22 For my part, I am ready not only to be tied up but even to die in Jerusalem for  
 23 the name of the Lord Jesus.' •And so, as he would not be persuaded, we gave up  
 24 the attempt, saying, 'The Lord's will be done'. 6:5; 8:4f, 40  
 2:4+, 17  
 11:27-28  
 1:8+; 20:23;  
 21:33  
 21:4  
 9:15-16;  
 20:24+  
 Mt 6:10  
 Lk 22:42p

### Paul's arrival in Jerusalem

- 15 After this we packed and went on up to Jerusalem. •Some of the disciples  
 16 from Caesarea accompanied us and took us to the house of a Cypriot with whom  
 17 we were to lodge;<sup>e</sup> he was called Mnason and had been one of the earliest disciples.  
 18 On our arrival in Jerusalem the brothers gave us a very warm welcome. •The 1:15+  
 19 next day Paul went with us<sup>f</sup> to visit James, and all the elders were present. •After Rm 15:31  
 20 greeting them he gave a detailed account of all that God had done among the 12:17+  
 21 pagans through his ministry. •They gave glory to God when they heard this, 14:27; 15:4,  
 22 'But you see, brother,' they said 'how thousands of Jews have now become 12  
 23 11:18+

1. The third great discourse of Paul in Ac. The first, ch. 13, exemplified his preaching to the Jews; the second, ch. 17, his preaching to the pagans; the third 20:18-35, is as it were the last testament of the departing pastor. Many of the details of this third discourse are found in his letters; its tone is that of the Pastoral Letters. After referring to his mission in Asia, vv. 18-21, he speaks of this as a final parting and seems to hint at his death, vv. 22-27. Paul's last advice to the elders of Ephesus (and through them to all the pastors in every church) is vigilance, vv. 28-32, selflessness, charity, vv. 33-35. In all of this Paul appeals to his own example: the discourse therefore draws a faithful portrait of the apostle himself.

m. Summary of Pauline preaching, to be compared with 17:30-31; 1 Th 1:9-10; 1 Co 8:4-6. Faith and conversion must go together, cf. Mk 1:15.

n. On his way to captivity Paul speaks of himself as a prisoner; in his heart he is one already. Others translate 'a prisoner of the Spirit', i.e. impelled by the Holy Spirit.

o. Cf. 15:26; 21:13; 1 Th 2:8; Ph 1:21-23. Others translate 'But I do not count my life of any value, as if it were precious to me'.

p. Cf. v. 38. From Jerusalem Paul intended to visit Spain, Rm 15:24-28. His long imprisonment affected his plans and he did in fact revisit Ephesus despite the presentiment expressed here, cf. Ac 28:31+.

q. Var. 'the Church of the Lord'. 1 P 2:9-10 speaks of the people which God made his own (following

Is 43:21; cf. Ac 18:10+); this people was the 'Congregation (= Church) of God', 5:11, one of Paul's favourite expressions, cf. 1 Co 1:2; 10:32; 11:22, etc.

r. A difficult phrase sometimes rendered 'acquired by him at the price of the blood of his own Son', cf. Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16. But we may see underlying the expression a certain flexibility of thought, since the work of the Father (= 'God') and of the Son is so inseparably one (cf., for example, Rm 8:31-39). For the doctrine, cf. Ep 5:25-27; Heb 9:12-14; 13:12.

s. 'to God', var. 'to the Lord'. 'that has power', or 'who has power', referring to God, cf. Rm 16:25.

t. The gospels have not recorded this saying.

21 a. Add. 'and Myra'.

b. The command does not come from the Spirit, but the Spirit has revealed to them Paul's fate which their love for him seeks to avert.

c. Prophecy in mime like that used by the prophets in the past, cf. Jr 18:1+.

d. The forecast (cf. 28:17) only approximately corresponds to the narrative of Paul's arrest (cf. 21:31-33) but it resembles the prophecy of Christ's Passion in Lk 18:31-34; cf. Col 1:24; Ph 3:10, etc.

e. The Western Text indicates, perhaps correctly, that this was half-way to Jerusalem.

f. The last 'we' until 27:1 (the departure for Rome): Luke followed Paul as far as Jerusalem and was to accompany him again from Caesarea to Rome.



believers, all of them staunch upholders of the Law,<sup>g</sup> and •they have heard that 21  
 6:11,14; 15: you instruct all Jews living among the pagans to break away from Moses,<sup>h</sup>  
 1: 28:17  
 Mk 7:1-13 authorising them not to circumcise their children<sup>i</sup> or to follow the customary  
 practices. •What is to be done? Inevitably there will be a meeting of the whole 22  
 body, since they are bound to hear that you have come.<sup>j</sup> •So do as we suggest. 23  
 18:18+; We have four men here who are under a vow; •take these men along and be 24  
 24:17 purified with them and pay all the expenses connected with the shaving of their  
 heads.<sup>k</sup> This will let everyone know there is no truth in the reports they have heard  
 15:19f,28f about you and that you still regularly observe the Law. •The pagans who have 25  
 become believers, as we wrote when we told them our decisions, must abstain from  
 15:1+ things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and  
 from fornication.<sup>l</sup>

So the next day Paul took the men along and was purified with them, and he 26  
 visited the Temple to give notice of the time when the period of purification would  
 be over and the offering would have to be presented on behalf of each of them.<sup>m</sup>

### Paul's arrest

The seven days were nearly over when some Jews from Asia caught sight of 27  
 24:18 him in the Temple and stirred up the crowd and seized him, •shouting, 'Men of 28  
 Rm 15:31  
 18:13-15; Israel, help! This is the man who preaches to everyone everywhere against our  
 21:21; 24: people, against the Law and against this place.<sup>n</sup> Now he has profaned this Holy  
 5f,14; 25:8 Place by bringing Greeks into the Temple.' •They had, in fact, previously seen 29  
 Lm 1:10  
 Ezk 44:9 Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and thought that Paul had brought  
 20:4 him into the Temple.

This roused the whole city; people came running from all sides; they seized 30  
 26:21 Paul and dragged him out of the Temple, and the gates were closed behind them.  
 23:27 They would have killed him if a report had not reached the tribune of the cohort<sup>o</sup> 31  
 that there was rioting all over Jerusalem. •He immediately called out soldiers  
 and centurions, and charged down on the crowd, who stopped beating Paul when  
 they saw the tribune and the soldiers. •When the tribune came up he arrested 33  
 20:23; 21:11; Paul, had him bound with two chains and enquired who he was and what he had  
 22:29 done. •People in the crowd called out different things, and since the noise made 34  
 it impossible for him to get any positive information, the tribune ordered Paul  
 to be taken into the fortress. •When Paul reached the steps, the crowd became 35  
 so violent that he had to be carried by the soldiers; •and indeed the whole mob 36  
 22:22 was after them, shouting, 'Kill him!'  
 Lk 23:18

Just as Paul was being taken into the fortress, he asked the tribune if he could 37  
 have a word with him. The tribune said, 'You speak Greek, then? •So you are 38  
 not the Egyptian who started the recent revolt and led those four thousand cut-  
 throats<sup>p</sup> out into the desert?' •'I?' said Paul 'I am a Jew and a citizen of the well-  
 known city of Tarsus in Cilicia. Please give me permission to speak to the people.' 39  
 The man gave his consent and Paul, standing at the top of the steps, gestured to 40  
 the people with his hand. When all was quiet again he spoke to them in Hebrew.<sup>q</sup>

### Paul's address to the Jews of Jerusalem<sup>a</sup>

7:2 **22** 'My brothers, my fathers, listen to what I have to say to you in my defence.' 1  
 When they realised he was speaking in Hebrew, the silence was even greater 2  
 2 Co 11:22 than before. •'I am a Jew,' Paul said 'and was born at Tarsus in Cilicia. I was 3  
 26:4-5 brought up here in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was taught the exact  
 5:34 observance of the Law of our ancestors. In fact, I was as full of duty towards God  
 26:5 as you are today. •I even persecuted this Way<sup>b</sup> to the death, and sent women as 4  
 Rm 10:2 as well as men to prison in chains •as the high priest and the whole council of elders 5  
 Ga 1:13-14 can testify, since they even sent me with letters to their brothers in Damascus.  
 Ph 3:5-6 When I set off it was with the intention of bringing prisoners back from there  
 8:3; 9:2 to Jerusalem for punishment.  
 10:1-18+; =26:9-18

'I was on that journey and nearly at Damascus when about midday a bright 6

- 7 light from heaven suddenly shone round me. •I fell to the ground and heard a voice  
 8 saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" •I answered: Who are you,  
 9 Lord? and he said to me, "I am Jesus the Nazarene, and you are persecuting Mt 2:23+  
 10 me". •The people with me saw the light but did not hear his voice as he spoke  
 11 to me. •I said: What am I to do, Lord? The Lord answered, "Stand up and go  
 into Damascus, and there you will be told what you have been appointed to do".  
 12 The light had been so dazzling that I was blind and my companions had to take  
 me by the hand; and so I came to Damascus.  
 13 •Someone called Ananias, a devout follower of the Law and highly thought  
 14 of by all the Jews living there,<sup>c</sup> •came to see me; he stood beside me and said,  
 "Brother Saul, receive your sight". Instantly my sight came back and I was able  
 15 to see him. •Then he said, "The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know  
 16 his will, to see the Just One<sup>d</sup> and hear his own voice speaking, •because you are  
 to be his witness before all mankind, testifying to what you have seen and heard.<sup>e</sup>  
 17 And now why delay? It is time you were baptised and had your sins washed away  
 while invoking his name."  
 18 •Once, after I had got back to Jerusalem,<sup>f</sup> when I was praying in the Temple,  
 19 I fell into a trance •and then I saw him. "Hurry," he said "leave Jerusalem at  
 20 once; they will not accept the testimony you are giving about me."<sup>g</sup> •Lord,  
 I answered, it is because they know that I used to go from synagogue to syna-  
 21 gogue, imprisoning and flogging those who believed in you; •and that when the  
 blood of your witness<sup>h</sup> Stephen was being shed, I was standing by in full agreement  
 with his murderers, and minding their clothes. •Then he said to me, "Go! I am  
 sending you out to the pagans far away." "<sup>i</sup>

1 Co 9:16-17

9:17; 26:16

1 Co 9:1

1:8+

Mt 13:16-

17p

1 Jn 1:1-3

2:38+

9:26

Ga 1:18

9:29-30

5:40

7:58; 8:1;

26:10

2:39+; 9:15

### Paul the Roman citizen

- 22 So far they had listened to him, but at these words they began to shout, 'Rid  
 23 the earth of the man! He is not fit to live!' •They were yelling, waving their  
 24 cloaks and throwing dust into the air, •and so the tribune had him brought into  
 the fortress and ordered him to be examined under the lash, to find out the reason  
 25 for the outcry against him. •But when they had strapped him down Paul said  
 to the centurion on duty, 'Is it legal for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen

21:36;25:24

16:37+;

23:27

g. For its observance by others as well as by themselves, cf. 11:2; 15:1,5; Ga 2:12; 5:1f.

h. Paul's doctrine of faith as the one source of justification, cf. Rm 1:16+; 3:22+, did indeed lead to this, since it meant that the Mosaic Law no longer gave the Jew superiority over the gentile. But Paul's purpose in expounding this principle was to leave converts from paganism free of Jewish observance, cf. Ga 2:11f, not to dissuade devout Jews from it.

i. Cf. Rm 2:25-29; 4:9-12; 1 Co 7:17-20.

j. Var. 'What is to be done? They will in any case hear that you have come.'

k. The determination of the nazirite vow had to be celebrated with expensive sacrifices, Nb 6:14-15.

l. Western Text 'Of the pagans who have become believers they have nothing to say to you. For our part, we have sent our decisions, namely that they have no observance to practise but that of abstaining from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, and from fornication.'

m. Text obscure: it seems to presuppose before the nazirite sacrifice a period of seven days devoted to certain rites of purification; there is no other evidence for this practice.

n. Cf. the charges against Stephen, 6:11-14, and against Jesus, Mt 26:61; 27:40.

o. A Roman garrison consisting of an auxiliary cohort was stationed in the Antonia overlooking the Temple area from the N.W. corner.

p. Or 'four thousand Assassins'; the term, *strikariot*, strictly means extreme nationalists. This revolt is mentioned by Josephus.

q. I.e. Aramaic; Hebrew was not spoken after the Exile.

22 a. After the three discourses which sum up the preaching of Paul, ch. 13, 17, 20, Ac records three apologies: before the Jewish people in Jerusalem, ch. 22, before the procurator Felix, ch. 24, before King Agrippa, ch. 26; each is cleverly adapted to the audience, cf. 9:1+. Before the people Paul defends his conduct as being that of a devout Jew.

b. The Church, cf. 9:2+. On Paul's career as persecutor, cf. 7:58; 8:1,3; 9:1,21; 22:19-20; 26:11; 1 Co 15:9; Ga 1:13,23; Ph 3:6; 1 Tm 1:13.

c. Paul describes Ananias simply as a pious Jew without adding that he was a Christian, 9:10 or mentioning his vision, 9:10-16.

d. Christ, cf. 3:14; 7:52.

e. Cf. 9:15. Ananias here speaks in the name of 'the God of our ancestors', like an O.T. prophet. Paul is to be a witness 'before all mankind', but the pagans are not explicitly mentioned until v. 21.

f. Paul passes over the three years which elapsed before their return, cf. 9:23+. The trance he speaks of is not mentioned elsewhere; it is not to be confused with that of 2 Co 12:1-4.

g. The narrative of Paul's apostolic work emphasises this, cf. 13:46-48; 18:6; 28:25-28.

h. The Greek word, *martyr*, had not yet acquired its restricted meaning but was beginning to: the supreme testimony being that of blood. Cf. Rv 2:13; 6:9; 17:6.

i. Since 'apostle' means 'envoy', Christ's words imply that Paul is now an apostle, cf. Ga 1:1; 1 Co 9:1; 2 Co 12:11-12, and, in particular, an apostle of the pagans, Ga 1:16; 2:7-8, though Ac (with the exception of 14:4,14) reserves the term 'apostle' to the Twelve.

and has not been brought to trial?' •When he heard this the centurion went and told the tribune; 'Do you realise what you are doing?' he said 'This man is a Roman citizen'. •So the tribune came and asked him, 'Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?' 'I am' Paul said. •The tribune replied, 'It cost me a large sum to acquire this citizenship'. 'But I was born to it' said Paul. •Then those who were about to examine him hurriedly withdrew, and the tribune himself was alarmed when he realised that he had put a Roman citizen in chains.<sup>f</sup>

### His appearance before the Sanhedrin<sup>g</sup>

The next day, since he wanted to know what precise charge the Jews were bringing, he freed Paul and gave orders for a meeting of the chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin; then he brought Paul down and stood him in front of them.

**23** Paul looked steadily at the Sanhedrin and began to speak, 'My brothers, to this day I have conducted myself before God with a perfectly clear conscience'.<sup>a</sup> •At this the high priest Ananias<sup>b</sup> ordered his attendants to strike him on the mouth. •Then Paul said to him, 'God will surely strike you, you whitewashed wall! How can you sit there to judge me according to the Law, and then break the Law by ordering a man to strike me?' •The attendants said, 'It is God's high priest you are insulting!' •Paul answered, 'Brothers, I did not realise it was the high priest, for scripture says: *You must not curse a ruler of your people*'.

Now Paul was well aware that one section was made up of Sadducees and the other of Pharisees, so he called out in the Sanhedrin, 'Brothers, I am a Pharisee and the son of Pharisees. It is for our hope in the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.' •As soon as he said this a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was split between the two parties. •For the Sadducees say there is neither resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit,<sup>c</sup> while the Pharisees accept all three. •The shouting grew louder, and some of the scribes from the Pharisees' party stood up and protested strongly, 'We find nothing wrong with this man. Suppose a spirit has spoken to him, or an angel?'<sup>d</sup> •Feeling was running high, and the tribune, afraid that they would tear Paul to pieces, ordered his troops to go down and haul him out and bring him into the fortress.

Next night, the Lord appeared to him and said, 'Courage! You have borne witness for me in Jerusalem, now you must do the same in Rome.'

### The conspiracy of the Jews against Paul

When it was day, the Jews held a secret meeting at which they made a vow<sup>e</sup> not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. •There were more than forty who took part in this conspiracy, •and they went to the chief priests and elders, and told them, 'We have made a solemn vow to let nothing pass our lips until we have killed Paul. •Now it is up to you and the Sanhedrin together to apply to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you meant to examine his case more closely; we, on our side, are prepared to dispose of him before he reaches you.'

But the son of Paul's sister heard of the ambush they were laying and made his way into the fortress and told Paul, •who called one of the centurions and said, 'Take this young man to the tribune; he has something to tell him'. •So the man took him to the tribune, and reported, 'The prisoner Paul summoned me and requested me to bring this young man to you; he has something to tell you'. •Then the tribune took him by the hand and drew him aside and asked, 'What is it you have to tell me?' •He replied, 'The Jews have made a plan to ask you to take Paul down to the Sanhedrin tomorrow, as though they meant to inquire more closely into his case. •Do not let them persuade you. There are more than forty of them lying in wait for him, and they have vowed not to eat or drink until they have got rid of him. They are ready now and only waiting for your order to be given.' The tribune let the young man go with this caution, 'Tell no one that you have given me this information'.

### Paul transferred to Caesarea

- 23 Then he summoned two of the centurions and said, 'Get two hundred soldiers ready to leave for Caesarea by the third hour of the night with seventy cavalry and two hundred auxiliaries; •provide horses for Paul, and deliver him unharmed to Felix the governor'.<sup>f</sup> •He also wrote a letter in these terms: •'Claudius Lysias to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. •This man had been seized by the Jews and would have been murdered by them but I came on the scene with my troops and got him away, having discovered that he was a Roman citizen. 21:31-33  
22:25-29  
28 Wanting to find out what charge they were making against him, I brought him before their Sanhedrin. •I found that the accusation concerned disputed points of their Law,<sup>g</sup> but that there was no charge deserving death or imprisonment.<sup>h</sup> 18:15; 25; 18-19; 26; 31; 28:18  
29 My information is that there is a conspiracy against the man, so I hasten to send him to you, and have notified his accusers that they must state their case against him in your presence.'<sup>i</sup>  
31 The soldiers carried out their orders; they took Paul and escorted him by night to Antipatris. •Next day they left the mounted escort to go on with him and returned to the fortress. •On arriving at Caesarea the escort delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. •The governor read the letter and asked him what province he came from. Learning that he was from Cilicia 32 he said, •'I will hear your case as soon as your accusers are here too'. Then he ordered him to be held in Herod's praetorium.

### The case before Felix

- 1 **24** Five days later the high priest Ananias came down with some of the elders and an advocate named Tertullus, and they laid information against Paul before the governor. •Paul was called, and Tertullus opened for the prosecution, 'Your Excellency, Felix, the unbroken peace we enjoy and the reforms this nation owes to your foresight •are matters we accept, always and everywhere, with all gratitude. •I do not want to take up too much of your time, but I beg you to give us a brief hearing. •The plain truth is that we find this man a perfect pest; he stirs up trouble among Jews the world over, and is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect.<sup>a</sup> •He has even attempted to profane the Temple. 16:20; 17:6  
2 We placed him under arrest, intending to judge him according to our Law,<sup>b</sup> •but Lk 23:2  
3 the tribune Lysias intervened and took him out of our hands by force, •ordering Mt 2:23+  
4 his accusers to appear before you; if you ask him<sup>c</sup> you can find out for yourself 21:28  
5 the truth of all our accusations against this man.' •The Jews supported him, asserting that these were the facts.  
10 When the governor motioned him to speak, Paul answered:<sup>d</sup>

j. Nevertheless, Paul is left in chains, v. 30; 23:18; 24:27; 26:29. Possibly a distinction is to be made between the heavy chains, a torture in themselves (of which Paul may have been relieved), and the lighter chains to prevent the prisoner from escaping.

k. As Jesus foretold to his disciples, Mt 10:17-18 = Mk 13:9-10; Lk 21:12. Paul is to appear before 'councils' Ac 22:30-23:10, 'governors' (Felix, ch. 24), 'kings' (Agrippa, ch. 25-26).

23 a. The 'clear conscience' is a feature of Paul's moral teaching: 1 Co 4:4; 2 Co 1:12; 1 Tm 1:5,19; 3:9; 2 Tm 1:3; cf. Heb 13:18.

b. Ananias son of Nedeбалos became high priest in about 47 A.D. He was arrested, sent to Rome and probably deprived of office in 51 or 52, then reinstated; he was assassinated in 66 at the beginning of the Jewish War.

c. The resurrection of the body, cf. 2 M 7:9+, and the doctrine of angels, cf. Tb 5:4+, were not part of Jewish teaching until a comparatively late date. From the text it appears that the Sadducees rejected the latter as well as the former (they certainly denied the doctrine of retribution in the world to come). On both questions Paul and the Pharisees were in agreement, cf. Ac 4:1f+.

d. The conjecture is apparently intended to explain the apparition on the Damascus road.

e. By calling down God's vengeance on themselves should they weaken.

f. Antoninus Felix, a freedman, brother of Pallas, Agrippina's favourite; he was procurator of Judaea from 52 to 59 or 60.

g. Western Text '...points of the Law of Moses, and a man called Jesus'.

h. Luke emphasises such statements which attest Paul's innocence, cf. v. 9; 25:18,25; 26:31; 28:18, as he did in the case of Jesus, cf. 3:13; 13:28; Lk 23:14-15,22, 1. Add. 'Farewell'.

24 a. Christianity was, for its opponents, merely a 'sect', cf. 5:17, within Judaism, cf. v. 14; 28:22.

b. The Jews claim that this is their affair. Cf. 25:9; Jn 18:31+. Alex. Text omits 'intending... before you'.

c. 'him' is Lysias in the text adopted here (cf. v. 22), Paul according to the shorter text.

d. Paul denies the charge of inciting to riot (cf. v. 5), vv. 11-13. He then explains how being a 'Nazarene' (cf. v. 5) in no way prevents him being a faithful Jew, vv. 14-16. He goes on to refute the charge of profaning the Temple, vv. 17-19. Finally he reminds them that it had been found impossible to convict him when he appeared before the Sanhedrin, vv. 20-21.

**Paul's speech before the Roman governor**

11:30+; 20:16 I know that you have administered justice over this nation for many years, and I can therefore speak with confidence in my defence. •As you can verify for yourself, it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem on pilgrimage,<sup>c</sup> •and it is not true that they ever found me arguing with anyone or stirring up the mob, either in the Temple, in the synagogues, or about the town; neither can they prove any of the accusations they are making against me now. 13

9:2+ 'What I do admit to you is this: it is according to the Way which they describe 14 as a sect that I worship the God of my ancestors, retaining my belief in all points of the Law and in what is written in the prophets;<sup>f</sup> •and I hold the same hope 15 in God as they<sup>g</sup> do that there will be a resurrection of good men and bad men alike. •In these things, I, as much as they, do my best to keep a clear conscience 16 at all times before God and man.

21:24 'After several years<sup>h</sup> I came to bring alms to my nation<sup>i</sup> and to make offerings;<sup>j</sup> 17 it was in connection with these that they found me in the Temple; I had been 18 purified, and there was no crowd involved, and no disturbance. •But some Jews 19 from Asia...—these are the ones who should have appeared before you and accused me of whatever they had against me. •At least let those who are present 20 say what crime they found me guilty of when I stood before the Sanhedrin, •unless 21 it were to do with this single outburst, when I stood up among them and called 4:2; 23:6 out: It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'<sup>k</sup>

**Paul's captivity at Caesarea**

9:2+ At this, Felix, who knew more about the Way than most people, adjourned 22 the case, saying, 'When Lysias the tribune has come down I will go into your case'. •He then gave orders to the centurion that Paul should be kept under arrest 23 but free from restriction, and that none of his own people should be prevented from seeing to his needs.<sup>l</sup>

Some days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla who was a Jewess.<sup>m</sup> He sent 24 for Paul and gave him a hearing on the subject of faith in Christ Jesus. •But when 25 he began to treat of righteousness, self-control and the coming Judgement, Felix Mk 6:17-20 took fright<sup>n</sup> and said, 'You may go for the present; I will send for you when I find 17:32 it convenient'. •At the same time he had hopes of receiving money from Paul, 26 and for this reason he sent for him frequently and had talks with him.

When the two years<sup>o</sup> came to an end, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus<sup>p</sup> 27 25:9 and, being anxious to gain favour with the Jews, Felix left Paul in custody.<sup>q</sup>

**Paul appeals to Caesar**

25 Three days after his arrival in the province,<sup>a</sup> Festus went up to Jerusalem 1 from Caesarea. •The chief priests and leaders of the Jews informed him of 2 the case against Paul,<sup>b</sup> urgently •asking him to support them rather than Paul, 3 23:12-15 and to have him transferred to Jerusalem. They were, in fact, preparing an ambush to murder him on the way. •But Festus replied that Paul would remain in custody 4 in Caesarea, and that he would be going back there shortly himself. •'Let your 5 authorities come down with me' he said 'and if there is anything wrong about the man, they can bring a charge against him.'

After staying with them for eight or ten days at the most, he went down to 6 Caesarea and the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and had Paul brought Mt 26:59-61p; 27:12-14p in. •As soon as Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem 7 surrounded him, making many serious accusations which they were unable to substantiate. •Paul's defence was this, 'I have committed no offence whatever 8 against either Jewish law, or the Temple, or Caesar'. •Festus was anxious to gain 9 21:28+; 24:14+ favour with the Jews, so he said to Paul, 'Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and be tried on these charges before me there?'<sup>c</sup> •But Paul replied, 'I am standing 10 before the tribunal of Caesar and this is where I should be tried. I have done the Jews no wrong, as you very well know. •If I am guilty of committing any capital 11



crime, I do not ask to be spared the death penalty. But if there is no substance in the accusations these persons bring against me, no one has a right to surrender me to them. I appeal to Caesar.<sup>d</sup> •Then Festus conferred with his advisers and replied, 'You have appealed to Caesar; to Caesar you shall go'.

### Paul appears before King Agrippa

Some days later King Agrippa and Bernice<sup>e</sup> arrived in Caesarea and paid their respects to Festus. •Their visit lasted several days, and Festus put Paul's case before the king. 'There is a man here' he said 'whom Felix left behind in custody, •and while I was in Jerusalem the chief priests and elders of the Jews laid information against him, demanding his condemnation. •But I told them that Romans are not in the habit of surrendering any man, until the accused confronts his accusers and is given an opportunity to defend himself against the charge. •So they came here with me, and I wasted no time but took my seat on the tribunal the very next day and had the man brought in. •When confronted with him, his accusers did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected; but they had some argument or other with him about their own religion and about a dead man called Jesus whom Paul alleged to be alive. •Not feeling qualified to deal with questions of this sort, I asked him if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem to be tried there on this issue. •But Paul put in an appeal for his case to be reserved for the judgement of the august emperor,<sup>f</sup> so I ordered him to be remanded until I could send him to Caesar.' •Agrippa said to Festus, 'I should like to hear the man myself'.<sup>g</sup> 'Tomorrow' he answered 'you shall hear him.'

So the next day Agrippa and Bernice arrived in great state and entered the audience chamber attended by the tribunes and the city notables; and Festus ordered Paul to be brought in. •Then Festus said, 'King Agrippa, and all here present with us, you see before you the man about whom the whole Jewish community has petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, loudly protesting that he ought not to be allowed to remain alive. •For my own part I am satisfied that he has committed no capital crime, but when he himself appealed to the august emperor I decided to send him. •But I have nothing definite that I can write to his Imperial Majesty<sup>h</sup> about him; that is why I have produced him before

e. Lit. 'to worship', cf. 8:27.

f. Christianity is not a different religion, it is Judaism with its ancient hope fulfilled. If the Jews reject Christ, they reject their own religious tradition. Cf. the discourse before Agrippa, ch. 26, the early Christian argument from prophecy, 2:23+; 3:24+, and Paul's own assertions, Rm 1:2; 3:31; 10:4; 16:26; 1 Co 15:3-4; Ga 3, etc.

g. The Pharisees, cf. 23:6+.

h. The visit of 18:22 must have been at least four years earlier, and the 'council of Jerusalem' visit eight or nine years earlier.

i. The only allusion in Ac to the real purpose of the journey, namely to deliver in Jerusalem the collection made among the churches in pagan territory, cf. Rm 15:25+.

j. Sacrifices offered to God, cf. 21:24,26.

k. A doctrine of the Pharisees: Paul shrewdly implies that Christians and Pharisees have something in common.

l. The same conditions as for Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

m. Youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa (12:1+). She had left her first husband, the king of Emesa, to marry Felix.

n. Felix was avaricious, cruel and dissolute. Compare the attitude of John the Baptist before Herod Antipas.

o. Greek: *dietia* (= a period of two years). This term, which recurs in 28:30, here seems to be used in its technical juridical sense: the maximum duration of preventive custody. This would mean that, since sentence had not meanwhile been pronounced, Paul must have been set free when the period expired. This is

probably what happened in Rome, cf. 28:30. By detaining Paul, Felix was breaking the law.

p. Appointed probably in 60, died in 62.

q. 'anxious to . . .'; Western Text: 'And he left Paul in prison on account of Drusilla'.

25 a. Or 'after taking office'.

b. Same procedure as in 24:1, cf. 25:15.

c. Festus realises that the dispute is about religious matters, a case not for him but for the Sanhedrin (cf. vv. 19-20). But as a Roman citizen Paul could not be committed to the Sanhedrin without his own consent. To secure this, Festus promises to attend and to preside over the discussion.

d. Since Festus has disclaimed jurisdiction, Paul cannot escape trial before the Sanhedrin except by claiming the Roman citizen's privilege of trial before the Imperial tribunal.

e. Agrippa, Bernice and Drusilla (cf. 24:24) were children of Herod Agrippa I, cf. 12:1+. The eldest, later Agrippa II, was born in 27. At this time Bernice was living with her brother and their relationship became matter for gossip; some years later Bernice became the mistress of Titus, the Roman general, later emperor.

f. Lit. 'Augustus'; so also in v. 25. The title 'Augustus', like 'Caesar', was borne by the ruling emperor, in this case Nero (54-68).

g. Just as his great-uncle Herod Antipas had wanted to see Jesus, Lk 9:9; 23:8.

h. Lit. 'to the Lord', term for the emperor considered as a king whose power was absolute and universal, and therefore practically divine.

you all, and before you in particular, King Agrippa, so that after the examination I may have something to write. •It seems to me pointless to send a prisoner 27 without indicating the charges against him.’

**26** Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You have leave to speak on your own behalf’. 1 And Paul held up his hand and began his defence:

#### Paul’s speech before King Agrippa<sup>a</sup>

‘I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, in that it is before you I am to 2 answer today all the charges made against me by the Jews, •the more so because<sup>b</sup> 3 you are an expert in matters of custom and controversy among the Jews. So I beg you to listen to me patiently.

22:3+  
Ga 1:14

‘My manner of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among 4 my own people and in Jerusalem, is common knowledge among the Jews. •They 5 have known me for a long time and could testify, if they would, that I followed the strictest party in our religion and lived as a Pharisee. •And now it is for my 6 hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors that I am on trial, •the promise 7 that our twelve tribes, constant in worship night and day, hope to attain.<sup>c</sup> For that hope, Sire, I am actually put on trial by Jews! •Why does it seem incredible 8 to you that God should raise the dead?<sup>d</sup>

23:6+

2 M 7  
Dn 12:1-3

‘As for me, I once thought it was my duty to use every means to oppose the 9 name of Jesus the Nazarene. •This I did in Jerusalem; I myself threw many of the 10 saints into prison, acting on authority from the chief priests, and when they were sentenced to death I cast my vote against them. •I often went round the 11 synagogues inflicting penalties, trying in this way to force them to renounce their faith; my fury against them was so extreme that I even pursued them into foreign cities.

=9:1-18;  
=22:3-16  
Mr 2:23+

9:13+

8:1; 22:20

‘On one such expedition I was going to Damascus, armed with full powers 12 and a commission from the chief priests, •and at midday as I was on my way, 13 your Majesty, I saw a light brighter than the sun come down from heaven. It shone brilliantly round me and my fellow travellers. •We all fell to the ground, 14 and I heard a voice saying to me in Hebrew, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you, kicking like this against the goad.”<sup>e</sup> •Then I said: Who 15 are you, Lord? And the Lord answered, “I am Jesus, and you are persecuting me. •But get up and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this 16 reason: to appoint you as my servant and as witness of this vision in which you have seen me, and of others in which I shall appear to you. •*I shall deliver you 17 from the people and from the pagans, to whom I am sending you •to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light,<sup>f</sup> from the dominion of Satan 18 to God, and receive, through faith in me, forgiveness of their sins<sup>g</sup> and a share in the inheritance of the sanctified.”*

Ezk 2:1

1:8+

Jr 1:5-8

Is 42:7-16

9:17-18  
Jn 8:12+  
Col 1:12-14  
Dt 33:3-4

Ga 1:16

‘After that, King Agrippa, I could not disobey the heavenly vision. •On the 19 contrary I started preaching, first to the people of Damascus, then to those of 20 Jerusalem and all the countryside of Judaea, and also to the pagans, urging them to repent and turn to God, proving their change of heart by their deeds. •This 21 was why the Jews laid hands on me in the Temple and tried to do away with me. But I was blessed with God’s help, and so I have stood firm to this day, testifying 22 to great and small alike, saying nothing more than what the prophets and Moses himself said would happen: •that the Christ was to suffer and that, as the first 23 to rise from the dead, he was to proclaim that light now shone for our people and for the pagans too.’

11:18

2:38+  
Lk 3:8p

21:30-31

2:23+  
Jn 1:45

1 Co 15:20-23  
13:47

#### His hearers’ reactions

He had reached this point in his defence when Festus shouted out, ‘Paul, you 24 are out of your mind; all that learning of yours is driving you mad’.<sup>h</sup> •‘Festus, 25 your Excellency,’ answered Paul ‘I am not mad: I am speaking nothing but the sober truth. •The king understands these matters, and to him I now speak with 26

Jn 18:37-38

assurance, confident that nothing of all this is lost on him; after all, these things  
 27 were not done in a corner.<sup>f</sup> •King Agrippa, do you believe in the prophets? I know  
 28 you do.' •At this Agrippa said to Paul, 'A little more, and your arguments would  
 29 make a Christian<sup>g</sup> of me'. •'Little or more,'<sup>h</sup> Paul replied 'I wish before God  
 that not only you but all who have heard me today would come to be as I am  
 —except for these chains.'<sup>i</sup>

30 At this the king rose to his feet, with the governor and Bernice and those who  
 31 sat there with them. •When they had retired they talked together and agreed,  
 32 'This man is doing nothing that deserves death or imprisonment'. •And Agrippa  
 remarked to Festus, 'The man could have been set free if he had not appealed to  
 Caesar'.<sup>j</sup>

### The departure for Rome

1 **27** When it had been decided that we<sup>a</sup> should sail for Italy, Paul and some  
 2 other prisoners were handed over to a centurion called Julius, of the  
 2 Augustan cohort. •We boarded a vessel from Adramyttium bound for ports on the  
 Asiatic coast, and put to sea; we had Aristarchus with us, a Macedonian of  
 3 Thessalonika. •Next day we put in at Sidon, and Julius was considerate enough  
 to allow Paul to go to his friends to be looked after.  
 4 From there we put to sea again, but as the winds were against us we sailed  
 5 under the lee of Cyprus, •then across the open sea off Cilicia and Pamphylia,  
 6 taking a fortnight<sup>b</sup> to reach Myra in Lycia. •There the centurion found an Alex-  
 andrian ship leaving for Italy and put us aboard.  
 7 For some days we made little headway, and we had difficulty in making  
 Cnidus. The wind would not allow us to touch there, so we sailed under the lee  
 8 of Crete off Cape Salmone •and struggled along the coast until we came to a place  
 called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.

### Storm and shipwreck

9 A great deal of time had been lost, and navigation was already hazardous  
 since it was now well after the time of the Fast,<sup>c</sup> so Paul gave them this warning,  
 10 'Friends, I can see this voyage will be dangerous and that we run the risk of losing  
 11 not only the cargo and the ship but also our lives as well'. •But the centurion  
 took more notice of the captain and the ship's owner than of what Paul was  
 12 saying; •and since the harbour was unsuitable for wintering, the majority were  
 for putting out from there in the hope of wintering at Phoenix—a harbour in  
 Crete, facing south-west and north-west.  
 13 A southerly breeze sprang up and, thinking their objective as good as reached,  
 14 they weighed anchor and began to sail past Crete, close inshore. •But it was not

Jon 1:4-16  
 Mt 8:23-27p

26 a. A flattering address, vv. 2-3; cf. 24:2-3,10, is followed by Paul's assertion that his Christian faith in bodily resurrection is shared by the Pharisees, vv. 4-8; cf. 23:6-8. Paul then describes the circumstances of his conversion, vv. 9-18; cf. 9:1-18; 22:3-16, and ends with a summary of his preaching which presents the Christian faith simply as the fulfilment of the scriptures, vv. 19-23; cf. 13:15-41. Behind the immediate quarrel lay the whole question of the relationship of Christianity to Judaism, cf. 24:14+.

b. Others translate 'more than anyone'.

c. The messianic hope takes definite shape in the belief in the resurrection of the virtuous who are to have their place in the kingdom at the end of time, cf. Dn 12:1-3; 2 M 7:9+. This hope has its initial fulfilment in the resurrection of Christ which is the ground of Christian hope, 1 Co 15:15-22; Col 1:18.

d. Var. vv. 7-8 'the promise for which our twelve tribes assiduously worship God day and night in the hope of attaining it; it is for that I am now arraigned by the Jews: namely, that God raises the dead'.

e. Greek proverb for useless resistance: the ox kicking against the goad succeeds only in wounding itself.

f. Paul's missionary vocation is described here in

O.T. terms used about two great prophetic figures, Jeremiah and the Servant of Yahweh.

g. In 9:17-18, Paul, his sight restored, passes from darkness to light; in 22:16 (cf. 9:18) Paul is ordered to wash away his sins by baptism. Thus his own experience is a symbol of his mission to others.

h. Festus is taken aback by Paul's biblical erudition and probably by the Jewish method of argument. Agrippa is silent; he is clearly shaken, cf. his evasive reply in v. 28.

i. The scriptures are being fulfilled by events (v. 23: the Passion and death of Christ; the widespread apostolic preaching) which all the world can see.

j. The word is still a nickname, cf. 11:26+. Var. 'In a little while you will persuade me to become a Christian!' or, 'In a little while you will persuade yourself you have made me a Christian!'

k. A play on Agrippa's phrase.

27 a. Luke reappears on the scene. The precision of the narrative suggests a carefully kept diary.

b. Lit. 'for fifteen days', Western Text.

c. Another name for the feast of Atonement, the only fast-day prescribed by the Law, Lv 16:29-31. It was celebrated about the time of the autumn equinox.

long before a hurricane, the 'north-easter' as they call it, burst on them from across the island. •The ship was caught and could not be turned head-on to the wind, 15 so we had to give way to it and let ourselves be driven. •We ran under the lee of 16 a small island called Cauda and managed with some difficulty to bring the ship's boat under control. •They hoisted it aboard and with the help of tackle bound 17 cables round the ship; then, afraid of running aground on the Syrtis banks, they floated out the sea-anchor and so let themselves drift. •As we were making very 18 heavy weather of it, the next day they began to jettison the cargo, •and the third 19 day they threw the ship's gear overboard with their own hands. •For a number 20 of days both the sun and the stars were invisible and the storm raged unabated until at last we gave up all hope of surviving.

Jon 1:5

27:33 Then, when they had been without food for a long time,<sup>4</sup> Paul stood up among 21 the men. 'Friends,' he said 'if you had listened to me and not put out from Crete, you would have spared yourselves all this damage and loss. •But now I ask you 22 not to give way to despair. There will be no loss of life at all, only of the ship. 27:34 Last night there was standing beside me an angel of the God to whom I belong 23 and whom I serve, •and he said, "Do not be afraid, Paul. You are destined to 24 appear before Caesar,<sup>6</sup> and for this reason God grants you the safety of all who are sailing with you." •So take courage, friends; I trust in God that things will 25 turn out just as I was told; •but we are to be stranded on some island.' 26

10:3+

Jon 1:9

18:9; 23:11

On the fourteenth night we were being driven one way and another in the 27 Adriatic,<sup>7</sup> when about midnight the crew sensed that land of some sort was near. They took soundings and found twenty fathoms; after a short interval they 28 sounded again and found fifteen fathoms. •Then, afraid that we might run 29 aground somewhere on a reef, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. •When some of the crew tried to escape from the ship and 30 lowered the ship's boat into the sea as though to lay out anchors from the bows, Paul said to the centurion and his men, 'Unless those men stay on board you 31 cannot hope to be saved'. •So the soldiers cut the boat's ropes and let it drop 32 away.

27:21 Just before daybreak Paul urged them all to have something to eat. 'For 33 fourteen days' he said 'you have been in suspense, going hungry and eating nothing. •Let me persuade you to have something to eat; your safety is not in 34 doubt. Not a hair of your heads will be lost.' •With these words he took some 35 bread, gave thanks to God in front of them all, broke it and began to eat.<sup>8</sup> •Then 36 they all plucked up courage and took something to eat themselves. •We were 37 in all two hundred and seventy-six souls on board that ship. •When they had eaten what they wanted they lightened the ship by throwing the corn overboard 38 into the sea.

27:24

Mt 10:30

When day came they did not recognise the land, but they could make out 39 a kind of bay with a beach; they planned to run the ship aground on this if they could. •They slipped the anchors and left them to the sea, and at the same time 40 loosened the lashings of the rudders; then, hoisting the foresail to the wind, they headed for the beach. •But the cross-currents carried them into a shoal and the 41 vessel ran aground. The bows were wedged in and stuck fast, while the stern began to break up with the pounding of the waves.

12:19+;

16:27

The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners for fear that any should swim off 42 and escape. •But the centurion was determined to bring Paul safely through, and 43 would not let them do what they intended. He gave orders that those who could swim should jump overboard first and so get ashore, •and the rest follow either 44 on planks or on pieces of wreckage. In this way all came safe and sound to land.

### Waiting in Malta

28 Once we had come safely through, we discovered that the island was 12 called Malta. •The inhabitants treated us with unusual kindness. They made us all welcome, and they lit a huge fire because it had started to rain and

- 3 the weather was cold. •Paul had collected a bundle of sticks and was putting them on the fire when a viper brought out by the heat attached itself to his hand.  
 4 When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand they said to one another, 'That man must be a murderer; he may have escaped the sea, but divine  
 5 vengeance<sup>a</sup> would not let him live'. •However, he shook the creature off into the fire and came to no harm, •although they were expecting him at any moment  
 6 to swell up or drop dead on the spot. After they had waited a long time without seeing anything out of the ordinary happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say he was a god. 14:11  
 7 In that neighbourhood there were estates belonging to the prefect of the island, whose name was Publius. He received us and entertained us hospitably  
 8 for three days. •It so happened that Publius' father was in bed, suffering from feverish attacks and dysentery. Paul went in to see him, and after a prayer he laid  
 9 his hands on the man and healed him. •When this happened, the other sick  
 10 people on the island came as well and were cured; •they honoured us with many marks of respect, and when we sailed they put on board the provisions we needed. Lk 10:9p 9:12 5:15-16; 8:7-8 Lk 4:40 1 Tm 4:14+

### From Malta to Rome

- 11 At the end of three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island; she came from Alexandria and her figurehead was the Twins. •We put in  
 12 at Syracuse and spent three days there; •from there we followed the coast up to Rhegium. After one day there a south wind sprang up and on the second day we  
 13 made Puteoli,<sup>b</sup> •where we found some brothers and were much rewarded by staying a week with them. And so we came to Rome.  
 14 When the brothers there heard of our arrival they came to meet us, as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns. When Paul saw them he thanked  
 15 God and took courage. •On our arrival in Rome Paul was allowed to stay in lodgings of his own with the soldier who guarded him.<sup>c</sup>

### Paul makes contact with the Roman Jews<sup>d</sup>

- 17 After three days he called together the leading Jews. When they had assembled, he said to them, 'Brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. •They examined me and would have set me free, since they found  
 18 me guilty of nothing involving the death penalty; •but the Jews lodged an objection, and I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation to make  
 19 against my own nation.<sup>e</sup> •That is why I have asked to see you and talk to you, for it is on account of the hope of Israel that I wear this chain.'  
 20 They answered,<sup>f</sup> 'We have received no letters from Judaea about you, nor has any countryman of yours arrived here with any report or story of anything to  
 21 your discredit. •We think it would be as well to hear your own account of your position; all we know about this sect is that opinion everywhere condemns it.' 21:21+; 24:14+ 23:29+ 25:11; 26:32 23:6+; 26:6-8,29 Lk 4:44+ 17:19-20 24:5,14

d. Paul's second speech (vv. 33f) would follow naturally on this observation. This first speech (vv. 21-26) seems to have been rather clumsily introduced into this context and to be partly a repetition of the second.

e. Not before Nero in person but before his tribunal.

f. The name was used for all that part of the Mediterranean between Greece, Italy and Africa.

g. Western Text add, 'giving it to us also'. All Jews pronounced a blessing when about to eat; nevertheless, the terms Luke uses seem to suggest the Eucharist, cf. 2:42+.

already a Christian colony in this busy port.

c. Western Text (adopted by the Antiochene recension) '... Rome, the centurion handed the prisoners over to the commander. But Paul was allowed to live outside the (Praetorian) camp.' This additional information agrees with what in fact must have happened. By the concession of *custodia militaris* the prisoner had his own lodgings, but his right arm was chained to the left of the soldier in charge.

d. Paul wants to establish good relations with the Jews of Rome as soon as possible. He gives a brief account of his trial, and for the last time protests his loyalty to Judaism.

e. Western Text add, 'but merely wished to escape death'.

f. The reply is cautious.

28 a. Lit. 'justice', *diké*, the divine justice personified.  
 b. Pozzuoli on the Gulf of Naples. There was



Paul's declaration to the Roman Jews<sup>o</sup>

So they arranged a day with him and a large number of them visited him at his lodgings. He put his case to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them about Jesus, arguing from the Law of Moses and the prophets. This went on from early morning until evening, and some were convinced by what he said, while the rest were sceptical. So they disagreed among themselves and, as they went away, Paul had one last thing to say to them,<sup>a</sup> 'How aptly the Holy Spirit spoke when he told your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah:

13:40  
Is 6:9-10  
Mt 13:14

*Go to this nation and say:*

26

*You will hear and hear again but not understand,  
see and see again, but not perceive.*

*For the heart of this nation has grown coarse,  
their ears are dull of hearing and they have shut their eyes,  
for fear they should see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their heart,  
and be converted  
and be healed by me.*

27

18:6 'Understand, then, that this salvation of God has been sent to the pagans; they will listen to it.'

## Epilogue

Paul spent the whole of the two years<sup>k</sup> in his own rented lodging. He welcomed all who came to visit him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ with complete freedom and without hindrance from anyone.<sup>l</sup>

28 g. In Rome also Paul preaches the gospel first to the Jews, cf. 13:5+. The summary of this preaching should be compared with the opening discourse in Pisidian Antioch, 13:15-41.

h. Paul's words are reminiscent of those following his discourse at Antioch, 13:46-47. They constitute the finale of Ac, and sound its dominant note, cf. 13:41+. They recall the vision of the future offered by Jesus at the end of his discourse in Nazareth, Lk 4:23-27, and in his last words to the apostles, Lk 24:47. The text from Is, 6:9-10 (LXX), is also used in Mt 13:14-15 (cf. Mk 4:12p) and, in part, in Jn 12:40. Both theme and text are commonplaces of early Christianity.

i. The Western Text (followed by the Antiochene recension) adds v. 29 'And when he had said this, the Jews left, arguing hotly between themselves'.

j. Thus Paul arrived in Rome, which brings one period of evangelisation to a close, cf. Lk 24:47; Ac 1:8+, and is presented as the starting-point for a

further advance of Christianity. Before Luke had finished his gospel he had opened up wide horizons to the apostolic mission; his Book of Acts ends with the same prospect for the future.

k. The same technical term as in 24:27. Paul, therefore, has been under the *custodia militaris* for the legal period during which his case should have been tried. This suggests that the trial did not in fact take place, probably because there was no one to accuse him. The legal period over, Paul must have been released; Phm 22 looks forward to his approaching liberation. During these two years Paul wrote his letters to the Colossians and to the Ephesians as well as his note to Philemon.

l. Western Text add, 'saying that this is he, Jesus, the son of God, by whom the whole world is destined to be judged', cf. 17:31. On Paul's ministry after his discharge, his second imprisonment, and his death, see the Introduction to the Letters of St Paul.

THE LETTERS  
OF SAINT PAUL



# INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS OF SAINT PAUL

## CHRONOLOGY

Through the Acts of the Apostles and through his own letters Saint Paul is more familiar to us than any other figure of the New Testament. These two mutually independent sources confirm and complement each other in spite of certain discrepancies of detail. We are also able to construct a fairly exact chronology of Paul's life from references to dated events such as Gallio's proconsulate in Corinth, Ac 18:12, and the year Festus succeeded Felix, Ac 24:27-25:1.

Paul, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, Ac 9:11; 21:39; 22:3, about 10 A.D. of a Jewish family of the tribe of Benjamin, Rm 11-1; Ph 3:5, was a Roman citizen, Ac 16:37f; 22:25-28; 23:27. As a young man he was educated in Jerusalem by Gamaliel who gave him a thorough grounding in religious doctrine of the school of the Pharisees. He became a bitter persecutor of the infant Church, Ac 22:4f; 26:9-12; Ga 1:13; Ph 3:6, and played some part in Stephen's martyrdom, Ac 7:58; 22:20; 26:10; but on the road to Damascus, c. 34 A.D., a vision of the risen Jesus changed his whole life. The risen Lord opened his mind to the truth of the Christian faith and revealed that he had chosen him to be the apostle of the pagans, Ac 9:3-16p; Ga 1:12,15f; Ep 3:2f. From then on, Paul dedicated his life to serving Christ who had personally chosen him as his follower, Ph 3:12. After spending some time in Arabia he returned to Damascus, Ga 1:17, and began his preaching there, Ac 9:20. In about 39 A.D. after a brief visit to Jerusalem, Ga 1:18; Ac 9:26-29, Paul went to Syria and Cilicia, Ga 1:21; Ac 9:30, till Barnabas fetched him back to Antioch where they preached together, Ac 11:25f and cf. 9:27. During Paul's first missionary journey (45-49) to Cyprus, Pamphilia, Pisidia and Lycaonia, Ac 13-14, he started using his Greek name Paul instead of his Jewish name Saul, Ac 13:9, and, because he preached better, started to become more famous than Barnabas, Ac 14:12. In 49 A.D., fourteen years after his conversion, Ga 2:1, he went to Jerusalem to take part in the apostles' council, and it was partly through his influence that the council agreed that the Jewish Law was not binding on Christian converts from paganism, Ac 15; Ga 2:3-6. His mission as apostle to the pagans was formally sanctioned, Ga 2:7-9, and he set out once more. The dates of his second (50-52; Ac 15:36-18:22) and third missionary journeys (53-58; Ac 18:23-21:17) are discussed later under the letters he wrote at intervals during those journeys. In 58, Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, Ac 21:27-23:22, and imprisoned at Caesarea Palestinae until 60 A.D., Ac 23:23-26:32. In the autumn of 60, Festus the procurator sent him to Rome under escort, Ac 27:1-28:16, where, after the statutory two years (61-63), Ac 28:30, Paul's case was dismissed for want of evidence and he was set free. It is possible that he went to Spain, as he had