

# Acts of the Apostles



For Use at Holy Ascension Orthodox Mission in Melbourne, Victoria.  
Please Return this Book after the Service

# The Reading of the Acts of the Apostles

The reading of the Acts should start at such a time (between 8pm and 9pm) so as to finish near 11:30pm.

**Reader:** The reading is from the Acts of the Apostles.  
Father, bless!

**Priest:** Through the prayers of the Holy Apostles,  
Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on  
us.

**Reader:** Amen.

The Reader begins reading from the Book of Acts.

According to the Typicon, the entire book should be read. Anyone in the congregation is allowed to read. Change over readers at end of chapters.

## Chapter 1

The first book I wrote, Theophilus, dealt with all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning, until the day in which He was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen. After He suffered, He also presented Himself alive to them by many proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking about God's Kingdom. Being assembled together with them, He commanded them, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which you heard from Me. Indeed, John baptized in water, but not many days from now, you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, "Lord, are You now restoring the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus told them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has set by His own authority. However, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of

the earth.” After saying these things, as they were watching, Jesus was taken up and a cloud took Him out of their sight. While they were gazing into the sky as He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing into the sky? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into the sky will come back in the same way as you saw Him going into heaven.” Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mountain called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away.

After entering the city, they went up into the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the brother of James. With one accord, all these were continuing steadfastly in prayer and supplication, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus and His brothers. In those days, Peter stood up among the disciples (and the number of names was about one hundred twenty) and said:

“Brethren, it was necessary that this Scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit had spoken beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered with us and received his portion in this ministry. (Now this man obtained a field with the reward for his wickedness, and falling headlong, his body burst open, and all his intestines gushed out. It became known to everyone who lived in Jerusalem that in their proper language that field was called ‘Akel Dama,’ that is, ‘The field of blood.’)

For it is written in the book of Psalms:

“Let his habitation be made desolate, and let no one dwell in it; and let another take his office of overseer.”

Therefore, of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John and to the day that He was taken up from us, of these men, one must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” So, they put forward two candidates: Joseph called Barsabbas who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away to go to his own place.” And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was added to the eleven apostles.

## Chapter 2

Now when the day of Pentecost came, they were all with one accord gathered in the same place. Suddenly, there came from heaven a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Divided tongues that seemed like fire appeared and one tongue rested on each of them. Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them the ability to speak. At that time of year, devout Jews from every nation under heaven were staying in Jerusalem. When this sound was heard, a crowd formed and people were bewildered because everyone heard the disciples speaking in his own language. They were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Behold, are not all these who speak Galileans? How is it that we hear everyone speak in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians: we hear them speaking in our languages concerning the deeds of power of God!" They were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" Others, mockingly, said, "They are filled with new wine!"

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spoke out to them: "Men of Judea, and all of you who are now staying in Jerusalem, let this be explained to you and listen to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose. It is only the third hour of the day! But this is what has been announced through the prophet Joel:

'It will be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters will

prophecy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. Yes, and on My menservants and on My maidservants in those days, I will pour out My Spirit, and they will prophesy! I will show wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, fire, and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. And it will be that whoever will call on the Name of the Lord will be saved.'

Men of Israel, listen to these words! Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested to you by God by deeds of power and wonders as well as signs which God accomplished through Him in the midst of you, even as you yourselves also know. He was handed over by the predetermined counsel and foreknowledge of God, whom you have taken, and by the hands of the wicked, have crucified and slain. God raised Him up, having released Him from the pains of death, because it was impossible that He should be held by it. For David says concerning Him:

'I saw the Lord always before my face, For He is on my right hand, so that I should not be moved. Therefore, my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced. Moreover, my flesh also will dwell in hope; because You will not abandon my soul to Hades, neither will You allow Your holy one to see decay. You made known to me the ways of life. You will make me full of gladness with Your presence.

Brethren, I can tell you with confidence that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is with us even to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that from the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, God would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke about the

resurrection of the Christ, declaring that His soul would not be left in Hades and that His flesh would not see decay. God has raised this Jesus back to life, and we are all witnesses of this fact. Being therefore exalted by the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but as he himself declared:

‘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 with assurance that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now when the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and asked Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all who are far away, even as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”

With many other words, he was bearing witness and urging them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!” Then those who gladly received his word were baptized, and about three thousand souls were added on that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers. Fear came on every soul, and many wonders and signs were accomplished through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common. They sold their possessions and goods, and shared them with all, according to everyone’s need. Day by day, they continued

to meet with one accord in the temple, and broke bread at home, partaking of their food with gladness and simplicity of heart. They praised God and were held in esteem by all the people. Every day, the Lord added to the Church those who were being saved.



### Chapter 3

Peter and John would go up into the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. A certain man who was lame from his mother's womb was being carried. Every day, he was laid at the gate of the temple (the one which is called 'Beautiful') to ask alms from those entering the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. Then Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!" The man gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have, I give to you. In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" Peter took the man by the right hand and raised him up. At once, his feet and ankles received strength. Leaping up, the man stood up and began to walk! He entered with them into the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God! When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized that it was the man who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, begging for alms; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. As the lame man who had been healed held on to Peter and John, all the people were greatly astonished and ran together to them in the porch that is called Solomon's Porch.

When Peter saw this, he answered the people, "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this man? Why do you gaze at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had determined to release Him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you. Then you killed the Author

of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. By faith in His Name, this man whom you see and know was made strong. Yes, the faith which comes through Jesus has given him this perfect soundness as you all can see. Now, brethren, I know that you did this in ignorance, as did your leaders. Yet, this is how God fulfilled what He had announced by the mouth of all His prophets, namely, that Christ should suffer.

Repent therefore, and turn back to God, so that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Christ Jesus who was ordained in advance for you. He must remain in Heaven until the times of restoration of all things, which God announced long ago by the mouth of all His holy prophets. For Moses indeed said to the fathers,

‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brethren. You shall listen to Him in all that He tells you. And it shall be that every soul that will not listen to that prophet will be utterly cut off from among the people.’

In fact, all the prophets that have spoken, from Samuel to those who followed after him, have also announced these days. You are the children of the prophets, and children of the covenant which God made with our fathers when He said to Abraham,

‘In your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.’

God, having raised up to life His servant Jesus, sent Him to you first, in order to bless you as every one of you turns away from his wicked ways.”



## Chapter 4

As they were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came to them. They were upset because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, since it was now the evening. But many of those who heard the word believed, and their number came to be about five thousand. In the morning, their leaders, presbyters, and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem. Annas (the high priest) was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and others that were relatives of the high priest. After placing the apostles in the middle of their assembly, they inquired, "By what power, or in what Name, have you done this?"

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, addressed them: "Rulers of the people and presbyters of Israel; if we are examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man and by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that it is in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead) that this man stands here before you whole. This Jesus is 'the stone which was regarded as worthless by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.' There is salvation in no one else, and there is no other Name under Heaven that is given among mortals by which we should be saved!"

Now seeing the boldness of Peter and John, and perceiving that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that these two men had been with Jesus. Seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But

after instructing them to step out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, "What shall we do to these men? Indeed, a remarkable miracle has been accomplished through them, as can plainly be seen by all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. Nevertheless, to prevent this from spreading any further among the people, let us severely threaten them so that from now on, they will no longer speak to anyone in this Name."

They called the apostles and ordered them not to speak at all or to teach in the Name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves! But we cannot help telling the things which we saw and heard!"

When they had further threatened the apostles, they let them go. They found no way to punish them on account of the people, because everyone glorified God for what had been done. (Moreover, the man on whom this miracle of healing had been performed was more than forty years old).

After being released, the apostles came to their own company and reported everything that the chief priests and the presbyters had said to them. When they heard it, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, You who made the Heaven, the Earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who by the mouth of Your servant, David, said,

'Why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth take a stand, and the rulers

take council together, against the Lord, and against His Christ.'

For truly, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together against Your holy Child, Jesus, whom You anointed. They did whatever Your hand and counsel had foreordained to happen. And now, Lord, consider their threats and grant Your bondservants to speak Your word with complete boldness. Stretch out Your hand to heal, and may signs and wonders be accomplished through the Name of Your holy Child Jesus."

When they had prayed, the place where they were gathered was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaimed the word of God with boldness.

The multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul. Not one of them claimed that anything he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. With great power, the apostles gave their witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. No one among them lacked anything because those who owned lands or houses sold them. They brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the feet of the apostles. Then distribution was made to each, according to everyone's need. Joses, who was surnamed Barnabas by the apostles (which means 'Son of Encouragement') was a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race.

## Chapter 5

Now a certain man named Ananias, along with his wife Sapphira, also sold a possession. He kept back part of the price (of which his wife was also aware) and brought the rest, laying it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has filled your heart so as to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? As long as you kept it, was it not still your own? And after it was sold, was it not still in your power? How is it that you have conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God!" Upon hearing these words, Ananias fell to the ground and died. Great fear came on all who heard these things. The young men got up, wrapped him, and carried him out to be buried. About three hours later, his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in. Peter asked her, "Tell me, was this the price you sold the land for?" She answered, "Yes, for that price." Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have conspired to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out!" At once, she fell down at Peter's feet and died. The young men came in and found her dead; they carried her out and buried her next to her husband. Great fear came on the whole Church and on all who heard these things.

Even more, many signs and wonders were accomplished among the people by the hands of the apostles, and they were all gathered with one accord in Solomon's porch. No one else dared to join them, even though they were honored by the people. More believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women. People even carried out the sick into the streets, placing them on cots and mattresses, so that as Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them. Crowds also formed

from the cities around Jerusalem; they brought sick people, as well as those tormented by unclean spirits, and all were healed.

However, the high priest took action, along with all his associates (which is the sect of the Sadducees). Filled with jealousy, they laid their hands on the apostles and placed them in the public jail. But an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors by night and brought them out, saying, "Go, stand in the temple, and speak to the people the whole message about this life." When the apostles heard this, they went to the temple at about daybreak, and they began to teach. Meanwhile, the high priest arrived, together with his associates, and called the Sanhedrin together, along with the council of the children of Israel. He then sent word to the prison to have the apostles brought in. But the officers who came did not find them in the prison. They came back and reported, "Truly, we found the prison shut and locked, and the guards standing before the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside!"

Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these words, they were very perplexed about them, wondering what would come of this. One officer came forward and told them, "Behold, the men whom you put in prison are now in the temple, standing and teaching the people."

Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without using force because they were afraid that the people might stone them. Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin. The high priest questioned them, saying, "Did we not strictly order you not to teach in this Name? Behold, you have filled



Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us!"

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed by hanging Him on a tree. God has exalted Him with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior in order to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. We are His witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit that God has given to those who obey Him." Hearing this, they were enraged and plotted to kill them. But someone stood up in the council, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was honored by all the people. He instructed that the apostles be put out for a while. He said to them, "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. Some time ago, Theudas arose, claiming to be someone. A number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves to him. He was eventually killed, all those who obeyed him were scattered, and it all came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee arose during the days of the census, and he led many people to follow him. He also perished, and all those who obeyed him were scattered abroad. Now I tell you: stay away from these men and leave them alone. If this plan or work is of human origin, it will be overthrown. But if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it, and you would find yourselves fighting against God!"

They agreed with him. Summoning the apostles, they had them flogged and ordered them not to speak in the Name of Jesus. Then they released them. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of His Name. Every day, in the temple and at home, they never stopped teaching and preaching that Jesus is the Christ.

## Chapter 6

Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, a complaint arose from the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily service of food distribution. The Twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not appropriate for us to abandon the word of God in order to serve tables. Therefore, select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. We will appoint them over this necessary task and devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

These words pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. Thus, the word of God spread and the number of disciples greatly multiplied in Jerusalem, and a large number of Jews became obedient to the faith. Full of faith and power, Stephen performed great wonders and signs among the people. But some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), along with Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and men from Cilicia and Asia, reacted. They began debating with Stephen, but they were not able to withstand the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke. Then they secretly convinced some men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God!"

Having stirred up the people, the presbyters and the scribes came against Stephen and arrested him. They brought him before the Sanhedrin and produced false witnesses who said, "This man is always uttering

blasphemies against the holy place and against the law. We have even heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us!”

All the members of the council gazed at Stephen and saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

## Chapter 7

The high priest asked, "Are these things so?" Stephen answered, "Brothers and fathers, hear me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. And God said to him, 'Leave your land and your relatives, and come into a land which I will show you.' This is how Abraham came out of the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. From there, when his father was dead, God moved him into this land, where you are now living. He gave Abraham no inheritance in this land, no, not so much as to set his foot on it. But God had promised that he and his descendants would possess this land, even when Abraham was still childless. God spoke in this way: that Abraham's descendants would live as foreigners in a foreign land, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years. 'I will judge the nation to which they will be in bondage,' said God, 'and after that time, they will they come out and offer divine service to Me in this place.' God also gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. Then Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day. Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the Twelve patriarchs. Filled with jealousy against Joseph, the patriarchs sold him into Egypt, but God was with him. He delivered Joseph from all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Pharaoh appointed him governor over Egypt and his entire house. Now a famine came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, along with great suffering, and our fathers could not find any food. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers on a first visit. On their second visit, Joseph was revealed to his brothers and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. Joseph sent a message and called for his father Jacob as well as all his relatives (seventy-five

souls). So Jacob went down into Egypt where he died, along with our fathers. Later, they were brought back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had purchased for a price in silver from the children of Hamor of Shechem. As the time of the promise which God had sworn to Abraham came close, the people were growing and multiplying in Egypt. Then a different king, one who did not know Joseph, came to power there. This king took advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers, forcing them to abandon their babies, so that they would not stay alive. At that time, Moses was born, and he was pleasing to God. For three months, he was nourished in his father's house; and when he was thrown out, Pharaoh's daughter took him and raised him as her own son. Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in his words and actions. But when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. Seeing one of them treated unjustly, he defended and avenged a man who was oppressed, striking the Egyptian. He supposed that his brethren would understand that God, by his hand, was giving them deliverance; but they did not understand. The following day, Moses presented himself to them as they were quarreling and urged them to be at peace again, saying, 'Men, you are brothers! Why do you wrong each other?' But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses away, saying: 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' When he heard this, Moses fled and became a stranger in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. When forty years were fulfilled, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight. As he came close to see, a voice of the Lord came to him, saying, 'I am the God of

your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ Moses trembled and did not dare to look. The Lord said to him, ‘Take your sandals off of your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. I have indeed seen the affliction of My people in Egypt and heard their groaning. I have come down to deliver them. Now come, I will send you into Egypt.’ This Moses, whom they had rejected by saying: ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’—God sent as both a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. Having worked wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, this man led them out in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. It is that same Moses who said to the children of Israel, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your brethren; you shall listen to Him.’ It is this Moses who was in the assembly in the wilderness with the Angel that spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, receiving living oracles to give to us. But our fathers would not be obedient to him; they rejected him and in their heart, turned back to Egypt. They told Aaron, ‘Make us gods that will go before us! As for this Moses who led us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ They made a calf in those days and brought a sacrifice to the idol, rejoicing in the works of their hands. But God turned away and gave them up to offer divine service to the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets:

‘Did you offer Me slain animals and sacrifices during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You took up the tabernacle of Moloch, the star of your god Remphan, the figures to which you expressed adoration. Therefore I will carry you away beyond Babylon.’

Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, which He who had spoken to Moses had commanded him to build according to the pattern that he had seen. It was handed down to our fathers, and in turn, they brought it with Joshua when they entered into the possession of the nations which God drove out before the face of our fathers. This tabernacle was there until the days of David, who found favor in the sight of God, and who prayed to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. Yet, it was Solomon who built Him a house. However, the Most High does not dwell in sanctuaries made with hands, as the prophet says:

‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is a 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 and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit! As your fathers did, you do likewise. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They even killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of whom you have now become betrayers and murderers. You received the law as it was ordained by angels, and did not keep it!”

Now when they heard these things, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into Heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He exclaimed, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

At this, they shouted with a loud voice, blocking their ears, and rushed at him with one accord. So they threw him out

of the city and stoned him. The witnesses placed their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. As they were stoning Stephen, he called in prayer, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

Kneeling down, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.



## Chapter 8

Now Saul was in full agreement with Stephen's death. At that time, a great persecution arose against the Church which was in Jerusalem. The disciples were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except for the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and greatly lamented over him. In the meantime, Saul was ravaging the Church, entering into every house and dragging both men and women off to prison.

As a result, those who had been scattered abroad began to travel around, preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed Christ to them. When the people heard and saw the signs which Philip was accomplishing, they agreed to listen to what he was preaching. (Indeed, unclean spirits were expelled from many of those who had them, and they came out shouting with a loud voice. Many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed, and there was great joy in that city). But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who used to practice sorcery in the city. He amazed the people of Samaria, claiming to be a great one, and all listened to him, from the least to the greatest. They said, "This man is the great power of God!" People listened to him because for a long time, he had amazed them with his sorceries. But when they believed Philip who was preaching good tidings, the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself also believed and after his baptism, he followed Philip closely. Seeing that miracles and signs were taking place, he was amazed. Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for the people, so that they might receive the Holy Spirit because the Holy

Spirit had not yet come upon any of them. (They had only been baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, so that whoever I lay my hands on may receive the Holy Spirit!"

But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness of yours and ask God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. Indeed, I see that you are in the poison of bitterness and in the bondage of wickedness!"

Simon answered, "Pray for me to God, that none of the things which you have spoken may happen to me."

After Peter and John had borne witness and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem and on their way preached the Good News in many villages of the Samaritans.

Then an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise, and go toward the south, to the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is a desert."

So Philip arose and went; and behold, there was a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was in charge of all her treasure and had come to Jerusalem to worship. He was returning and sitting in his chariot, and reading the prophet

Isaiah. The Spirit said to Philip, "Go near, and join yourself to this chariot."

Philip ran to the eunuch and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

The man replied, "How can I, unless someone explains it to me?"

He then begged Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture which he was reading was this:

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter. As a lamb before his shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth. In His humiliation, His judgment was taken away. And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.

The eunuch asked Philip, "Who is the prophet talking about? About himself, or about someone else?"

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, he proclaimed the Good News about Jesus to this man. As they went on the way, they came to a place with some water, and the eunuch said, "Behold, here is water! What is keeping me from being baptized?"

Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The man answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!"

He commanded the chariot to stand still, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip

baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch did not see him anymore and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. Passing through that area, he preached the Good News to all the cities, until he reached Caesarea.

## Chapter 9

But Saul, still breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest. He asked him for letters to the synagogues of Damascus, giving permission that if he found anyone who belonged to 'the Way,' whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As Saul was on his journey and approaching Damascus, a light from Heaven suddenly shone around him. He fell on the earth and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" He asked, "Who are You, Lord?"

The Lord answered, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now arise, go into the city, and there you will be told what you must do."

The men who were travelling with Saul stood speechless, hearing the sound, but seeing no one. Saul got up from the ground, and when his eyes were opened, he could not see anyone. His fellow travelers led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. Saul was without sight for three days, and he neither ate nor drank. Now a certain disciple named Ananias lived in Damascus. In a vision, the Lord said to him, "Ananias!"

Ananias answered, "Behold, I am here Lord!"

The Lord said to him, "Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judah for someone named Saul, a man of Tarsus. For behold, he is praying, and in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him, so that he might receive his sight."

But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard about this man from many, how much evil he has done to Your saints at Jerusalem. Here, he has authority from the chief priests to bind all those who call upon Your Name!”

But the Lord said to him, “Be on your way, for he is My chosen vessel to bear My Name before nations and kings, and to the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for My Name’s sake.”

Ananias departed and entered into the house. Laying his hands on Saul, 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 receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit!”

At once, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he received his sight. He arose and was baptized, and after taking some food, he was strengthened. After staying for several days with the disciples who were at Damascus, Saul immediately went in the synagogues to proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God. All who heard him were amazed, and asked, “Is this not the man who did such damage in Jerusalem to those who called on this Name, and who had come here intending to bring them bound before the chief priests?”

But Saul grew even more in strength and confounded the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

After some time, the Jews conspired to kill Saul, but their plot became known to him. Day and night, they watched the gates in order to be able to kill Saul, but the disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall,

lowering him in a basket. When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he truly was a disciple. Nevertheless, Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. Saul told them how he had seen the Lord on the way, and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had boldly preached in the Name of Jesus. So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. He talked and debated with the Hellenists, but they tried to kill him. When the brethren became aware of this, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him off to Tarsus.

And so, the Churches throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and were edified. Walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they continued to grow. Now as Peter was traveling through all those regions, he also came down to visit the saints who lived in Lydda. There, he found a certain man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and who had been bedridden for eight years. Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you! Get up and make your bed!"

And immediately, he arose. All who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. Now there lived in Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, (which, when translated means Gazelle). This woman was full of good works and acts of mercy. But it happened that at this time, she became ill and died. She was washed and placed in an upper room. As Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to help them. So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, the disciples led him into the upper room. All the widows stood

by him weeping, showing Peter the coats and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. But having put everyone out of the room, Peter knelt down and began to pray. Turning toward the body, he said, "Tabitha, get up!"

She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. Then Peter gave her his hand and raised her up. Calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. After this, Peter stayed in Joppa for a while, lodging with Simon, a tanner.



## Chapter 10

Now there was a certain man in Caesarea whose name was Cornelius. He was a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man who feared God with his entire household. He gave generous alms to the people and always prayed to God. At about the ninth hour of the day, he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God coming to him, and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

Gazing at the angel and being quite alarmed, Cornelius said, "What is it, Lord?"

The angel replied, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa, and get Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside."

When the angel who had spoken to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among his attendants. Having explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Now on the next day, as they were on their way and approached the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray at about the sixth hour. He became hungry and desired to eat, but while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw Heaven opened and something like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild animals, reptiles, and birds of the sky. Then a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat!"

But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean!"

Again, a second time, the voice spoke to him, "What God has cleansed, you must not call unclean."

This happened three times, and again the vessel was taken up into heaven. As Peter was very perplexed regarding the meaning of the vision, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius found where Simon's house was and stood at the gate. They called and asked whether Simon, who was called Peter, was lodging there. While Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. Arise and go downstairs! Accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them."

Peter went down to meet the men and said, "Behold, I am the one you are looking for! Why have you come?"

They replied, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous man and one who fears God, someone well spoken of by all the nation of the Jews, was directed by a holy angel to invite you to his house and to listen to what you say."

Then Peter invited them in and gave them lodging. On the next day, he arose and went out with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. The following day, they entered into Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell down at his feet, and worshiped him.

But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up! I am also a man!"

As he talked with Cornelius, he went in and found many people assembled. Peter said to them, "You yourselves

know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or visit someone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean. Therefore, I have come without complaint when I was sent for. And so, I ask, why did you send for me?”

Cornelius replied, “Four days ago, I was fasting until this hour, and at the ninth hour, I was praying in my house. And behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and he said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer is heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. Therefore, send messengers to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is staying in the house of Simon a tanner, by the seaside. He will speak to you.’ And so, I sent for you at once, and it was good of you to come! Now then, we are all here present in the sight of God to hear everything that God has commanded you.”

Peter opened his mouth and said, “Truly, I perceive that God does not show favoritism; but in every nation, whoever fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. God sent His word to the children of Israel, and the Good News of peace was preached by Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all. You know what happened since the Good News was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after baptism was preached by John. You know how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, how Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. We are witnesses of everything He did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death, hanging Him on a tree, but God raised Him up the third day and allowed Him to be seen. Yet, He was not manifest to all the people but only to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God—that is, to us who ate

and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one who is appointed by God as the Judge of the living and the dead. It is to Him that all the prophets bear witness: that through His Name, everyone who believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the word. The believers who had come with Peter and who were of the circumcision were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the Gentiles. Indeed, they heard them speaking in other languages and magnifying God. At this, Peter said, “Can anyone refuse the water to these people, seeing that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we have, and say that they should not be baptized?”

He then ordered that they be baptized in the Name of the Lord. After this, they asked him to stay for a few days.

## Chapter 11

Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, those who were of the circumcision criticized him, saying, "You went into the house of uncircumcised people and ate with them!"

But Peter began to speak and explained things to them in order: "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision: a certain container like a great sheet was let down from Heaven by four corners, descending and coming down as far as me. When I had looked intently at it and examined it, I saw the four-footed animals of the earth, wild animals, creeping things, and birds of the sky. I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter, kill and eat!' But I said, 'Not so, Lord, for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered into my mouth!' But a voice out of Heaven answered me the second time, 'What God has cleansed, do not call unclean!' This was done three times, and everything was drawn back into Heaven. At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was staying, having been sent to me from Caesarea. The Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and get Simon, who is called Peter. He will speak to you the words by which you will be saved, you and your entire household.' As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, even as on us at the beginning. I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized in water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit.' And so, if God gave them the same gift that He gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to oppose God?"

When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles the repentance which produces life!"

Now those who had been scattered abroad by the oppression that arose in connection with Stephen had traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they were only proclaiming the word to Jews. But some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, spoke to the Hellenists and preached the Lord Jesus when they arrived in Antioch. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. News of these things came to the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem. So, they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced. He encouraged them all to remain close to the Lord with a resolute heart. Indeed, Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas went out to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year, they assembled with the Church and taught many people. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Now in these days, prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and predicted through the Spirit that a great famine would take place all over the world; and it happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. According to their ability, each one of the disciples determined to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea. This is indeed what they did, sending their gift to the presbyters through the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

## Chapter 12

About that time, King Herod took actions to oppress some of the members of the Church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. When Herod saw that it pleased the Jews, he went on to arrest Peter as well. (This was during the days of unleavened bread). After arresting Peter, he put him in prison and delivered him to four squads of four soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. And so, Peter was kept in the prison, but constant prayer was made by the Church to God for him. The same night, when Herod was about to bring him out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the cell. Striking Peter on the side, the angel woke him up, saying, "Stand up quickly!"

And Peter's chains fell off from his hands. The angel said to him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals!" and he did so. Then the angel said, "Put on your cloak and follow me!"

Peter went out and followed him, but he did not realize that what was being done by the angel was real, thinking that he was seeing a vision. When they were past the first and second guard, they arrived at the iron gate which leads into the city, and it opened to them by itself. Having gone through, they went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. When Peter came to himself, he exclaimed, "Now I truly know that the Lord has sent out His angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

After pondering on this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and praying. When Peter knocked at the outer gate, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that she did not open the door! Instead, she ran in and announced that Peter was standing in front of the gate. But they said to her, "You are crazy!"

When she insisted that it was so, they said, "It is his angel!"

Meanwhile Peter continued knocking. When they opened the door, they saw him and were amazed. But he motioned them with his hand to be silent and told them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. He said, "Tell these things to James, and to the brethren."

Then he departed, and went to another place. As soon as it was day, there was no small commotion among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. When Herod had looked for him and could not find him, he interrogated the guards and ordered that they should be put to death. Meanwhile, Peter went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there.

At that time, Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. With one accord, they came to him, and, having befriended Blastus (the king's personal aide), they asked for peace because their country depended on the king's country for food. On an appointed day, Herod dressed himself in royal clothing, sat on the throne, and gave a speech to them. The people shouted, "The voice of a god, not of a man!"



Immediately, an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.

Meanwhile, the word of God grew and multiplied. After completing their service, Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, and they also took with them John whose other name was Mark.

## Chapter 13

Now in the Church that was at Antioch, there were some prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was surnamed Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they were liturgizing to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Then, after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them on their way. Being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there sailed to Cyprus. When they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues, with John as their attendant. After going through the island to Paphos, they met a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar Jesus. He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. Being an intelligent man, the proconsul called Barnabas and Saul in order to hear the word of God. However, Elymas the sorcerer (this is his name when translated) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But filled with the Holy Spirit, Saul (who is also called Paul), fixed his eyes on Elymas and said, "You are full of all kinds of deceit and cunning, you son of the devil and enemy of all righteousness! Will you not stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is against you! You will be blind, unable to see the sun for a season!"

At once, mist and darkness fell upon Elymas, and he began to grope around, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had taken place, he believed and was amazed by the teaching of the Lord. Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos to Perga

in Pamphylia where John left them to return to Jerusalem. Continuing from Perga, they came to Antioch of Pisidia. There, they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down to listen. After the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent them a message, “Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, speak!”

So Paul stood up, motioned with his hand, and said, “Men of Israel and you Gentiles who fear God, listen! The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people prosper when they lived as foreigners in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm, He led them out of it. For a period of about forty years, He put up with them in the wilderness. And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, God distributed their land among them by lot. After this, for about four hundred fifty years, He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king, and God gave to them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin who ruled for forty years. After removing him, God raised up David to be their king, even bearing witness to him, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.’ From this man’s seed, God has brought salvation to Israel, according to His promise. This was before the coming of Jesus, when John first preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. As John was completing his work, he said, ‘Who do you suppose that I am? I am not He! But behold, one comes after me whose sandals I am unworthy to untie.’ Brethren, children of the line of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, this message of salvation has been sent to you! Indeed, those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Him or the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath. Still, by condemning Him, they fulfilled the

prophets! Although they could find no cause for His execution, they asked Pilate to have Jesus killed. After fulfilling all the things that were written about Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead, and He was seen for many days by those who had come up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are His witnesses to the people. And now, we bring you the Good News that the promise made to the fathers has come about: God has fulfilled it for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is also written in the second psalm:

‘You are my Son. Today I have become Your father.’

That God raised Him up from the dead to never again return to corruption, He has declared in these words:

‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’

Therefore, He also says in another psalm,

‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see decay.’

Then, after having in his own generation served God’s purpose, David fell asleep. He was laid with his fathers and saw decay. But He whom God raised up did not see decay! Therefore, may you know, brethren, that through this Man the remission of sins is proclaimed to you! By Him, everyone who believes is justified from all things, things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, for fear that what is spoken in the prophets may come on you:

‘Behold, you scoffers, be amazed, and perish! For in your days, I shall accomplish a work, which you will not believe, even if one would proclaim it to you.’

And so, as the Jews were leaving the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation was dismissed, many Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and encouraged them to persevere in the grace of God. The next Sabbath, almost the entire city was gathered to hear the word of God! But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy and opposed what Paul said, contradicting and blaspheming.

Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that God’s word should be spoken to you first. But since you are rejecting it and consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles! For this is what the Lord has commanded us, saying: I have set you as a light for the Gentiles, so that you should bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.”

When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and received the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Thus, the word of the Lord was spread throughout the entire region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women as well as the leading men of the city. They instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from their borders. So the apostles shook off the dust of their feet against these people and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

## Chapter 14

In Iconium, both Paul and Barnabas entered into the synagogue of the Jews. They spoke in such a way that a great multitude of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up and poisoned the souls of the Gentiles against the brethren. Therefore, Paul and Barnabas stayed there for a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord. Moreover, the Lord bore witness to the word of His grace and granted that signs and wonders be done by their hands. However, the city was divided. Some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. Then a group of Gentiles and Jews, along with their leaders, plotted to attack and stone them. But Paul and Barnabas became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra, Derbe, and to the surrounding region. There, they continued to preach the Good News. At Lystra, there was a certain man sitting without strength in his feet. He was a cripple from his mother's womb and he had never walked. He was listening to Paul speak when Paul fixed his eyes on him. Seeing that the man had faith to be healed, Paul said with a loud voice, "Stand up on your feet!"

And the man jumped up and began to walk. When the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, shouting in the language of Lycaonia, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!"

They called Barnabas "Zeus" and Paul "Hermes," because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and they wanted to offer a sacrifice along with the crowd. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and ran into the crowd, crying out, "Friends, why are you doing these things? We are men just like you, bringing you the Good

News so that you should turn away from these vain things toward the living God who made the Heaven, the Earth, and the sea, and all that is in them. In past generations, He allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. However, He did not leave Himself without witness: He did good and gave you rains from the sky as well as fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness.”

Even by saying these things, they could hardly prevent the multitudes from offering a sacrifice to them. Then some Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrived and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, thinking that he was dead. But as the disciples stood around him, he got up and returned into the city. On the next day, he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

After preaching the Good News to that city and having made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. They strengthened the souls of the disciples and exhorted them to continue in the faith, saying that “we must go through many afflictions to enter the Kingdom of God.” After appointing presbyters for them in every Church, with prayer and fasting, Paul and Barnabas committed them to the Lord in whom they placed their trust. They passed through Pisidia and arrived in Pamphylia. After preaching the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From there, they sailed to Antioch from where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had now fulfilled. When they arrived, they gathered the Church and reported all that God had accomplished with them, and that He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. They stayed there with the disciples for some time.

## Chapter 15

Then certain men came down from Judea to Antioch and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved!" As a result, Paul and Barnabas had no small dispute and controversy with them. Therefore, the brethren appointed Paul, Barnabas and some of their own to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and presbyters regarding this question. Having been sent on their way by the Church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, relating the conversion of the Gentiles and causing great joy to all the brethren. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were received by the Church, the apostles and the presbyters, and they reported all that God had accomplished with them and that He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. However, some believers from the sect of the Pharisees arose and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses!" The apostles and the presbyters gathered together to discuss this matter. When there had been much discussion, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that some time ago, God made a choice among us, that by my mouth the nations should hear the word of the Good News and believe. God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He had done to us. He made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. And now, why do you put God to the test by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples, one which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they are."

At this, the whole multitude kept silence. They listened to Barnabas and Paul report what signs and wonders God had accomplished among the nations through them. When



they had finished, James said, “Brethren, listen to me! Simeon has reported how God first showed concern toward the Gentiles in order to take from them a people for His Name. This agrees with the words of the prophets. As it is written:

‘After these things I will return. I will again build the tabernacle of David, which has fallen. I will again build its ruins. I will set it up, so that the rest of the people may seek after the Lord; all the Gentiles who are called by My Name,’ Says the Lord, who does all these things.’

All His works are known to God from eternity. Therefore, I judge that we should not trouble those who turn to God from among the Gentiles. Instead, we should write to them to abstain from the pollution of idols, from sexual immorality, from what is strangled, and from blood. For from generations of old, Moses has had in every city those who preach him, being read every Sabbath in the synagogues.”

Then it seemed good to the apostles and the presbyters, along with the whole Church, to choose some of their own men and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, who were leading men among the brethren. Through their hands, they wrote: “The apostles, the presbyters, and the brethren; to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: greetings! We have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words and unsettled your souls by saying: ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law,’ although they had no such commission from us. Having assembled with one accord, it has seemed good to us to select men and to send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for

the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we have sent Judas and Silas, who will also tell you the same things by word of mouth. It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose no greater burden on you than what is necessary: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. If you abstain from these things, it will be well with you. Farewell!”

Accordingly, the men were sent off and arrived in Antioch where they gathered the community and delivered the letter. The people read it and rejoiced over the encouragement. Judas and Silas (who were also prophets) encouraged the brethren with many words and strengthened them. After spending some time there, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to those who had sent them out. But it seemed good to Silas to remain there. Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord with many others.

After some time, Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us revisit our brethren in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, to see how they are doing!”

Barnabas was determined to take John (who was called Mark) along with them. However, Paul did not think that it was a good idea to take with them someone who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. Then the disagreement became so intense that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and having been entrusted by the brethren to the grace of God, they departed. Paul went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the Churches.

## Chapter 16

Paul then came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple named Timothy lived there. He was the son of a certain Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. This disciple was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have Timothy along on the journey, so he had him circumcised because of the Jews who were in those parts, since all knew that his father was a Greek. As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to the brethren the decisions which had been ordained by the apostles and presbyters who were at Jerusalem, so that they might obey. As a result, the Churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number every day.

After going through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. When they arrived at the border of Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia but the Spirit did not allow them. So they passed by Mysia and came down to Troas. During the night, a vision appeared to Paul: a man of Macedonia was standing, begging him, and saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us!"

After Paul had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the Good News to them.

Having set sail from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis. From there, we sailed to Philippi which is a city of Macedonia, the foremost of the district and a Roman colony. We stayed for some time in the same city. On the Sabbath day, we went outside the city by a riverside, where we

expected that there would be a place of prayer. We sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman heard us: one named Lydia, a seller of purple cloth, from the city of Thyatira. She feared God and the Lord opened her heart to listen to what Paul was saying. When she and her household were baptized, she begged us, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay!" And so, she persuaded us.

As we were going to prayer, it happened that we encountered a certain girl who had a spirit of divination and who produced much profit to her masters by fortune telling. As she followed Paul and Silas, she cried out, "These men are bondservants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us a way of salvation!"

And she did this for many days. But Paul, becoming greatly annoyed, turned back and said to the spirit, "In the Name of Jesus Christ, I order you to come out of her!"

And the spirit came out that very moment. When her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. Having brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These Jewish men are causing unrest in our city! They teach customs which are not lawful for us Romans to accept or observe!"

When the crowd also rose up against them, the magistrates had them stripped and flogged. After giving them a severe flogging, the magistrates had them thrown into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a command, he threw them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. But when it

was about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly, there was a great earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once, all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were loosened. The jailer, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, began to draw his sword and he was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!"

Having asked for lights, the jailer rushed in and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. He brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household!"

Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all those who were in his household. Late as it was, the jailer washed their wounds and was immediately baptized, he and his entire household. He took them into his house and set food before them. He was filled with joy for believing in God, along with his entire household. But when day came, the magistrates sent the sergeants with the order, "Let those men go."

The jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent word to let you go! Now you may come out, and go in peace."

But Paul said to the sergeants, "They have beaten us in public, without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and you have thrown us into prison! And now they want to

release us in secret? No indeed! Let them come themselves and bring us out!”

The sergeants reported these words to the magistrates, and hearing that Paul and Silas were Romans, they became afraid. Therefore, they came and pleaded with them. When they had escorted them out, the officials asked them to leave the city. So they left the prison and went to Lydia’s house, where they met the brethren and encouraged them. Then they departed.

## Chapter 17

After passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul and Silas arrived in Thessalonica where there was a Jewish synagogue. As was his custom, Paul gave them his attention and for three Sabbath days, he reasoned with them from the Scriptures. He explained and showed that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, saying, "This Jesus whom I proclaim to you is the Christ."

Some of the Jews were convinced and joined Paul and Silas, together with a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few of the leading women. But the unconvinced Jews took along some wicked men from the marketplace, gathered a crowd and set the city in an uproar. Assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them out to the people. But not finding them, they dragged Jason and some of the brethren before the city officials, shouting, "These people who have turned the world upside down have also come here, and Jason has received them! All of them act in opposition to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus!"

The multitude and the city officials were troubled when they heard these things. After receiving a bond from Jason and the others, they let them go.

At once, the brethren sent Paul and Silas away by night to Beroea. When they arrived, they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now the Bereans were more open-minded than the people of Thessalonica: they received the word with great eagerness of mind and examined the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were true. As a result, many of them believed, as well as some Greek women of high standing, and a fair number of Greek men. But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that Paul was also

proclaiming the word of God at Beroea, they came there to stir up the crowds. Then the brethren immediately led Paul away to the coast, while Silas and Timothy remained there. But those who escorted Paul took him as far as Athens, and they left instructions for Silas and Timothy that they should join Paul very quickly. Then they departed.

Now as Paul was in Athens waiting for them, his spirit was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. And so, he began to debate in the synagogue with the Jews and the Gentile God-fearers, and every day in the marketplace with the people that he met. Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also had discussions with him. Some said, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others suggested, "He seems to be advocating foreign deities," because he was preaching to them Jesus and 'the resurrection.'

So they took him by the arm and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching that you proclaim is all about? You certainly bring some strange things to our ears! Therefore we want to know what all this is about."

Now all the Athenians and the strangers living there spent their time doing nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing. So Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus, and said, "Athenians! I perceive that you are very religious in all things. In fact, as I passed along and observed your sacred monuments, I also found an altar with this inscription:

'To an unknown God.'



Therefore, the one you revere in ignorance, this one I announce to you! The God who made the world and all things in it, being Lord of Heaven and Earth, does not dwell in sanctuaries made with hands! Neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life, breath, and everything else. From one blood, He has made every nation to dwell on the entire surface of the earth (having determined the times and boundaries of their habitation). God did this so that people should seek the Lord and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, although He is not far from each one of us. 'For in Him we live, and move, and have our being!' As some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' Since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divinity is like gold, silver, or stone, engraved by human art and imagination. In the past, God overlooked such ignorance, but now, He commands that all people everywhere should repent, because He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, "We want to hear you again on this matter."

Paul then left their company. Still, a few men joined with him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

## Chapter 18

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There, he met a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race. He and his wife Priscilla had recently arrived from Italy because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and since he practiced the same trade (they were tent makers), he lived and worked with them. Every Sabbath, Paul reasoned in the synagogue and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was dedicated to preaching, bearing witness to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. Then, when the Jews opposed him and blasphemed, he shook out his clothing and told them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles!"

He departed and went into the house of a man named Justus, a man devoted to God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. Now Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with his entire household; and many Corinthians, when they heard, believed and were baptized. One night, the Lord said to Paul by a vision, "Do not be afraid! Speak out and do not be silent. I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many people in this city."

Paul lived there for a year and six months, teaching the word of God among the people of Corinth. However, when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews rose up with one accord against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat, saying, "This man convinces people to worship God in opposition to the law."

But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If you Jews were complaining about a matter of

wrongdoing or about a wicked crime, it would be reasonable that I should bear with you. However, if there is a question about words and names and your own law, deal with it yourselves, for I do not want to be a judge of these matters.”

And he had them removed from the court. Then all the Greeks turned on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal, but Gallio did not care about any of these things.

After this, Paul stayed some time longer. He then took his leave of the brethren and set sail from Corinth to Syria, together with Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchreae, he shaved his head on account of a vow which he had made. Arriving in Ephesus, he left Priscilla and Aquila there, but he himself entered into the synagogue and debated with the Jews. When they asked him to stay with them a longer time, he declined. However, taking his leave of them, he said, “I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem, but I will come back to you if God wills.”

He then set sail from Ephesus. After landing at Caesarea, he went to greet the Church, and then traveled down to Antioch. Having spent some time there, he departed and went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, in order, strengthening all the disciples.

Now a certain Jew named Apollos who was an Alexandrian by race and an eloquent man arrived in Ephesus, and he was powerful with the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, although he had only experienced the baptism of John. Apollos began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but

when Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. When Apollos had determined to cross over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to receive him. When he arrived there, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, for he powerfully refuted the Jews, publicly showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

## Chapter 19

It happened that, while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul had passed through the upper country and arrived in Ephesus. And finding some disciples, he asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit!"

Paul asked them, "Then into what were you baptized?" They answered, "Into John's baptism."

Paul said, "John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus Christ."

After hearing this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. They were about twelve men in all. Then Paul visited the synagogue and spoke boldly for a period of three months, debating and presenting arguments concerning the Kingdom of God. But when some became hardened and disobedient, they began to speak evil of the Way in public. Then Paul departed from them and took the disciples away, giving daily lectures in the school of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all those who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. God worked remarkable miracles by the hands of Paul, so much that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and the evil spirits were expelled from them.

Now some of the itinerant Jews who were exorcists took it

on themselves to invoke the Name of the Lord Jesus over those who had the evil spirits. They said, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches."

There were seven sons of a certain Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did this. However, the evil spirit answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?"

The man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them and overpowered them. He gave them such a beating that they escaped from that house naked and wounded. This became known to all who lived at Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. Fear fell upon them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many of those who had believed came forward to confess and reveal their evil deeds. Many of those who practiced magical arts brought their books and burned them in the sight of all. Their price was counted and found to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. In this way, the word of the Lord was growing and becoming powerful.

Now after these things had ended and after passing through Macedonia and Achaia, Paul firmly decided to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After going there, I must also see Rome!"

Having sent into Macedonia two of his attendants, Timothy and Erastus, Paul stayed in Asia for a while longer. About that time, there arose a serious disturbance concerning the Way. A certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought much business to the craftsmen. He held a meeting with craftsmen of the same occupation and said, "Men, you know that we obtain our wealth through this business. As you can see and hear, not in Ephesus alone, but almost

throughout all Asia, this Paul has convinced and turned away many people, saying that our gods are no gods and that they are made with human hands. Not only is there danger that our trade will lose its credit, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis, whom all Asia and the world revere, will be considered as nothing, and that her majesty will be destroyed!”

When they heard this, the craftsmen were filled with anger and shouted, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

The whole city was filled with confusion. The people rushed with one accord into the theater and arrested Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel. But when Paul desired to enter in to speak to the people, the disciples did not allow him. Some of the officials of the province who were his friends sent word to him and begged him not to venture into the theater. Some people shouted one thing, and some another as the assembly was in turmoil. Most of them did not even know why they had come together. The Jews pushed Alexander and he was brought out of the multitude. He motioned with his hand in order to present a defense to the people, but when they realized that he was a Jew, they all with one voice shouted, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

And they did this for about two hours. When the town clerk had quieted the multitude, he said, “Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great goddess Artemis and of the image which fell down from Zeus? Since these things cannot be denied, you should be quiet and do nothing rash. For you have brought these men here, who are neither temple-robbers nor blasphemers of your goddess.

If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a case against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them press charges against one another. But if you seek anything about other matters, it will be settled in the lawful assembly. For indeed, we are in danger of being accused concerning today's riot, since there was no reason which we may give to account for this commotion.”

After speaking these words, he dismissed the assembly.



## Chapter 20

When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples. He then took leave of them and left for Macedonia. As he traveled through those parts, he encouraged the disciples with many words and arrived into Greece. After Paul had spent three months there, the Jews began to plot against him as he was about to set sail for Syria. He then determined to return through Macedonia. The following disciples accompanied him as far as Asia: Sopater of Beroea; Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians; Gaius of Derbe; Timothy; Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. Then men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. But we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread and five days later, we met them at Troas where we stayed for seven days. On the first day of the week, when the disciples were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them. Since he intended to depart on the next day, he continued his speech until midnight. (There were many lights in the upper room where we had assembled). A certain young man named Eutychus was sitting in the window, becoming drowsy. As Paul spoke still longer, the young man was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor. He was taken up dead. But Paul went down, fell on him, and took him in his arms, saying, "Do not be distressed! His soul is still in him!" Paul went back upstairs, broke bread, ate, and talked with them a long while, even until daybreak. Then he departed. The people brought the boy home alive, greatly comforted.

As for us who had gone ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there. This is what Paul had arranged since he intended to go there by land. When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and headed to Mitylene. The next day, we sailed from there and arrived opposite Chios. The following day, we touched

at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium, and the day after we arrived in Miletus. Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus in order not to spend time in Asia because he was in a hurry: if possible, he wanted to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. From Miletus, Paul sent a message to Ephesus and called to himself the presbyters of the Church. When they arrived, he told them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you all the time. I served the Lord with all humility, with many tears, and with trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews. I did not hesitate to proclaim to you anything that was profitable, teaching you publicly and from house to house. To both Jews and Greeks, I bore witness to repentance before God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Now behold, I go to Jerusalem bound by the Spirit. I do not know what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. Yet, I do not focus on these things and I do not hold my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy and fulfill the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully bear witness to the Good News of the grace of God. Now behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the Kingdom of God will ever see my face again. And so, I testify to you today that I am clean from the blood of all men, for I did not hesitate to proclaim to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore, keep watch over yourselves and over the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers! Be shepherds of the Church of the Lord and of God, which He has purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure, vicious wolves will enter in among you and they will not spare the flock. From among your own group, men will arise who will speak perverse things in order to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, keep watch!

Remember that for a period of three years, I did not cease night and day to warn everyone with tears. Now, brethren, I entrust you to God, and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver, or gold, or clothing. You yourselves know that these, my hands, served my needs and those who were with me. In all things, I have given you an example, that by this kind of hard work you should support the weak and remember the word of the Lord Jesus, as He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive!'"

After saying these things, Paul knelt down and prayed with them all. They were all in tears, embracing Paul and kissing him. Most of all, they were sorrowful because of what he had said, that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

## Chapter 21

After departing from them, we set sail and made a straight course to Cos. The next day, we sailed to Rhodes and from there to Patara. Having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and continued our journey. When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre where the ship was to unload her cargo. Since we found some disciples there, we stayed for seven days. Through the Spirit, the disciples told Paul that he should not go up to Jerusalem. When our time there was completed, we departed and went on our journey. All the disciples, with wives and children, escorted us on our way until we were out of the city. Kneeling down on the beach, we prayed. After saying goodbye to each other, we boarded the ship and they returned home. We continued the voyage from Tyre and arrived in Ptolemais. There, we greeted the brethren and spent the day with them. The following day, we left and arrived in Caesarea. We went to 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. As we stayed there for a few days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming to us and taking Paul's belt, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit: 'Likewise, in Jerusalem, the Jews will bind the man who owns this belt and they will deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

When we heard these things, both we and the disciples who lived there begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? Indeed, I am ready, not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus."

Since he would not be persuaded, we became silent, except to say, "The Lord's will be done!"

After these days, we took up our baggage and went up to Jerusalem. Some of the disciples from Caesarea also went with us, bringing an early disciple named Mnason of Cyprus, with whom we would be staying. When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. The next day, Paul went with us to visit James, and all the presbyters were present. After greeting them, Paul reported in detail what God had accomplished among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard it, they glorified the Lord. They told him, "You see, brother, that there are many thousands among the Jews who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law. They have been informed about you, that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to abandon Moses and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or to preserve the customs. What then? The Church must certainly meet since they will hear that you have arrived. Therefore, do what we tell you. We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them, join in their purification rites, and pay for their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Then all may know that there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written our decision that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from food offered to idols, from blood, from strangled things, and from sexual immorality."

So Paul took the men, and the next day, he purified himself and went with them into the temple, declaring the fulfillment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them. When the seven days were

almost completed, Jews from Asia saw Paul in the temple. They stirred up the entire crowd and laid hands on him, shouting, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the chosen people, the law, and this place. Moreover, he also brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place!" They said this because they had seen Trophimus, the Ephesian, with Paul in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

The entire city was in turmoil and the people came running. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the doors were shut. As they were trying to kill him, news came up to the commanding officer of the Roman troops that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Immediately, he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to the crowd. When they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, the Jews stopped beating Paul. Then the commanding officer came near and arrested him. He gave orders that Paul should be bound with two chains, and inquired who he was and what he had done. From the crowd, some shouted one thing and some another. Since the commander could not find out the truth because of the noise, he commanded that Paul be taken into the barracks. When Paul reached the steps, he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd. The whole mob followed them and shouted, "Away with him!"

As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he asked the commanding officer, "May I speak to you?" The man said, "Do you know Greek? Then are you not the Egyptian who recently stirred people up to rebellion and led the four thousand Assassins into the wilderness?" So Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a

citizen of no insignificant city. I beg you, allow me to speak to the people.”

Having received permission from the commander, Paul stood on the steps and motioned with his hand to the people. When there was a great silence, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, saying:

## Chapter 22

“Brothers and fathers, listen to the defense which I now make to you.”

When the people heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they were even more quiet. Paul continued, “I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel. I was instructed according to the strict tradition of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as you all are this day. I persecuted this Way to death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as the high priest and the entire council of the presbyters can testify. I even received letters for their brethren in Damascus and traveled there to bring these people in chains to Jerusalem to be punished. It happened that, suddenly, as I was on my journey and approaching Damascus, at about noon, a great light shone from the sky around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ He said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you persecute.’ Indeed, those who were with me saw the light and were afraid, but they did not understand the voice of Him who spoke to me. I asked, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ The Lord said to me, ‘Arise, and go into Damascus. There, you will be told what you should do.’ Since I could not see because of the glory of that light, I was led by the hand of those who were with me and arrived in Damascus. Someone named Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews, and who lived in Damascus, came to me. Standing by me, he said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ At that very moment, I was able to see him! 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. For you will be a witness for



Him to all people, testifying to what you have seen and heard. Now why do you wait? Arise, be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the Name of the Lord.’ It happened that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance. I saw the Lord saying to me, ‘Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.’ I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in You. When the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I too was standing by, consenting to his death and guarding the coats of those who killed him.’ Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you out far from here to the Gentiles.’” They listened to him until he said that; then they lifted up their voice, and shouted, “Rid the earth of this fellow, for he is not fit to live!”

As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and dust into the air, the commanding officer ordered that Paul be brought into the barracks. He then gave instruction that Paul should be interrogated under scourging, so that he might find out for what crime the people shouted against him in such a way. When they had tied him up with straps, Paul asked the centurion who stood by, “Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?”

When the centurion heard this, he went to the commanding officer and told him, “Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman citizen!” Then the commanding officer came and asked Paul, “Tell me, are you a Roman?” Paul replied, “Yes.”

The commanding officer answered, “I bought my citizenship for a great price!”

“But I was born a Roman,” Paul replied. Immediately those who were about to interrogate him left him, and even the commanding officer was afraid when he realized that he had bound Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains. But on the next day, desiring to know the truth about why Paul was accused by the Jews, the officer freed him from the bonds and commanded the chief priests and all their Sanhedrin to appear. He then brought Paul down and set him before them.

## Chapter 23

Looking straight at the Sanhedrin, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day.”

Then Ananias, the high priest, ordered those who stood by him to strike Paul on the mouth. At this, Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! Do you sit to judge me according to the law, and yet command me to be struck contrary to the law?”

Those who stood by said, “Do you insult God’s high priest?”

Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was high priest. For it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”

But when Paul realized that some were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Men and brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee! And I am being judged concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead!”

When he said this, an argument arose between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, angel, or spirit; but the Pharisees believe in all of these things).

A great uproar began, and the teachers of the law who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up. They strongly argued, “We find no evil in this man! But if a spirit or angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God!”

The dispute became so fierce that the commanding officer feared that they would tear Paul to pieces. He then ordered the soldiers to go down and remove Paul from the assembly by force, and to bring him into the barracks. The following night, the Lord stood by him, and said, "Rejoice, Paul! As you have borne witness to Me in Jerusalem, you must also bear witness in Rome."

When day came, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under a great curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. There were more than forty people who joined this conspiracy. They came to the chief priests and the presbyters, and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great curse, to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. Now then, you with the Sanhedrin should petition the commanding officer to bring him down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to judge his case more exactly. We are ready to kill him before he comes near!"

But Paul's nephew heard of their ambush. He came, entered into the fortress and told Paul. Calling one of the centurions, Paul said, "Bring this young man to the commanding officer. He has something to tell him."

Accordingly, the centurion took Paul's nephew and brought him to the commanding officer, saying, "Paul, the prisoner, called me and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to tell you."

The commanding officer took Paul's nephew by the hand, and going aside, asked him privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?"

He replied, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though intending to inquire somewhat more accurately concerning him. But do not give in to their request, for more than forty men lie in wait for Paul, and they have bound themselves under a curse neither to eat nor to drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for you to grant their request.”

And so, the commanding officer let the young man go with this instruction, “Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me.”

He called to himself two of the centurions and said, “Prepare two hundred soldiers to leave at the third hour of the night for Caesarea, along with seventy horsemen, and two hundred men armed with spears.”

He asked them to provide animals in order set Paul on one, and to bring him safely to Felix the governor. He wrote a letter as follows:

“Claudius Lysias,

To the most excellent governor Felix:  
Greetings!

This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be killed by them, when I came with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. Desiring to know why they accused him, I brought him to their council. I found him to be accused about questions of their law, but not to be charged with anything worthy of death or imprisonment. When I was told that the Jews were about to ambush this man, I immediately sent him to you. I also

instructed his accusers to bring their accusations against him before you.

Farewell.”

And so the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. But on the next day, they left the horsemen to continue with him and returned to the barracks. When the horsemen arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and also presented Paul to him. After reading the letter, the governor asked what province Paul was from. Having learned that he was from Cilicia, he said, “I will hear you fully when your accusers also arrive.”

He then commanded that Paul should be held in Herod’s palace.

## Chapter 24

Five days later, the high priest, Ananias, came down with the presbyters and a professional speaker named Tertullus, and they informed the governor of their charges against Paul. Paul was then called in and Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, "We have enjoyed much peace under you, and we see that prosperity is being carried out for this nation. Most Excellent Felix, we acknowledge this always and everywhere, with utmost gratitude. But, that I may not delay you, I entreat you to bear with us and hear a few words. As it is, we have found this man to be a plague, an instigator of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, and we arrested him, desiring to judge him according to our own laws. However, the commanding officer, Lysias, arrived and with much violence took him out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself, you will be able to verify for yourself the truth of our accusations."

The Jews also joined in the deposition, affirming that these things were true. When the governor had motioned for him to speak, Paul answered, "Because I know that you have been a judge of this nation for many years, I gladly make my defense. As you can see, it has been no more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. In the temple, they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the synagogues, or in the city. Moreover, they cannot prove the accusations they are making against me now. However, I do admit this to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so do I offer divine service to the God of our fathers. I believe all things which are written in the law and in the prophets. I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will

be a resurrection of the dead, both upright and wicked. And so, I strive also to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men. Now after a few years, I came to bring to my people gifts for the needy, and to present offerings. This is how certain Jews from Asia found me in the temple, ritually purified, with no mob or turmoil. But there are some Jews from Asia who should have been here before you to present their accusations if they had anything against me. Otherwise, let these men explain what injustice they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin. Or perhaps it is for what I cried out while standing among them, 'I am being judged by you today regarding the resurrection of the dead!'"

But when Felix heard these things, being better informed concerning the Way, he adjourned the case, stating, "When Lysias, the commanding officer, comes down, I will decide your case."

He ordered the centurion that Paul should be kept in custody and that he should have some privileges: none of his friends should be forbidden from serving him or visiting him. A few days later, Felix came with his wife Drusilla who was Jewish. He sent for Paul and granted him a hearing concerning the faith in Christ. As Paul discoursed about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix became alarmed and said, "Go your way for now. When it is convenient for me, I will summon you again."

Meanwhile, he also hoped that Paul would offer him money for his release. For this reason too, he sent for him more often and discussed with him. But after two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul



imprisoned.

## Chapter 25

Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. Then the high priest and the leaders of the Jewish people presented to him an accusatory report against Paul. They begged him and asked for his support against Paul, asking that he would transfer the prisoner back to Jerusalem, plotting to kill him on the way. However, Festus replied that Paul would be kept in custody at Caesarea, and that he himself would leave shortly. He said, "Those who have authority among you should go down there with me! And if this man has done anything wrong, let them accuse him."

Having stayed among them more than ten days, Festus returned to Caesarea. The following day, he sat on the judgment seat and ordered that Paul be brought in. When he arrived, the Jews who had traveled from Jerusalem stood around him. They hurled against Paul many grave accusations which they could not prove. Paul then said in his own defense, "I have not sinned in any way, against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against Caesar!"

Then desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Festus asked Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem in order to be judged by me there concerning these matters?"

But Paul replied, "I am standing before Caesar's judgment seat, where I should be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also know very well. Now if I have done wrong and committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die! But if none of those things they accuse me of are true, then no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

At this, and after conferring with his advisers, Festus answered, "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you shall go!"

A few days later, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived in Caesarea to greet Festus. Since they were spending many days there, Festus presented Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a certain man who was left as a prisoner by Felix. When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the presbyters of the Jews presented an accusatory report about this man, asking me to condemn him. I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to condemn anyone to death before the accused has met his accusers face to face and has had opportunity to make his defense in the case against him. Then, since they had come together here, I did not delay. On the following day, I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. When the accusers stood up, they did not bring any of the charges I was expecting. Instead, they had some dispute against him dealing with their own religion, and about a certain Jesus who was dead, and whom Paul affirmed to be alive. I was puzzled as how to investigate such things and asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. But Paul appealed that his case be reserved for the decision of the emperor, and so I gave orders that he be detained until I could send him to Caesar."

Agrippa said to Festus, "I too would like to hear this man!"

"Tomorrow," Festus replied, "you shall hear him."

On the next day, after Agrippa and Bernice had made their entry with great pomp, they went to the audience hall with

the commanding officers and the leaders of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all who are here present with us, you see this man. The entire Jewish community, both in Jerusalem and here, petitioned me about him, clamoring that he should not live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and as he himself had appealed to his Imperial Majesty, I decided to send him to Rome. I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning this man! Therefore, I have brought him forth before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after examination, I may have something to write. For it seems unreasonable to me to send a prisoner without also specifying the charges against him."

## Chapter 26

Agrippa said to Paul, "You may speak for yourself."

Then Paul held up his hand and made his defense. "I consider myself blessed, King Agrippa, that today, I am able to make my defense before you in response to all the accusations of the Jews, especially because you are an expert in all the customs and debates which take place among the Jews. Therefore, I beg you to hear me patiently. Indeed, all the Jews know about my way of life from my youth, which was from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem. Since they have known me from the beginning, they could testify that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion. And now, I stand here on trial because of the hope of the promise made by God to the fathers! This is what our twelve tribes hope to attain as they constantly offer divine service night and day. It is concerning this hope that I am accused by the Jews, King Agrippa! Why is it judged incredible that God raises the dead? As for myself, I certainly thought that it was my duty to oppose the Name of Jesus of Nazareth. I also did this in Jerusalem: having received authority from the chief priests, I had many of the saints imprisoned, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Often I went to all the synagogues to have them punished and I tried to make them blaspheme. Filled with rage against them, I even persecuted them in foreign cities. Then, as I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission from the chief priests, at noon, O king, I saw on the way a light from the sky. It was brighter than the sun and shone around me and those who were traveling with me. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads!' I asked, 'Who are

You, Lord?’ He replied, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting! Now arise and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose: to appoint you as a servant and a witness both of what you have seen and of what I will reveal to you. I will rescue you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, and receive remission of sins as well as an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’ Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but I proclaimed this to the people of Damascus first, and Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea. Then I also proclaimed it to the Gentiles—that they should repent, turn to God, and do works worthy of their repentance. For this reason, the Jews arrested me in the temple and tried to kill me. Yet, having obtained God’s help, I stand to this day and bear witness to small and great alike. I only say what the prophets and Moses said would happen, how the Christ was destined to suffer, and how, by the resurrection of the dead, he would be first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.”

As Paul was presenting this defense, Festus exclaimed with a loud voice, “Paul, you are crazy! Your great learning is driving you insane!”

But Paul replied, “I am not crazy, Most Excellent Festus, but boldly declare words of truth and good sense. Indeed, the king is aware of these things and I will also speak freely to him. For I am convinced that none of this is hidden from him, for this has not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe!”

Agrippa then said to Paul, “With a little persuasion, are you trying to make me a Christian?”

Paul answered, “I pray to God, that whether with little or with much, not only you but also all who hear me today might become as I am, except for these chains.”

When he had said these things, the king rose up with the governor, along with Bernice and those who sat with them. After retiring, they talked together and agreed, “This man has done nothing worthy of death or imprisonment.”

Agrippa said to Festus, “This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

## Chapter 27

When it was determined that we should sail for Italy, the authorities delivered Paul and other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Imperial regiment. Boarding a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, intending to sail to various places on the coast of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, traveled with us. The next day, we landed at Sidon. Julius treated Paul with kindness and gave him permission to visit his friends and to be cared for. Putting to sea from there, we sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary. After sailing across the open sea along the coasts of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we arrived in Myra, a city of Lycia. There, the centurion found a ship sailing from Alexandria to Italy, and he put us on board. After sailing slowly for many days, we arrived with difficulty near Cnidus. The wind did not allow us to go further on course, and we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone. We continued along the coast and arrived at a place called 'Fair Havens,' near the city of Lasea. A great deal of time had been lost and the voyage was now dangerous because the season was already past. Paul gave them this warning: "Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will result in injuries and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also of our lives!"

However, the centurion gave more heed to the master and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul was saying. Since the haven was not suitable to spend the winter, the majority was in favor of continuing, doing their utmost to reach Phoenix and winter there. This is a port of Crete which faces both the northeast and the southeast. When the south wind began to blow softly, they thought that their goal was within reach. Having lifted the anchor, they sailed along the coast of Crete, close to shore. But before long, a violent wind called 'the northeastern' rushed down from



the island! The ship was caught and could not face the wind. We had to yield to the wind, and the ship was driven along. Sailing under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were able, with difficulty, to secure the lifeboat. After the crew had hoisted it up, they used it to help reinforce the ship. Fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis sand bars, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship drift along. We were so battered by the storm that the next day, the men began to throw things overboard. On the third day, we threw out the ship's tackle with our own hands. When neither sun nor stars had shone on us for many days, and with a major storm pressing on us, all hope that we would be saved was now taken away. As the men had been for a long time without food, Paul stood up among them and said, "Sirs, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete; then you would have avoided this injury and loss. Now I encourage you to keep your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For last night, an angel of the God to whom I belong and to whom I offer divine service stood by me. He said: 'Do not be afraid, Paul! You must stand before Caesar. Behold, God has granted you the life of all those who sail with you.' Therefore, sirs, be of good cheer! For I believe God, that it will be just as it has been spoken to me. However, we must run aground on some island."

On the fourteenth night, at about midnight, as we were driven back and forth in the Adriatic Sea, the sailors surmised that they were approaching some land. They measured the depth of water and found twenty fathoms. A little while later, they took soundings again and found fifteen fathoms. Fearing that we would run aground on rocky ground, they let down four anchors from the stern, hoping to hold steady until daylight. Trying to escape from the ship, the sailors lowered the lifeboat into the sea,

pretending that they would lay out anchors from the bow. Paul then said to the centurion and to the soldiers, “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved!”

So the soldiers cut away the ropes of the lifeboat and let it fall off. As the day was coming on, Paul begged them all to take some food, saying, “This day is the fourteenth day that you wait and continue fasting, taking nothing. Now I urge you to take some food! This is for your safety, and not a hair will fall from any of your heads.”

After saying this and having taken bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all. Then he broke it and began to eat. At this, they all cheered up and also took food. In all, we were two hundred seventy-six souls on the ship. When they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship by throwing out the wheat into the sea. When day came, they did not recognize the land but noticed a cove with a beach, and they decided to try to drive the ship onto it. Casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time untying the rudder ropes. Hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. But coming to a place with cross-currents, they beached the vessel. The front of the ship struck and remained immovable while the stern began to break up by the violence of the waves. The soldiers’ advice was to kill the prisoners, so that none of them would swim out and escape. But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He gave orders that those who could swim should throw themselves overboard first and go to shore. The rest should follow, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to the land.

## Chapter 28

Once safe on the shore, they learned that the island was called Malta. The natives showed us unusual kindness; they kindled a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. But as Paul was gathering a bundle of sticks and placing them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said one to another, "There is no doubt that this man is a murderer! He has escaped from the sea but Justice has not allowed him to live."

However, Paul shook off the creature into the fire and remained unharmed. Nevertheless, they expected that he would have swollen or suddenly fallen down dead. After watching for a long time and seeing nothing bad happen to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god! Now in the vicinity of that place were lands belonging to the leader of the island, a man named Publius who welcomed us and courteously hosted us for three days. It also happened that Publius' father was bedridden, sick with fever and dysentery. Paul went to see him and prayed, and laying his hands on him, healed him. After this had taken place, the rest of the people who had diseases in the island also came, and they were cured. They honored us in many ways; and when we sailed off, they put on board the things that we needed. Three months later, we set sail in a ship from Alexandria which had wintered in the island, whose figurehead was "The Twin Brothers."

Touching at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. From there, we circled around the coastline of Sicily and arrived at Rhegium. The following day, a south wind sprang up and on the second day, we arrived in Puteoli.

There, we found brethren who entreated us to stay with them for seven days. And so, we approached Rome.

From there, having heard of us, the brethren came to meet us as far as The Market of Appius and the Three Taverns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage. When we reached Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard, but Paul was allowed to stay by himself with the soldier who guarded him. Three days later, Paul called together those who were the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, he said to them, “Brothers, although I have done nothing against the people or the customs of our fathers, I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. After putting me on trial, the Romans wanted to release me because there were no grounds to put me to death. But when the Jews spoke against it, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything about which to accuse my nation. For this reason, therefore, I asked to see you and to speak with you, for it is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”

They answered him, “We have not received letters from Judea concerning you, and no brother has come here to make a report or speak any evil of you. But we desire to hear from you what you think because it is known to us that everywhere, people speak against this sect.”

After making an appointment with Paul for a certain day, many more people visited him at his place of residence. From morning until evening, he explained and bore witness about the things of the Kingdom of God. He also tried to convince the Jews concerning Jesus, quoting both from the law of Moses and from the prophets. Some believed what was spoken, and others did not. Although disagreeing among themselves, they left after Paul had

spoken one last word, “Rightly did the Holy Spirit speak to our fathers through Isaiah the prophet, saying:

‘Go to this people and say: You will keep on hearing but never understand! You will keep on seeing but never perceive! For this people’s heart has grown callous, their ears are dull of hearing, and they have closed their eyes, for fear that they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and would repent, and I would heal them.’

Therefore, you should know that God’s salvation is sent to the nations; they will listen!”

After Paul said these words, the Jews departed with a great dispute among themselves. So Paul stayed two whole years in his own rented house, receiving everyone who came to visit him. With all boldness and without hindrance, he proclaimed the Kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the signal of the Superior we end the reading.

**Reader:** To our God be the glory.

**Priest:** To Him be honor and glory, now and ever  
and to the ages of ages.

**Reader:** Amen.

## Sources

### ***Scripture – New Testament***

The Eastern Orthodox Bible.