

THE SPREAD OF THE WORD OF GOD

The Lord's witnesses in Jerusalem,
and in all Judea and Samaria, and to
the farthest part of the earth.

THE EVENTS THAT HAVE BEEN FULFILLED AMONG US

I produced the former account, O Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day he was taken up, after he had given orders through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen, to whom he also presented himself alive after he suffered, with many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking the things about the kingdom of God. And while he was with them, he commanded them,

“Do not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for what was promised by the Father, which you heard about from me. For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

So when they had come together, they began asking him, saying,

“Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”

But he said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest part of the earth.”

And after he had said these things, while they were watching, he was taken up, and a cloud received him from their sight. And as they were staring into the sky while he was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood by them who also said,

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand there looking into the sky? This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven like this will come back in the same way you saw him departing into heaven!”

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mountain that is called Olive Grove which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upstairs room where they were staying—Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas son of James. All these were busily engaged with one mind in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers (and it was a crowd of persons of about one hundred twenty at the same place) and said,

“Men and brothers, it was necessary that the scripture be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit proclaimed beforehand through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus, because he was counted among us and received a share in this ministry.” (Now this man acquired a field for the wages of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines spilled out. And it became known to all who live in Jerusalem, so that that field was called in their own language “Akeldama,” that is, “Field of Blood.”) “For it is written in the book of Psalms,

‘Let his residence become deserted,
and let there be no one to live in it,’

and,

‘Let another person take his position.’

Therefore it is necessary for one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time in which the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day on which he was taken up from us—one of these men must become a witness of his resurrection together with us.” And they proposed two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was called Justus) and Matthias. And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show clearly which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to depart to his own place.” And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was added to serve with the eleven apostles.

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And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in the same place. And suddenly a sound like a violent rushing wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. And divided tongues like fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them ability to speak out.

Now there were Jews residing in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd gathered and was in confusion, because each one was hearing them speaking in his own language. And they were astounded and astonished, saying, "Behold, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how do we hear, each one of us, in our own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and those residing in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya toward Cyrene, and the Romans who were in town, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own languages the great deeds of God!"

And all were amazed and greatly perplexed, saying to one another, "What can this mean?"

But others jeered and said, "They are full of sweet new wine!"

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them,

"Judean men, and all those who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and pay attention to my words! For these men are not drunk, as you assume, because it is the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

'And it will be in the last days,' God says,

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

And even on my male slaves and on my female slaves

I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

And I will cause wonders in the heaven above

and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and vapour of smoke.

The sun will be changed to darkness

and the moon to blood,

before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes.

And it will be that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.'

"Israelite men, listen to these words! Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— this man, delivered up by the determined plan and foreknowledge of God, you executed by nailing to a cross through the hand of lawless men. God raised him up, having brought to an end the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says with reference to him,

'I saw the Lord before me continually,
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken.

For this reason my heart was glad

and my tongue rejoiced greatly,
furthermore also my flesh will live in hope,

because you will not abandon my soul in Hades,
nor will you permit your Holy One to experience decay.

You have made known to me the paths of life;

you will fill me with gladness with your presence.'

"Men and brothers, it is possible to speak with confidence to you about the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us until this day.

Therefore, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, by having foreseen this, he spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he abandoned in Hades nor did his flesh experience decay. This Jesus God raised up, of which we all are witnesses.

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Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he has poured out this that you see and hear. For David did not ascend into heaven, but he himself says,

‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”’

Therefore let all the house of Israel know beyond a doubt, that God has made him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified!”

Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “What should we do, men and brothers?”

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all those who are far away, as many as the Lord our God calls to himself.” And with many other words he solemnly urged and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this crooked generation!” So those who accepted his message were baptized, and on that day about three thousand souls were added.

And they were devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayers.

And fear came on every soul, and many wonders and signs were being performed by the apostles. And all who believed were in the same place, and had everything in common. And they began selling their possessions and property, and distributing these things to all, to the degree that anyone had need. And every day, devoting themselves to meeting with one purpose in the temple courts and breaking bread from house to house, they were eating their food with joy and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord was adding every day to the total of those who were being saved.

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

And a certain man was being carried who was lame from birth. He was placed every day at the gate of the temple called “Beautiful,” so that he could ask for charitable gifts from those who were going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple courts, he began asking to receive alms. And Peter looked intently at him, together with John, and said, “Look at us!” So he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not possess, but what I have, this I give to you—in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!” And taking hold of him by the right hand, he raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood and began walking around and entered into the temple courts with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and they recognized him, that this one was the one who used to sit asking for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with awe and astonishment at what had happened to him.

And while he was holding fast to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico called Solomon’s, utterly astonished. And when he saw it, Peter replied to the people,

“Men and Israelites, why are you astonished at this? Or why are you staring at us, as if by our own power or godliness we have made him walk? The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in the presence of Pilate, after he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and demanded that a man—a murderer—be granted to you. And you killed the originator of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses! And on the basis of faith in his name, his name has made this man strong, whom you see and know, and the faith that is through him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. But

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the things which God foretold through the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he has fulfilled in this way. Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and he may send the Christ appointed for you—Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things, about which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from earliest times. Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You will listen to him in everything that he says to you. And it will be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet will be destroyed utterly from the people.’ And indeed, all the prophets from Samuel and all those who followed him have spoken about and proclaimed these days. You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God ordained with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed.’ God, after he had raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning each of you back from your wickedness!”

And while they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees approached them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them and put them in custody until the next day, because it was already evening. But many of those who listened to the message believed, and the number of the men was approximately five thousand.

And it happened that on the next day,

their rulers and elders and scribes came together in Jerusalem, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all those who were from the high priest’s family. And they made them stand in their midst and began to ask, “By what power or by what name did you do this?”

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,

“Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a sick man—by what means this man was healed— let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man stands before you healthy! This one is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, that has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that is given among people by which we must be saved.”

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were astonished, and recognized them, that they had been with Jesus. And because they saw the man who had been healed standing there with them, they had nothing to say in return. But after they had ordered them to go outside the Sanhedrin, they began to confer with one another, saying, “What should we do with these men? For that a remarkable sign has taken place through them is evident to all those who live in Jerusalem, and we are not able to deny it! But in order that it may not spread much further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more in this name to anyone at all.” And they called them back and commanded them not to speak or to teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than God, you decide! For we are not able to refrain from speaking about the things that we have seen and heard.” So after threatening them further, they released them, finding no way to punish them on account of the people, because they were all praising God for what had happened. For the man on whom this sign of healing had been performed was more than forty years old.

And when they were released,

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they went to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices with one mind to God and said,

“Master, you are the one who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things in them, the one who said by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David, your servant,

‘Why do the nations rage,
and the peoples conspire in vain?
The kings of the earth stood opposed,
and the rulers assembled together at the same place,
against the Lord and against his Christ.’

For in truth both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, assembled together in this city against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed, to do all that your hand and plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, concern yourself with their threats and grant your slaves to speak your message with all boldness, as you extend your hand to heal and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

Now the group of those who believed were one heart and soul, and no one said anything of what belonged to him was his own, but all things were theirs in common. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on them all. For there was not even anyone needy among them, because all those who were owners of plots of land or houses were selling them and bringing the proceeds of the things that were sold and placing them at the feet of the apostles. And it was being distributed to each as anyone had need. So Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated “son of encouragement”), a Levite of Cyprus by nationality, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and placed it at the feet of the apostles.

Now a certain man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and he kept back for himself some of the proceeds, and his wife was aware of it. And he brought a certain part and placed it at the feet of the apostles. But Peter said, “Ananias, for what reason has Satan filled your heart, that you lied to the Holy Spirit and kept back for yourself some of the proceeds of the piece of land? When it remained to you, did it not remain yours? And when it was sold, was it at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to people, but to God!”

And when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear came on all those who heard about it. So the young men stood up, wrapped him up, and carried him out and buried him. And it happened that there was an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, “Tell me whether you both were paid this much for the piece of land.” And she said, “Yes, this much.” So Peter said to her, “How is it that it was agreed by you two to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out!” And immediately she fell down at his feet and died. So when the young men came in, they found her dead, and carried her out and buried her with her husband. And great fear came on the whole church and on all who heard about these things.

Now many signs and wonders were being performed among the people through the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon’s Portico. And none of the rest dared to join them, but the people spoke highly of them. And even more believers in the Lord were being added, large numbers of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and put them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow would fall on some of them. And the people of the towns around Jerusalem also

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came together, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, who were all being healed.

Now the high priest rose up and all those who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy. And they laid hands on the apostles and put them in the public prison.

But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison and led them out and said, "Go and stand in the temple courts and proclaim to the people all the words of this life." And when they heard this, they entered at daybreak into the temple courts and began teaching.

Now when the high priest and those with him arrived, they summoned the Sanhedrin—even the whole council of elders of the sons of Israel—and sent to the prison to have them brought. But the officers who came did not find them in the prison, and they returned and reported, saying, "We found the prison locked with all security and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside!" Now when both the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed concerning them, as to what this might be. But someone came and reported to them, "Behold, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple courts and teaching the people!" Then the captain went with the officers and brought them, not with force (for they were afraid of the people, lest they be stoned by them).

And when they had brought them, they made them stand in the Sanhedrin, and the high priest put a question to them, saying,

"We strictly commanded you not to teach in this name? And behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching! And you are intending to bring upon us the blood of this man!"

But Peter and the apostles answered and said,

"It is necessary to obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. This one God has exalted to his right hand as Leader and Saviour to grant repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

Now when they heard this, they were infuriated, and were wanting to execute them. But a certain man stood up in the Sanhedrin, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law respected by all the people, and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time. And he said to them,

"Men and Israelites, take care for yourselves what you are about to do to these men! For before these days, Theudas rose up saying he was somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was executed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. After this man, Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and caused people to follow him in revolt. And that one perished, and all who followed him were scattered. And now I tell you, keep away from these men, and leave them alone, because if this plan or this matter is from people, it will be overthrown. But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them, lest you even be found fighting against God."

So they were persuaded by him. And they summoned the apostles, beat them, commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and released them. So they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin rejoicing, because they had been considered worthy to be dishonoured for the sake of the name. Every day, both in the temple courts and from house to house, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the good news that the Christ was Jesus.

Now in these days, as the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose

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by the Greek-speaking Jews against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the twelve summoned the community of disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we neglect the word of God to serve tables. So, brothers, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we will put in charge of this need. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the statement pleased the whole group, and they chose Stephen (a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit), and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus (a convert from Antioch), whom they stood before the apostles. And they prayed and placed their hands on them. And the word of God kept spreading, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem was increasing greatly, and a large number of priests began obeying the faith.

Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. But some of those from the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and disputed with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and God!" And they incited the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came up and seized him and brought him to the Sanhedrin. And they put forward false witnesses who said, "This man does not stop speaking words against the holy place and the law! For we have heard him saying that this Nazarene Jesus will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed down to us." And as they looked intently at him, all those who were sitting in the Sanhedrin saw his face was like the face of an angel.

And the high priest said, "Is it so concerning these things?" So he said,

"Men—brothers and fathers—listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in Haran, and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your relatives and come to the land that I will show you.' Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. And from there, after his father died, he caused him to move to this land in which you now live. And he did not give him an inheritance in it—not even a footstep—and he promised to give it to him for his possession, and to his descendants after him, although he did not have a child. But God spoke like this: 'His descendants will be foreigners in a foreign land, and they will enslave them and mistreat them four hundred years, and the nation that they will serve as slaves, I will judge,' God said, 'and after these things they will come out and will worship me in this place.' And he gave him the covenant of circumcision, and so he became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac did so with Jacob, and Jacob did so with the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, because they were jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt. And God was with him, and rescued him from all his afflictions and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And he appointed him ruler over Egypt and all his household. And a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan and great affliction, and our fathers could not find food. So when Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And on the second visit Joseph was made known to his brothers, and the family of Joseph became known to Pharaoh. So Joseph sent and summoned his father Jacob and all his relatives, seventy-five persons in all. And Jacob went down to Egypt and died, he and our fathers. And they were brought back to Shechem and buried in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. "But as the time of the promise that God had made to Abraham was drawing near, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt until another king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph. This man deceitfully took advantage of our people and mistreated our ancestors, causing them to abandon their infants so that they would

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not be kept alive. At this time Moses was born, and he was beautiful to God. He was brought up for three months in his father's house, and when he was abandoned, the daughter of Pharaoh took him up and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was powerful in his words and deeds.

"But when he was forty years old, it entered in his heart to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel. And when he saw one of them being unjustly harmed, he defended him and avenged the one who had been oppressed by striking down the Egyptian. And he thought his brothers would understand that God was granting deliverance to them by his hand, but they did not understand. And on the following day, he made an appearance to them while they were fighting and was attempting to reconcile them in peace, saying, 'Men and brothers, why are you doing wrong to one another?' But the one who was doing wrong to his neighbour pushed him aside, saying, 'Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us? You do not want to do away with me the same way you did away with the Egyptian yesterday, do you?' And at this statement, Moses fled and became a foreigner in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

"And when forty years had been completed, an angel appeared to him in the desert of Mount Sinai in the flame of a burning bush. And when Moses saw it, he was astonished at the sight, and when he approached to look at it, the voice of the Lord came: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob!' So Moses began trembling and did not dare to look at it. And the Lord said to him, 'Untie the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. I have certainly seen the mistreatment of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.' This Moses whom they had repudiated, saying, 'Who appointed you a ruler and a judge?'—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.

"This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers.' This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and who with our fathers received living oracles to give to us, to whom our fathers were not willing to become obedient, but rejected him and turned back in their hearts to Egypt, saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods who will go on before us! For this Moses, who led us out from the land of Egypt—we do not know what has happened to him!' And they manufactured a calf in those days, and offered up a sacrifice to the idol, and began rejoicing in the works of their hands. But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, just as it is written in the book of the prophets:

'You did not bring offerings and sacrifices to me
for forty years in the wilderness, did you, house of Israel?
And you took along the tabernacle of Moloch
and the star of the god Rephan,
the images that you made, to worship them,
and I will deport you beyond Babylon!'

The tabernacle of the testimony belonged to our fathers in the wilderness, just as the one who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the design that he had seen, and which, after receiving it in turn, our fathers brought in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out from the presence of our fathers, until the days of David, who found favour in the sight of God and asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built a house for him. But the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands, just as the prophet says,

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'Heaven is my throne
and earth is the footstool for my feet.
What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord,
or what is the place of my rest?
Did not my hand make all these things?'

"You stiff-necked people and uncircumcised in hearts and in your ears! You constantly resist the Holy Spirit! As your fathers did, so also do you! Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand about the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become, you who received the law by directions of angels and have not observed it!"

Now when they heard these things, they were infuriated in their hearts and gnashed their teeth at him. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" But crying out with a loud voice, they stopped their ears and rushed at him with one purpose. And after they had driven him out of the city, they began to stone him, and the witnesses laid aside their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they kept on stoning Stephen as he was calling out and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" And falling to his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And after he said this, he fell asleep.

And Saul was agreeing with his murder. Now there happened on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul was attempting to destroy the church. Entering house after house, he dragged off both men and women and delivered them to prison.

Now those who had been scattered went about proclaiming the good news of the word. And Philip came down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming the Christ to them.

And the crowds with one mind were paying attention to what was being said by Philip, as they heard him and saw the signs that he was performing. For many of those who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them, crying out with a loud voice, and many who were paralysed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.

Now a certain man named Simon had been in the city practicing magic and astonishing the people of Samaria, saying he was someone great. They were all paying attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called 'Great.'" And they were paying attention to him because for a long time he had astonished them with his magic. But when they believed Philip as he was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were being baptized. And Simon himself also believed, and after he was baptized he was keeping close company with Philip. And when he saw the signs and great miracles that were taking place, he was astonished.

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them,

who went down and prayed for them so that they would receive the Holy Spirit. (For he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then they placed their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Now Simon, when he saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, offered them money, saying, "Give to me also this power, so that whomever I place my hands on may receive the Holy Spirit!" But Peter said to him, "May your silver be destroyed along with you, because you thought you could acquire the gift of God by means of money! You have no part or share in this matter, because your heart is not right before

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God. Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and ask the Lord if perhaps the intent of your heart may be forgiven you!" For I see you are in a state of bitter envy and bound by unrighteousness." But Simon answered and said, "You pray to the Lord for me so that nothing of what you have said will come upon me." So when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they turned back toward Jerusalem, and were proclaiming the good news to many villages of the Samaritans.

Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Get up and go toward the south on the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) And he got up and went, and behold, there was a man, an Ethiopian eunuch (a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasury) who had come to worship in Jerusalem and was returning and sitting in his chariot, and reading aloud the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Approach and join this chariot." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading aloud Isaiah the prophet and said, "So then, do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "So how could I, unless someone will guide me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of scripture that he was reading aloud was this:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
In his humiliation justice was taken from him.
Who can describe his descendants?
For his life was taken away from the earth."

And the eunuch answered and said to Philip, "I ask you, about whom does the prophet say this—about himself or about someone else?" So Philip opened his mouth and beginning from this scripture, proclaimed the good news to him about Jesus. And as they were travelling down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And he ordered the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water—Philip and the eunuch—and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any longer, for he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked for letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, both men and women, he could bring them tied up to Jerusalem. Now as he proceeded, it happened that when he approached Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" So he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting! But get up and enter into the city, and it will be told to you what you must do." (Now the men who were travelling together with him stood speechless, because they heard the voice but saw no one.) So Saul got up from the ground, but although his eyes were open he could see nothing. And leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was unable to see for three days, and he did not eat or drink. Now there was a certain disciple in Damascus named Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias!" And he said, "Behold, here I am, Lord!" And the Lord said to him, "Get up, go to the street called 'Straight' and in the house of Judas look for a man named Saul from Tarsus. For behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and placing hands on him so that he may regain his sight." But Ananias replied, "Lord, I have heard from many people about this man, how much harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem, and here he has authority from the chief priests to tie up all who call upon your

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name!" But the Lord said to him, "Go, because this man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." So Ananias departed and entered into the house, and placing his hands on him, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight and got up and was baptized, and after taking food, he regained his strength. And he was with the disciples in Damascus several days.

And immediately he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues: "This one is the Son of God!" And all who heard him were amazed, and were saying, "Is this not the one who was wreaking havoc in Jerusalem on those who call upon this name, and had come here for this reason, that he could bring them tied up to the chief priests?" But Saul was increasing in strength even more, and was confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that this one is the Christ.

And when many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted to do away with him. But their plot became known to Saul, and they were also watching the gates both day and night so that they could do away with him. But his disciples took him at night and let him down through the wall by lowering him in a basket.

And when he arrived in Jerusalem, he was attempting to associate with the disciples, and they were all afraid of him, because they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and related to them how he had seen the Lord on the road and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. And he was going in and going out among them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. And he was speaking and debating with the Greek-speaking Jews, but they were trying to do away with him. And when the brothers found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

Then the church throughout all of Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being strengthened. And living in the fear of the Lord and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it was increasing in numbers.

Now it happened that as Peter was travelling through all the places, he also came down to the saints who lived in Lydda. And he found there a certain man named Aeneas who was paralysed, who had been lying on a mat for eight years. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you! Get up and make your bed yourself!" And immediately he got up. And all those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him, who all indeed turned to the Lord.

Now in Joppa there was a certain female disciple named Tabitha (which translated means "Dorcas"). She was full of good deeds and charitable giving which she was constantly doing. Now it happened that in those days after becoming sick, she died. And after washing her, they placed her in an upstairs room. And because Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, when they heard that Peter was in Lydda, sent two men to him, urging, "Do not delay to come to us!" So Peter got up and accompanied them. When he arrived, they brought him up to the upstairs room, and all the widows came to him, weeping and showing him tunics and other clothing that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. But Peter sent them all outside, and, falling to his knees, he prayed. And turning toward the body, he said, "Tabitha, get up!" And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up. And he called the saints and the widows and presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. And it happened that he stayed many days in Joppa with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Now there was a certain man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Cohort,

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devout and fearing God together with all his household, doing many charitable deeds for the people and praying to God continually. About the ninth hour of the day, he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming to him and saying to him, "Cornelius." And he stared at him and became terrified and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your charitable deeds have gone up for a memorial offering before God. And now, send men to Joppa and summon a certain Simon, who is also called Peter. This man is staying as a guest with a certain Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." And when the angel who spoke to him departed, he summoned two of the household slaves and a devout soldier from those who attended him, and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. And the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray at about the sixth hour. And he became hungry and wanted to eat. But while they were preparing the food, a trance came over him. And he saw heaven opened and an object something like a large sheet coming down, being let down to the earth by its four corners, in which were all the four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth and birds of the sky. And a voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, slaughter and eat!" But Peter said, "Certainly not, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common and unclean!" And the voice came again to him for the second time: "The things which God has made clean, you must not consider unclean!" And this happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into heaven.

Now while Peter was greatly perplexed within himself as to what the vision that he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having found the house of Simon by asking around, stood at the gate. And they called out and asked if Simon who was also called Peter was staying there as a guest. And while Peter was reflecting about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, men are looking for you. But get up, go down, and go with them—not hesitating at all, because I have sent them." So Peter went down to the men and said, "Behold, I am he whom you are looking for! What is the reason for which you have come?" And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man—and well spoken of by the whole nation of the Jews—was directed by a holy angel to summon you to his house and to hear words from you." So he invited them in and entertained them as guests, and on the next day he got up and went away with them. And some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. And on the next day he entered into Caesarea.

Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. So it happened that when Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell at his feet, and worshiped him. But Peter helped him up, saying, "Get up! I myself am also a man!" And as he conversed with him, he went in and found many people gathered. And he said to them, "You know that it is forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or to approach a foreigner. And to me God has shown that I should call no man common or unclean. Therefore—and without raising any objection—I came when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you sent for me."

And Cornelius said, "Four days ago at this hour, the ninth, I was praying in my house. And behold, a man in shining clothing stood before me and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your charitable deeds have been remembered before God. Therefore send to Joppa and summon Simon who is also called Peter. This man is staying as a guest in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. Therefore I sent for you at once, and you were kind enough to come. So now we all are present before God to hear all the things that have been commanded to you by the Lord.'"

So Peter opened his mouth and said, "In truth I understand that God is not one who shows partiality, but in every nation the one who fears him and who does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the message that he sent to the sons of Israel, proclaiming the good news of peace through Jesus Christ—this one is Lord of all— you know the thing that happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism that John proclaimed: Jesus of Nazareth—how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with him. And

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we are witnesses of all the things that he did both in the land of the Judeans and in Jerusalem, whom they also executed by hanging him on a tree. God raised this one up on the third day and granted that he should become visible, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen beforehand by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify solemnly that this one is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and of the dead. To this one all the prophets testify, that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.”

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who were listening to the message. And those believers from the circumcision who had accompanied Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter said, “Surely no one can withhold the water for these people to be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as we also did!” So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay for several days.

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision took issue with him, saying, “You went to men who were uncircumcised and ate with them!” But Peter began and explained it to them in an orderly sequence, saying, “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision—an object something like a large sheet coming down, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came to me. As I looked intently into it, I was considering it, and I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild animals and the reptiles and the birds of the sky. And I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter, slaughter and eat!’ But I said, ‘Certainly not, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has ever entered into my mouth!’ But the voice replied from heaven for the second time, ‘The things which God has made clean, you must not consider unclean!’ And this happened three times, and everything was pulled up into heaven again. And behold, at once three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea approached the house in which we were staying. And the Spirit told me to accompany them, not hesitating at all. So these six brothers also went with me, and we entered into the man’s house. And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and summon Simon, who is also called Peter, who will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ And as I was beginning to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as also on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ Therefore if God gave them the same gift as also to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to be able to hinder God?” And when they heard these things, they became silent and praised God, saying, “Then God has granted the repentance leading to life to the Gentiles also!”

Now those who had been scattered

because of the persecution that took place over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, proclaiming the message to no one except Jews alone. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they came to Antioch, began to speak to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the good news about the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. And the report came to the attention of the church that was in Jerusalem about them, and they sent out Barnabas as far as Antioch, who, when he arrived and saw the grace of God, rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with devoted hearts, because he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a large number were added to the Lord. So he departed for Tarsus to look for Saul. And when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it happened to them also that they met together for a whole year with the church and taught a large number of people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

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Now in those days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

And one of them named Agabus stood up and indicated by the Spirit that a great famine was about to come over the whole inhabited earth (which took place in the time of Claudius). So from the disciples, according to their ability to give, each one of them determined to send financial aid for support to the brothers who lived in Judea, which they also did, sending the aid to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

Now at that time, Herod the king laid hands on some of those from the church to harm them.

So he executed James the brother of John with a sword. And when he saw that it was pleasing to the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (Now this was during the feast of Unleavened Bread.) After he had arrested him, he also put him in prison, handing him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. Thus Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer was fervently being made to God by the church for him.

Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards before the door were watching the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood near him, and a light shone in the prison cell. And striking Peter's side, he woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly!" And his chains fell off of his hands. And the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and put on your sandals!" And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me!" And he went out and was following him. And he did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but was thinking he was seeing a vision. And after they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened for them by itself, and they went out and went forward along one narrow street, and at once the angel departed from him. And when Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I know truly that the Lord has sent out his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and all that the Jewish people expected!" And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John (who is also called Mark), where many people were gathered together and were praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a female slave named Rhoda came up to answer. And recognizing Peter's voice, because of her joy she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter was standing at the gate. But they said to her, "You are out of your mind!" But she kept insisting it was so. And they kept saying, "It is his angel!" But Peter was continuing to knock, and when they opened the door they saw him and were astonished. But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he related to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Report these things to James and to the brothers," and he departed and went to another place.

Now when day came, there was not a little commotion among the soldiers as to what then had become of Peter. And when Herod had searched for him and did not find him, he questioned the guards and ordered that they be led away to execution. And he came down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there.

Now he was very angry with the Tyrians and Sidonians. So they came to him with one purpose, and after persuading Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country was supported with food from the king's country. So on an appointed day Herod, after putting on royal clothing and sitting down on the judgment seat, began to deliver a public address to them. But the people began to call out loudly, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down because he did not give the glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died. But the word of God kept on increasing and multiplying.

So Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem when they had completed their service, having taken along with them John (who is also called Mark).

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Now there were prophets and teachers in Antioch in the church that was there: Barnabas, and Simeon (who was called Niger), and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen (a close friend of Herod the tetrarch), and Saul. And while they were serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart now for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, after they had fasted and prayed and placed their hands on them, they sent them away.

Therefore, sent out by the Holy Spirit, they came down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed away to Cyprus. And when they came to Salamis, they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they also had John as assistant. And when they had crossed over the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a certain man, a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and wished to hear the word of God. But Elymas the magician (for his name is translated in this way) opposed them, attempting to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul (also called Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, "O you who are full of all deceit and of all unscrupulousness, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness! Will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord! And now behold, the hand of the Lord is against you, and you will be blind, not seeing the sun for a while. And immediately mist and darkness fell over him, and he was going around looking for people to lead him by the hand. Then when the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, because he was astounded at the teaching about the Lord.

Now Paul and his companions put out to sea

from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia, but John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. And they went on from Perga and arrived at Pisidian Antioch. And they entered into the synagogue on the day of the Sabbath and sat down. So after the reading from the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Men and brothers, if there is any message of exhortation by you for the people, say it."

So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand, he said,

"Israelite men, and those who fear God, listen! The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. And for a period of time of about forty years, he put up with them in the wilderness. And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave their land to his people as an inheritance. This took about four hundred and fifty years. And after these things, he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. And then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man from the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And after removing him, he raised up David for their king, about whom he also said, testifying, 'I have found David the son of Jesse to be a man in accordance with my heart, who will carry out all my will.' From the descendants of this man, according to his promise, God brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus. Before his coming John had publicly proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. But while John was completing his mission, he said, 'What do you suppose me to be? I am not he! But behold, one is coming after me of whom I am not worthy to untie the sandals of his feet!'

"Men and brothers, sons of the family of Abraham and those among you who fear God—to us the message of this salvation has been sent! For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize this one, and the voices of the prophets that are read on every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. And although they found no charge worthy of death, they asked Pilate that he be executed. And when they had carried out all the things that were written about him, they took him down from the tree and placed him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, who appeared for many days to those who had come up with him

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from Galilee to Jerusalem—who are now his witnesses to the people. And we proclaim the good news to you: that the promise that was made to the fathers, this promise God has fulfilled to our children by raising Jesus, as it is also written in the second psalm,

‘You are my Son;
today I have fathered you.’

But that he has raised him from the dead, no more going to return to decay, he has spoken in this way: ‘I will give you the reliable divine decrees of David.’ Therefore he also says in another psalm,

‘You will not permit your Holy One to experience decay.’

For David, after serving the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was buried with his fathers, and experienced decay. But he whom God raised up did not experience decay.

“Therefore let it be known to you, men and brothers, that through this one forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and from all the things from which you were not able to be justified by the law of Moses, by this one everyone who believes is justified! Watch out, therefore, lest what is stated by the prophets come upon you:

‘Look, you scoffers,
and be astonished and perish!
For I am doing a work in your days,
a work that you would never believe
even if someone were to tell it to you.’”

And as they were going out, they began urging that these things be spoken about to them on the next Sabbath. And after the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who were speaking to them and were persuading them to continue in the grace of God. And on the coming Sabbath, nearly the whole city came together to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, and began contradicting what was being said by Paul by reviling him. Both Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly and said,

“It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you, since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life! Behold, we are turning to the Gentiles! For so the Lord has commanded us:

‘I have appointed you to be a light for the Gentiles,
that you would bring salvation to the end of the earth.’

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began to rejoice and to glorify the word of the Lord. And all those who were designated for eternal life believed. So the word of the Lord was carried through the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high social standing and the most prominent men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and threw them out of their district. So after shaking off the dust from their feet against them, they went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Now it happened that in Iconium

they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews and spoke in such a way that a large number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the Jews who were disobedient stirred up and poisoned the minds of the Gentiles against the brothers. So they stayed there for a considerable time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who testified to the message of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be performed through their hands. But the population of the city was divided, and some were with the Jews and some with the apostles. So when an inclination took place on the part of both the Gentiles and the Jews, together with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, they became aware of it and fled to the Lycaonian cities—Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding region. And there they were continuing to proclaim the good news.

And in Lystra

a certain man was sitting powerless in his feet, lame from birth, who had never walked. This man listened while Paul was speaking. Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet!" And he leaped up and began walking. And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices in the Lycaonian language, saying, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us!" And they began calling Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes, because he was the principal speaker. And the priest of the temple of Zeus that was just outside the city brought bulls and garlands to the gates and was wanting to offer sacrifice, along with the crowds. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard about it, they tore their clothing and rushed out into the crowd, shouting and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, proclaiming the good news that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things that are in them— who in generations that are past permitted all the nations to go their own ways. And yet he did not leave himself without witness by doing good, giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying you with food and your hearts with gladness." And although they said these things, only with difficulty did they dissuade the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.

But Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium, and when they had won over the crowds and stoned Paul, they dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples surrounded him, he got up and went into the city.

And on the next day he departed with Barnabas

for Derbe. And after they had proclaimed the good news in that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying, "Through many persecutions it is necessary for us to enter into the kingdom of God." And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, after praying with fasting, they entrusted them to the Lord, in whom they had believed. And they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. And after they proclaimed the message in Perga, they went down to Attalia, and from there they sailed away to Antioch where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had completed. And when they arrived and called the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. And they stayed no little time with the disciples.

And some men came down from Judea

and began teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom prescribed by Moses, you cannot be saved." And after there was no little strife and debate by Paul and Barnabas against them, they appointed Paul and Barnabas and some others from among them to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem concerning this issue. So they were sent on their way by the church, and passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, telling in detail the conversion of the Gentiles and bringing great joy to all the brothers. And when they arrived in Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and reported all that God had done with them. But some of those who had believed from the party of the Pharisees stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to observe the law of Moses!" Both the apostles and the elders assembled to deliberate concerning this matter. And after there was much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Men and brothers, you know that in the early days God chose among you through my mouth that the Gentiles should hear the message of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he also did to us. And he made no distinction between us

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and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. So now why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in the same way those also are.” And the whole group became silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul describing all the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. And after they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, “Men and brothers, listen to me! Simeon has described how God first concerned himself to take from among the Gentiles a people for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

‘After these things I will return
and build up again the tent of David that has fallen,
and the parts of it that had been torn down I will build up again
and will restore it,
so that the rest of humanity may seek the Lord,
even all the Gentiles who are called by my name,
says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.’

Therefore I conclude we should not cause difficulty for those from among the Gentiles who turn to God, but we should write a letter to them to abstain from the pollution of idols and from sexual immorality and from what has been strangled and from blood. For Moses has those who proclaim him in every city from ancient generations, because he is read aloud in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

Then it seemed best to the apostles and the elders, together with the whole church, to send men chosen from among them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas—Judas who was called Barsabbas and Silas, men who were leaders among the brothers— writing this letter to be delivered by them:

The apostles and the elders, brothers.

To the brothers who are from among the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia.
Greetings!

Because we have heard that some have gone out from among us—to whom we gave no orders—and have thrown you into confusion by words upsetting your minds, it seemed best to us, having reached a unanimous decision, and having chosen men, to send them to you together with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives on behalf of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, and they will report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed best to the Holy Spirit and to us to place on you no greater burden except these necessary things: that you abstain from food sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these things you will do well.

Farewell.

So when they were sent off, they came down to Antioch, and after calling together the community, they delivered the letter. And when they read it aloud, they rejoiced at the encouragement. Both Judas and Silas, who were also prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brothers by a long message. And after spending some time, they were sent away in peace from the brothers to those who had sent them. But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch teaching and proclaiming the word of the Lord with many others also.

And after some days,

Paul said to Barnabas, “Come then, let us return and visit the brothers in every town in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, to see how they are doing.” Now Barnabas wanted to take John who was called Mark along also, but Paul held the opinion they should not take this one along, who departed from them in Pamphylia and did not accompany them in the work. And a sharp disagreement took place, so that they separated from one another. And Barnabas took along Mark and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed,

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after being commended to the grace of the Lord by the brothers. And he travelled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman but of a Greek father, who was well spoken of by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted this one to go with him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was Greek. And as they went through the towns, they passed on to them to observe the rules that had been decided by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So the churches were being strengthened in the faith and were growing in number every day.

And they travelled through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in Asia. And when they came to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them. So going through Mysia, they went down to Troas.

And a vision appeared to Paul during the night: a certain Macedonian man was standing there and imploring him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!"

And when he had seen the vision, we wanted at once to go away to Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

So putting out to sea from Troas, we sailed a straight course to Samothrace, and on the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of that district of Macedonia, a Roman colony. And we were staying in this city for some days. And on the day of the Sabbath, we went outside the city gate beside the river, where we thought there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women assembled there. And a certain woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira, a merchant dealing in purple cloth who showed reverence for God, was listening. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was being said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household, she urged us, saying, "If you consider me to be a believer in the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain female slave who had a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing a large profit to her owners by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us and was crying out, saying, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation!" And she was doing this for many days. But Paul, becoming greatly annoyed and turning around, said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out immediately. But when her owners saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, and are proclaiming customs that are not permitted for us to accept or to practice, because we are Romans!" And the crowd joined in attacking them, and the chief magistrates tore off their clothing and gave orders to beat them with rods. And after they had inflicted many blows on them, they threw them into prison, giving orders to the jailer to guard them securely. Having received such an order, he put them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Now about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened and all the bonds were unfastened. And after the jailer was awake and saw the doors of the prison open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, "Do no harm to yourself, for we are all here!" And demanding lights, he rushed in and, beginning to tremble, fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas. And he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do so that I can be

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saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household!" And they spoke the message of the Lord to him, together with all those in his house. And he took them at that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and he himself was baptized at once, and all those of his household. And he brought them up into his house and set a meal before them, and rejoiced greatly that he had believed in God with his whole household.

And when it was day, the chief magistrates sent the police officers, saying, "Release those men." And the jailer reported these words to Paul: "The chief magistrates have sent an order that you should be released. So come out now and go in peace!" But Paul said to them, "They beat us in public without due process—men who are Roman citizens—and threw us into prison, and now they are wanting to release us secretly? Certainly not! Rather let them come themselves and bring us out!" So the police officers reported these words to the chief magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. And they came and apologized to them, and after they brought them out they asked them to depart from the city. And when they came out of the prison, they went to Lydia and when they saw them, they encouraged the brothers and departed.

Now after they travelled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And as was his custom, Paul went in to them and on three Sabbath days he discussed with them from the scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, and also a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few of the prominent women.

But the Jews were filled with jealousy and, taking along some worthless men from the rabble in the marketplace and forming a mob, threw the city into an uproar. And attacking Jason's house, they were looking for them to bring them out to the popular assembly. And when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brothers before the city officials, shouting, "These people who have stirred up trouble throughout the world have come here also, whom Jason has entertained as guests! And these people are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king, Jesus!" And they threw the crowd into confusion, and the city officials who heard these things. And after taking money as security from Jason and the rest, they released them.

Now the brothers sent away both Paul and Silas at once, during the night, to Berea. They went into the synagogue of the Jews when they arrived. Now these were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica. They accepted the message with all eagerness, examining the scriptures every day to see if these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and not a few of the prominent Greek women and men. But when the Jews from Thessalonica found out that the message of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there too, inciting and stirring up the crowds. So then the brothers sent Paul away at once to go to the sea, and both Silas and Timothy remained there.

And those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving an order for Silas and Timothy that they should come to him as soon as possible, they went away.

Now while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he observed the city was full of idols. So he was discussing in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. And even some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him, and some were saying, "What does this babbler want to say?" But others said, "He appears to be a proclaimer of foreign deities," because he was proclaiming the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. And they took hold of him and brought him to the Areopagus,

saying, "May we learn what is this new teaching being proclaimed by you? For you are bringing some astonishing things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean." (Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who stayed there used to spend their time in nothing else than telling something or listening to something new.)

So Paul stood there in the middle of the Areopagus and said,

"Men of Athens, I see you are very religious in every respect. For as I was passing through and observing carefully your objects of worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed, 'To an unknown God.' Therefore what you worship without knowing it, this I proclaim to you— the God who made the world and all the things in it. This one, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands as if he needed anything, because he himself gives to everyone life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of humanity to live on all the face of the earth, determining their fixed times and the fixed boundaries of their habitation, to search for God, if perhaps indeed they might feel around for him and find him. And indeed he is not far away from each one of us, for in him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said: 'For we also are his offspring.' Therefore, because we are offspring of God, we ought not to think the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by human skill and thought. Therefore although God has overlooked the times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man who he has appointed, having provided proof to everyone by raising him from the dead."

Now when they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed, but others said, "We will hear you about this again also." So Paul went out from the midst of them. But some people joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

After these things he departed from Athens and went to Corinth.

And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus who had arrived recently from Italy along with Priscilla his wife, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to depart from Rome, and he went to them. And because he was practicing the same trade, he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. And he argued in the synagogue every Sabbath, attempting to persuade both Jews and Greeks.

Now when both Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began to be occupied with the message, solemnly testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. And when they resisted and reviled him, he shook out his clothes and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am guiltless! From now on I will go to the Gentiles!" And leaving there, he entered into the house of someone named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God whose house was next door to the synagogue. And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord together with his whole household. And many of the Corinthians, when they heard about it, believed and were baptized. And the Lord said to Paul by a vision in the night, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not keep silent, because I am with you and no one will attack you to harm you, because many people are mine in this city." So he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Now when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews rose up with one purpose against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat, saying, "This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law!" But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it was some crime or wicked villainy, O Jews, I would have been justified in accepting your complaint. But if it is questions concerning a word and names and your own law, see to it yourselves! I do not wish to be a judge of these things." And he drove them away from the judgment seat. So they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and

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began beating him in front of the judgment seat. And none of these things was a concern to Gallio.

So Paul, after remaining many days longer, said farewell to the brothers and sailed away to Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. He shaved his head at Cenchrea, because he had taken a vow. So they arrived at Ephesus, and those he left behind there, but he himself entered into the synagogue and discussed with the Jews. And when they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not give his consent, but saying farewell and telling them, "I will return to you again if God wills," he set sail from Ephesus. And when he arrived at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch. And after spending some time there, he departed, travelling through one place after another in the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, a native Alexandrian, arrived in Ephesus—an eloquent man who was well-versed in the scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being enthusiastic in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things about Jesus, although he knew only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately. And when he wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he assisted greatly those who had believed through grace. For he was vigorously refuting the Jews in public, demonstrating through the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. And it happened that while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul travelled through the inland regions and came to Ephesus and found some disciples. And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "But we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit!" And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into the baptism of John." And Paul said, "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the one who was to come after him—that is, in Jesus." And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy. (Now the total number of men was about twelve.) So he entered into the synagogue and was speaking boldly for three months, discussing and attempting to convince them concerning the kingdom of God. But when some became hardened and were disobedient, reviling the Way before the congregation, he departed from them and took away the disciples, leading discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. And this took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. And God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or work aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to those who were sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. But some itinerant Jewish exorcists also attempted to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches!" (Now seven sons of a certain Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.) But the evil spirit answered and said to them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I am acquainted with, but who are you?" And the man who had the evil spirit leaped on them, subdued all of them, and prevailed against them, so that they ran away from that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all who lived in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was exalted. And many of those who had believed came, confessing and disclosing their practices, and many of those who practiced magic brought together their books and burned them up in the sight of everyone. And they counted up their value and found it was fifty thousand silver coins. In this way the word of the Lord was growing in power and was prevailing.

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Now when these things were completed, Paul resolved in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, it is necessary for me to see Rome also." So after sending two of those who were assisting him, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, he himself stayed some time in Asia.

Now there happened at that time no little disturbance concerning the Way. For someone named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver replicas of the temple of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen. These he gathered together, and the workers occupied with such things, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we get our prosperity, and you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this man Paul has persuaded and turned away a large crowd by saying that the gods made by hands are not gods. So not only is there a danger this line of business of ours will come into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be regarded as nothing—and she is about to be brought down even from her grandeur, she whom the whole of Asia and the entire world worship!"

And when they heard this and became full of rage, they began to shout, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" And the city was filled with the tumult, and with one purpose they rushed into the theatre, seizing Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were travelling companions of Paul. But when Paul wanted to enter into the popular assembly, the disciples would not let him. And even some of the Asiarchs who were his friends sent word to him and were urging him not to risk himself by going into the theatre. So some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and the majority did not know why they had assembled. And some of the crowd advised Alexander, when the Jews put him forward. But Alexander, motioning with his hand, was wanting to defend himself to the popular assembly. But when they recognized that he was a Jew, they were shouting with one voice from all of them for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" And when the city secretary had quieted the crowd, he said, "Ephesian men, for who is there among men who does not know the Ephesian city is honorary temple keeper of the great Artemis and of her image fallen from heaven? Therefore because these things are undeniable, it is necessary that you be quiet and do nothing rash! For you have brought these men here who are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess. If then Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against anyone, the court days are observed and there are proconsuls—let them bring charges against one another! But if you desire anything further, it will be settled in the lawful assembly. For indeed we are in danger of being accused of rioting concerning today, since there is no cause in relation to which we will be able to give an account concerning this disorderly gathering!" And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

Now after the turmoil had ceased,

Paul summoned the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed to travel to Macedonia. And after he had gone through those regions and encouraged them at length, he came to Greece and stayed three months. Because a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he came to a decision to return through Macedonia. And Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, and Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, and Gaius from Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia, were accompanying him. And these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us in Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread and came to them at Troas within five days, where we stayed seven days.

And on the first day of the week, when we had assembled to break bread, Paul began conversing with them, because he was going to leave on the next day, and he extended his message until midnight. Now there were quite a few lamps in the upstairs room where we were gathered. And a certain young man named Eutychus who was sitting in the window was sinking into a deep sleep while Paul was conversing at length. Being overcome by sleep,

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he fell down from the third story and was picked up dead. But Paul went down and threw himself on him, and putting his arms around him, said, "Do not be distressed, for his life is in him." So he went up and broke bread, and when he had eaten and talked for a long time, until dawn, then he departed. And they led the youth away alive, and were greatly comforted.

But we went on ahead to the ship and put out to sea for Assos, intending to take Paul on board there. For having made arrangements in this way, he himself was intending to travel by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. And we sailed from there on the next day, and arrived opposite Chios. And on the next day we approached Samos, and on the following day we came to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not be having to spend time in Asia. For he was hurrying if it could be possible for him to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletus he sent word to Ephesus and summoned the elders of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them,

"You know from the first day on which I set foot in Asia how I was the whole time with you— serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, and with the trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews— how I did not shrink from proclaiming to you anything that would be profitable, and from teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks with respect to repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.

"And now behold, bound by the Spirit I am travelling to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in town after town, saying that bonds and persecutions await me. But I consider my life as worth nothing to myself, in order to finish my mission and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

"And now behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you on this very day that I am guiltless of the blood of all of you, for I did not shrink from proclaiming to you the whole purpose of God. Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God which he obtained through the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. And from among you yourselves men will arise, speaking perversions of the truth in order to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears.

"And now I entrust you to God and to the message of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have desired no one's silver or gold or clothing! You yourselves know that these hands served to meet my needs and the needs of those who were with me. I have shown you with respect to all things that by working hard in this way it is necessary to help those who are in need, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus that he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

And when he had said these things, he fell to his knees and prayed with them all. And there was considerable weeping by all, and hugging Paul, they kissed him, especially distressed at the statement that he had said, that they were going to see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

And it happened that after we tore ourselves away from them, we put out to sea, and running a straight course we came to Cos and on the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. And finding a ship that was crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and put out to sea. And after we sighted Cyprus and left it behind on the port

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side, we sailed to Syria and arrived at Tyre, because the ship was to unload its cargo there. And we stayed there seven days after we found the disciples, who kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem. And it happened that when our days were over, we departed and went on our way, while all of them accompanied us, together with their wives and children, as far as outside the city. And after falling to our knees on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another and embarked in the ship, and they returned to their own homes.

And when we had completed the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais. And after we greeted the brothers, we stayed one day with them. And on the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. (Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.)

And while we were staying there many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And he came to us and took Paul's belt. Tying up his own feet and hands, he said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man whose belt this is, and will deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" And when we heard these things, both we and the local residents urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul replied, "What are you doing weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be tied up, but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus!" And because he would not be persuaded, we remained silent, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

So after these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem.

And some of the disciples from Caesarea also travelled together with us, bringing us to a certain Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing, with whom we were to be entertained as guests.

And when we came to Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us gladly. And on the next day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. And after greeting them, he began to relate one after the other the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard this, they began to glorify God. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many ten thousands there are among the Jews who have believed, and they are all zealous adherents of the law. And they have been informed about you that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles the abandonment of Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or to live according to our customs. What then is to be done? Doubtless they will all hear that you have come! Therefore do this that we tell you: we have four men who have taken a vow upon themselves. Take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses so that they can shave their heads, and everyone will know that the things which they had been informed about you are nothing, but you yourself also agree with observing the law. But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we have written a letter after deciding they should avoid food sacrificed to idols and blood and what has been strangled and sexual immorality."

Then Paul took along the men on the next day,

and after he had purified himself together with them, he entered into the temple courts, announcing the completion of the days of purification until the time the offering would be presented on behalf of each one of them.

But when the seven days were about to be completed, the Jews from Asia who had seen him in the temple courts stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, shouting, "Israelite men, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place! And furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple, and has defiled this holy place!" (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, whom they thought that Paul had brought into the temple.) And the whole city was stirred

up, and the people came running together, and they seized Paul and dragged him outside of the temple courts, and immediately the doors were shut.

And as they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the military tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. He immediately took along soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the military tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the military tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains, and inquired who he was and what it was that he had done. But some in the crowd were shouting one thing and others another, and because he was not able to find out the truth on account of the commotion, he gave orders to bring him into the barracks. And when he came to the steps, it happened that he had to be carried by the soldiers on account of the violence of the crowd, for the crowd of people was following them, shouting, "Away with him!"

And as he was about to be brought into the barracks, Paul said to the military tribune, "Is it permitted for me to say something to you?" And he said, "Do you know Greek? Then you are not the Egyptian who before these days raised a revolt and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?" But Paul said, "I am a Jewish man from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no unimportant city. Now I ask you, allow me to speak to the people." So when he permitted him, Paul, standing there on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he addressed them in the Aramaic language, saying, "Men—brothers and fathers—listen to my defence to you now!" And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Aramaic language, they became even more silent. And he said,

"I am a Jewish man born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to the exactness of the law received from our fathers, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. I persecuted this Way to the death, tying up and delivering to prison both men and women, as indeed the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me, from whom also I received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and was travelling there to lead away those who were there also tied up to Jerusalem so that they could be punished.

"And it happened that as I was travelling and approaching Damascus around noon, suddenly a very bright light from heaven flashed around me, and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene whom you are persecuting.' (Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me.) So I said, 'What should I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and proceed to Damascus, and there it will be told to you about all the things that have been appointed for you to do.' And as I could not see as a result of the brightness of that light, I arrived in Damascus led by the hand of those who were with me. And a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who live there, came to me and stood by me and said to me, 'Brother Saul, regain your sight!' And at that same time I looked up at him and saw him. And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know his will, and to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth, because you will be a witness for him to all people of what you have seen and heard. And now why are you delaying? Get up, be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name!'

"And it happened that when I returned to Jerusalem and I was praying in the temple courts, I was in a trance, and saw him saying to me, 'Hurry and depart quickly from Jerusalem, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that from synagogue to synagogue I was imprisoning and beating those who believed in you. And when the blood of your witness Stephen was being shed, I myself also was standing near and was approving, and was guarding the

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cloaks of those who were killing him.' And he said to me, 'Go, because I will send you far away to the Gentiles!'"

Now they were listening to him until this word, and they raised their voices, saying, "Away with such a man from the earth! For it is not fitting for him to live!" And while they were screaming and throwing off their cloaks and throwing dust into the air, the military tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying he was to be examined with a lash so that he could find out for what reason they were crying out against him in this way. But when they had stretched him out for the lash, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it permitted for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?" And when the centurion heard this, he went to the military tribune and reported it, saying, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen!" So the military tribune came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" And he said, "Yes." And the military tribune replied, "I acquired this citizenship for a large sum of money." And Paul said, "But I indeed was born a citizen. Then immediately those who were about to examine him kept away from him, and the military tribune also was afraid when he realized that he was a Roman citizen and that he had tied him up.

But on the next day,

because he wanted to know the true reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin to assemble, and he brought down Paul and had him stand before them.

And looking intently at the Sanhedrin, Paul said, "Men and brothers, I have lived my life in all good conscience before God to this day." So the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near him to strike his mouth. Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! And are you sitting there judging me according to the law, and acting contrary to the law do you order me to be struck?" And those who stood nearby said, "Are you reviling the high priest of God?" And Paul said, "I did not know, brothers, that he was high priest. For it is written, 'You must not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

Now when Paul realized that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he shouted out in the Sanhedrin, "Men and brothers! I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees! I am being judged concerning the hope and the resurrection of the dead!" And when he said this, a dispute developed between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection or angel or spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.) And there was loud shouting, and some of the scribes from the party of the Pharisees stood up and contended sharply, saying, "We find nothing wrong with this man! But what if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" And when the dispute became severe, the military tribune, fearing lest Paul be torn apart by them, ordered the detachment to go down, take him away from their midst, and bring him into the barracks. And the next night the Lord stood by him and said, "Have courage, for as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

And when it was day,

the Jews made a conspiracy and bound themselves under a curse, saying they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. Now there were more than forty who had made this conspiracy, who went to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have bound ourselves under a curse to partake of nothing until we have killed Paul. Therefore, now you along with the Sanhedrin explain to the military tribune that he should bring him down to you, as if you were going to determine more accurately the things concerning him. And we are ready to do away with him before he comes near."

But when the son of Paul's sister heard about the ambush, he came and entered into the barracks and reported it to Paul. So Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Bring this young man to the military tribune, because he has something to report to him." So he took

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him and brought him to the military tribune and said, "The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you." And the military tribune, taking hold of his hand and withdrawing privately, asked, "What is it that you have to report to me?" And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you that you bring Paul down to the Sanhedrin tomorrow, as if they were going to inquire somewhat more accurately concerning him. You therefore do not be persuaded by them, because more than forty men of their number are lying in wait for him, who have bound themselves under a curse neither to eat nor to drink until they have done away with him. And now they are ready, waiting for you to agree." So the military tribune sent the young man away, directing him, "Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me."

And he summoned two of the centurions and said, "Make ready from the third hour of the night two hundred soldiers and seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, in order that they may proceed as far as Caesarea. And provide mounts so that they can put Paul on them and bring him safely to Felix the governor." He wrote a letter that had this form:

Claudius Lysias.

To his excellency Governor Felix.

Greetings!

This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the detachment and rescued him, because I learned that he was a Roman citizen. And because I wanted to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their Sanhedrin. I found he was accused concerning controversial questions of their law, but having no charge deserving death or imprisonment. And when it was made known to me there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you immediately, also ordering his accusers to speak against him before you.

Therefore the soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took Paul and brought him to Antipatris during the night.

And on the next day

they let the horsemen go on with him, and they returned to the barracks. The horsemen, when they came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, also presented Paul to him. So after reading the letter and asking what province he was from, and learning that he was from Cilicia, he said, "I will give you a hearing whenever your accusers arrive also," giving orders for him to be guarded in the praetorium of Herod.

And after five days

the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and an attorney, a certain Tertullus, all of whom brought charges against Paul to the governor. And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying,

"We have experienced much peace through you, and reforms are taking place in this nation through your foresight. Both in every way and everywhere we acknowledge this, most excellent Felix, with all gratitude. But so that I may not impose on you for longer, I implore you to hear us briefly with your customary graciousness. For we have found this man to be a public menace and one who causes riots among all the Jews throughout the Roman Empire and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, who even attempted to desecrate the temple, and we arrested him. When you yourself examine him you will be able to find out from him about all these things of which we are accusing him."

And the Jews also joined in the attack, asserting these things were so.

And when the governor gestured for him to speak, Paul replied,

"Because I know you have been a judge over this nation for many years, I defend myself cheerfully with respect to the things concerning myself. You can ascertain

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that it has not been more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. And neither did they find me arguing with anyone or making a crowd develop in the temple courts nor in the synagogues nor throughout the city. Nor can they prove the things to you concerning which they are now accusing me. But I do confess this to you, that according to the Way (which they call a sect), so I worship the God of our fathers, believing all things that are in accordance with the law and that are written in the prophets, having a hope in God which these men also themselves await: that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. For this reason also I myself always do my best to have a clear conscience toward God and people. So after many years, I came to practice charitable giving and offerings to my people, in which they found me purified in the temple courts, not with a crowd or with a disturbance. But there are some Jews from Asia who ought to be present before you and bring charges against me, if they have anything against me, or these men themselves should say what crime they found when I stood before the Sanhedrin, other than concerning this one declaration that I shouted while standing there before them: 'I am being judged before you today concerning the resurrection of the dead!'"

But Felix, because he understood the facts concerning the Way more accurately, put them off, saying, "When Lysias the military tribune comes down, I will decide your case." He ordered the centurion for him to be guarded and to have some freedom, and in no way to prevent any of his own people from serving him.

And after some days,

when Felix arrived with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and listened to him concerning faith in Christ Jesus. And while he was discussing about righteousness and self control and the judgment that is to come, Felix became afraid and replied, "Go away for the present, and when I have an opportunity, I will summon you." At the same time he was also hoping that money would be given to him by Paul. For this reason also he sent for him as often as possible and talked with him. And when two years had passed, Felix received as successor Porcius Festus. And because he wanted to do a favour for the Jews, Felix left Paul behind as a prisoner.

Now when Festus set foot in the province,

after three days he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. And the chief priests and the most prominent men of the Jews brought charges against Paul to him, and were urging him, asking for a favour against him, that he summon him to Jerusalem, because they were preparing an ambush to do away with him along the way. Then Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea, and he himself was about to go there in a short time. So he said, "Let those among you who are prominent go down with me, and if there is any wrong in the man, let them bring charges against him."

And after he had stayed among them not more than eight or ten days,

he went down to Caesarea. On the next day he sat down on the judgment seat and gave orders for Paul to be brought. And when he arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges that they were not able to prove, while Paul said in his defence, "Neither against the law of the Jews nor against the temple nor against Caesar have I sinned with reference to anything!" But Festus, because he wanted to do a favour for the Jews, answered and said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem to be tried before me there concerning these things?" But Paul said, "I am standing before the judgment seat of Caesar, where it is necessary for me to be judged. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also know very well. If then I am doing wrong and have done anything deserving death, I am not trying to avoid dying. But if there is nothing

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true of the things which these people are accusing me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar!" Then Festus, after discussing this with his council, replied, "You have appealed to Caesar—to Caesar you will go!"

Now after some days had passed,

King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to welcome Festus. And while they were staying there many days, Festus laid out the case against Paul to the king, saying,

"There is a certain man left behind by Felix as a prisoner, concerning whom when I was in Jerusalem the chief priests and the elders of the Jews presented evidence, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him. To them I replied that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up any man before the one who had been accused met his accusers face to face and received an opportunity for a defence concerning the accusation. Therefore, when they had assembled here, I made no delay; on the next day I sat down on the judgment seat and gave orders for the man to be brought. When they stood up, his accusers began bringing no charge concerning him of the evil deeds that I was suspecting, but they had some issues with him concerning their own religion, and concerning a certain Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul claimed to be alive. And because I was at a loss with regard to the investigation concerning these things, I asked if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and to be judged there concerning these things. But when Paul appealed that he be kept under guard for the decision of His Majesty the Emperor, I gave orders for him to be kept under guard until I could send him to Caesar."

So Agrippa said to Festus, "I want to hear the man myself also." "Tomorrow," he said, "you will hear him."

So on the next day,

Agrippa and Bernice came with great pageantry and entered into the audience hall, along with military tribunes and the most prominent men of the city. And when Festus gave the order, Paul was brought in. And Festus said,

"King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this man about whom the whole population of the Jews appealed to me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he must not live any longer. But I understood that he had done nothing deserving death himself, and when this man appealed to His Majesty the Emperor, I decided to send him. I do not have anything definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all—and especially before you, King Agrippa—so that after this preliminary hearing has taken place, I may have something to write. For it seems unreasonable to me to send a prisoner and not to indicate the charges against him."

So Agrippa said to Paul, "It is permitted for you to speak for yourself." Then Paul extended his hand and began to defend himself:

"Concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that before you I am about to defend myself today, because you are especially acquainted with both all the customs and controversial questions with respect to the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me with patience. "Now all the Jews know my manner of life from my youth, that had taken place from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem, having known me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that in accordance with the strictest party of our religion I lived as a Pharisee. And now I stand here on trial on the basis of hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our twelve tribes hope to attain as they earnestly serve him night and day. Concerning this hope I am being accused by the Jews, O king! Why is it thought incredible by you people that God raises the dead? Indeed, I myself thought it was necessary to do many things opposed to the name of

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Jesus the Nazarene, which I also did in Jerusalem, and not only did I lock up many of the saints in prison, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being executed, I cast my vote against them. And throughout all the synagogues I punished them often and tried to force them to blaspheme, and because I was enraged at them beyond measure, I was pursuing them even as far as to foreign cities. In this activity I was travelling to Damascus with the authority and full power of the chief priests. In the middle of the day along the road, O king, I saw a light from heaven, more than the brightness of the sun, shining around me and those who were travelling with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Aramaic language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads!' So I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet, because for this reason I have appeared to you, to appoint you a servant and witness both to the things in which you saw me and to the things in which I will appear to you, rescuing you from the people and from the Gentiles to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

"Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but to those in Damascus first, and in Jerusalem and all the region of Judea and to the Gentiles, I proclaimed that they should repent and turn to God, doing deeds worthy of repentance. On account of these things the Jews seized me in the temple courts and were attempting to kill me. Therefore I have experienced help from God until this day, and I stand here testifying to both small and great, saying nothing except what both the prophets and Moses have said were going to happen, that the Christ was to suffer and that as the first of the resurrection from the dead, he was going to proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles."

And as he was saying these things in his defence, Festus said with a loud voice, "You are out of your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you insane!"

But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but am speaking words of truth and rationality. For the king knows about these things, to whom also I am speaking freely, for I am not convinced that these things in any way have escaped his notice, because this was not done in a corner. Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know that you believe."

But Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time are you persuading me to become a Christian?" And Paul replied, "I pray to God, whether in a short time or in a long time, not only you but also all those who are listening to me today may become such people as I also am, except for these bonds!"

Both the king and the governor got up, and Bernice and those who were sitting with them. And as they were going out, they were talking to one another, saying, "This man is not doing anything deserving death or imprisonment."

And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar."

And when it was decided that we would sail away to Italy, they handed over Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius of the Augustan Cohort. And we went aboard a ship from Adramyttium that was about to sail to the places along the coast of Asia and put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us. And on the next day, we put in at Sidon. And Julius, treating Paul kindly, allowed him to go to his friends to be cared for. And from there we put out to sea and sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. And after we had sailed across the open sea along Cilicia and Pamphylia, we put in at Myra in Lycia.

And there the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board it.

And sailing slowly, in many days and with difficulty we came to Cnidus. Because the wind did not permit us to go further, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. And sailing along its coast with difficulty, we came to a certain place called Fair Havens, near which was the town of Lasea.

And because considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast was already over, Paul strongly recommended, saying to them, "Men, I perceive that the voyage is going to end with disaster and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives!" But the centurion was convinced even more by the shipmaster and the shipowner than by what was said by Paul. And because the harbor was unsuitable for spending the winter in, the majority decided on a plan to put out to sea from there, if somehow they could arrive at Phoenix, a harbor of Crete facing toward the southwest and toward the northwest, to spend the winter there.

And when a southwest wind began to blow gently, because they thought they could accomplish their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed close along Crete. But not long afterward a wind like a hurricane, called the northeaster, rushed down from it. And when the ship was caught and was not able to head into the wind, we gave way and were driven along. And running under the lee of a certain small island called Cauda, we were able with difficulty to get the ship's boat under control. After hoisting it up, they made use of supports to undergird the ship. And because they were afraid lest they run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and thus were driven along. And because we were violently battered by the storm, on the next day they began jettisoning the cargo, and on the third day they threw overboard the gear of the ship with their own hands. But when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and with not a little bad weather confronting us, finally all hope was abandoned that we would be saved.

And because many were experiencing lack of appetite, at that time Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice not to put out to sea from Crete, and thus avoided this damage and loss! And now I urge you to cheer up, for there will be no loss of life from among you, but only of the ship. For this night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve came to me, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul! It is necessary for you to stand before Caesar, and behold, God has graciously granted you all who are sailing with you.' Therefore keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will be like this—according to the way it was told to me. But it is necessary that we run aground on some island."

And when the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven in the Adriatic Sea about the middle of the night, the sailors suspected they were approaching some land. And taking soundings, they found twenty fathoms. So going on a little further and taking soundings again, they found fifteen fathoms. And because they were afraid lest somewhere we run aground against rough places, they threw down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. And when the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship and were lowering the ship's boat into the sea, pretending as if they were going to lay out anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men remain with the ship, you cannot be saved!" Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it fall away.

And until the day was about to come, Paul was urging them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited anxiously, and you have continued without eating, having taken nothing. Therefore I urge you to take some food, for this is necessary for your preservation. For not a hair from your head will be lost." And after he said these things and took bread, he gave thanks to God in front of them all, and after breaking it, he began to eat. So they all were encouraged and partook of food themselves. (Now we were in all two

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hundred seventy six persons on the ship.) And when they had eaten their fill of food, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea.

Now when day came,

they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a certain bay having a beach, onto which they decided to run the ship ashore if they could. And slipping the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes of the steering oars. And hoisting the foresail to the wind that was blowing, they held course for the beach. But falling into a place of crosscurrents, they ran the ship aground. And the bow stuck fast and stayed immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence. Now the plan of the soldiers was that they would kill the prisoners lest any escape by swimming away, but the centurion, because he wanted to save Paul, prevented them from doing what they intended, and gave orders that those who were able to swim should jump in first to get to the land, and then the rest, some of whom floated on planks and some of whom on anything that was from the ship. And in this way all were brought safely to the land.

And after we were brought safely through,

then we found out that the island was called Malta. And the local inhabitants showed extraordinary kindness to us, for they lit a fire and welcomed us all, because of the rain that had begun and because of the cold. And when Paul had gathered a large number of sticks and was placing them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand. And when the local people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, "Doubtless this man is a murderer whom, although he was rescued from the sea, Justice has not permitted to live!" He, in turn, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. But they were expecting that he was going to swell up or suddenly to fall down dead. So after they had waited for a long time and saw nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began saying that he was a god.

Now in the regions around that place were fields belonging to the chief official of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us hospitably for three days. And it happened that the father of Publius was lying down, afflicted with fever and dysentery. Paul went to him and after praying, he placed his hands on him and healed him. And after this had taken place, the rest of those on the island who had diseases were coming and being healed also. They also honoured us with many honours, and when we were putting out to sea, they gave us the things we needed.

Now after three months

we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered at the island, an Alexandrian one with the twin gods Castor and Pollux as its insignia. And putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there three days. From there we got underway and arrived at Rhegium, and after one day a south wind came up and on the second day we came to Puteoli, where we found brothers, and were implored to stay with them seven days.

And in this way we came to Rome.

And from there the brothers, when they heard the news about us, came to meet us as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns. When he saw them, Paul gave thanks to God and took courage. And when we entered into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself with the soldier who was guarding him.

Now it happened that after three days, he called together those who were the most prominent of the Jews. And when they had assembled, he said to them,

"Men and brothers, although I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, from Jerusalem I was delivered as a prisoner into the hands of the Romans, who, when they had examined me, were wanting to release me, because

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there was no basis for an accusation worthy of death with me. But because the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar (not as if I had any charge to bring against my own people). Therefore for this reason I have requested to see you and to speak with you, for because of the hope of Israel I am wearing this chain!”

And they said to him,

“We have received no letters about you from Judea, nor has any of the brothers come and reported or spoken anything evil about you. But we would like to hear from you what you think, for concerning this sect it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere.”

And when they had set a day with him, many more came to him at his lodging place, to whom he was explaining from early in the morning until evening, testifying about the kingdom of God and attempting to convince them about Jesus from both the law of Moses and the prophets. And some were convinced by what was said, but others refused to believe. So being in disagreement with one another, they began to leave after Paul made one statement:

“The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through the prophet Isaiah to your fathers, saying,

‘Go to this people and say,

“You will keep on hearing and will never understand,

and you will keep on seeing and will never perceive.

For the heart of this people has become dull,

and with their ears they hear with difficulty,

and they have shut their eyes,

lest they see with their eyes,

and hear with their ears,

and understand with their heart,

and turn, and I would heal them.”’

Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles. They also will listen!”

So he stayed two whole years in his own rented house, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, without hindrance.