

Acts

Luke Writes Another Book

1 Dear Theophilus, The first book I wrote was about everything that Jesus did and taught. ²I wrote about the whole life of Jesus, from the beginning until the day he was carried up into heaven. Before this happened, Jesus talked to the apostles* he had chosen. With the help of the Holy Spirit,* Jesus told the apostles what they should do. ³This was after Jesus' death, but he showed the apostles that he was alive. Jesus proved this by doing many powerful things. The apostles saw Jesus many times during the 40 days after he was raised from death. Jesus spoke to the apostles about the kingdom of God. ⁴One time when Jesus was eating with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem. Jesus said, "The Father has promised you something; I told you about it before. Wait here [in Jerusalem] to receive this promise. ⁵John baptized* people with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus Is Carried Up into Heaven

⁶The apostles* were all together. They asked Jesus, "Lord, is this the time for you to give the Jews their kingdom again?"

⁷Jesus said to them, "The Father is the only One who has the authority to decide dates and times. You cannot know these things. ⁸But the Holy Spirit* will come to you. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—

you will tell people about me. First, you will tell people in Jerusalem. Then you will tell people in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world."

⁹After Jesus told the apostles* these things, he was lifted up into the sky. While the apostles were watching, Jesus went into a cloud, and they could not see him. ¹⁰Jesus was going away, and the apostles were looking into the sky. Suddenly, two men (*angels*) wearing white clothes stood beside them. ¹¹The two men said to the apostles, "Men from Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus carried away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go."

A New Apostle Is Chosen

¹²Then the apostles* went back to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. (This mountain is about one-half mile from Jerusalem.) ¹³The apostles entered the city. They went to the place where they were staying; this was in a room upstairs. The apostles were: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (known as the Zealot*), and Judas (the son of James).

¹⁴The apostles* were all together. They were constantly praying with the same purpose. Some women, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers were there with the apostles.

¹⁵After a few days there was a meeting of the believers. (There were about 120 of them.) Peter stood up and said, ¹⁶⁻¹⁷"Brothers, in the Scriptures* the Holy Spirit* said through

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Zealot The Zealots were a group of Jewish patriots.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

David* that something must happen. He was talking about Judas, one of our own group. Judas served together with us. The Spirit* said that Judas would lead men to arrest Jesus.”

¹⁸(Judas was paid money for doing this. His money was used to buy him a field. But Judas fell on his head, and his body broke open. All his intestines poured out. ¹⁹And all the people of Jerusalem learned about this. That is why they named that field Akeldama. In their language Akeldama means “field of blood.”)

²⁰[Peter said,] “In the book of Psalms, this is written [about Judas]:

‘People should not go near
his land (*property*);
No one should live there!’ *Psalm 69:25*

And it is also written:

‘Let another man have his work.’
Psalm 109:8

^{21–22}“So now another man must join us and become a witness of Jesus’ resurrection.* This man must be one of those men who were part of our group during all the time when the Lord Jesus was with us. This man must have been with us from the time John began to baptize* people until the day when Jesus was carried up from us into heaven.”

²³The apostles* put two men before the group. One was Joseph Barsabbas. He was also called Justus. The other man was Matthias. ^{24–25}The apostles prayed, “Lord, you know the minds of all people. Show us which one of these two men you choose to do this work. Judas turned away from it and went where he belongs. Lord, show us which man should take his place as an apostle!” ²⁶Then the apostles used lots* to choose one of the two men. The lots showed that Matthias was the one that the Lord wanted. So he became an apostle with the other eleven.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

resurrection Being raised from death to live again.

baptize A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

lots Rocks or sticks used like dice for making a choice.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 When the day of Pentecost* came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a noise came from the sky. It sounded like a strong wind blowing. This noise filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw something that looked like flames of fire. The flames were separated and stood over each person there. ⁴They were all filled with the Holy Spirit,* and they began to speak different languages. The Holy Spirit was giving them the power to do this.

⁵There were some Jewish men that truly worshiped God in Jerusalem at this time. These men were from every country in the world. ⁶A large group of these men came together because they heard the noise. They were surprised because the apostles* were speaking, and every man heard in his own language. ⁷The Jews were all amazed at this. They did not understand how the apostles could do this. They said, “Look! These men (*the apostles*) that we hear speaking are all from Galilee*! ⁸But we hear them in our own languages. How is this possible? We are from different places: ⁹Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia,* ¹⁰Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the areas of Libya near the city of Cyrene, Rome, ¹¹Crete and Arabia. Some of us were born Jews. Others are converts.* We are from these different countries. But we can hear these men in our own languages! We can all understand the great things they are saying about God.” ¹²The people were all amazed and confused. They asked each other, “What is happening?” ¹³Other people were laughing at the apostles. These people thought the apostles were drunk from too much wine.

Peter Speaks to the People

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles.* He spoke loudly so that all the people could hear. He said, “My Jewish

Pentecost Jewish festival celebrating the wheat harvest. It was fifty days after Passover.

from Galilee The people thought men from Galilee could speak only their own language.

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

converts People that changed their religion to become Jews.

brothers and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me. I will tell you something you need to know. Listen carefully. ¹⁵These men are not drunk like you think; it is only nine o'clock in the morning! ¹⁶But Joel the prophet* wrote about the things you see happening here today. This is what Joel wrote:

- 17 'God says:
In the last days,
I will pour out (*give*) my Spirit*
on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.*
Your young men will see visions.*
Your old men will have special dreams.
- 18 At that time,
I will pour out (*give*) my Spirit*
on my servants, men and women,
and they will prophesy.*
- 19 I will show amazing things
in the sky above.
I will give proofs
on the earth below.
There will be blood, fire,
and thick smoke.
- 20 The sun will be changed into darkness,
and the moon will become red like blood.
Then the great and glorious day of the
Lord will come.
- 21 And every person who trusts in the Lord
will be saved.' *Joel 2:28-32*

²²“My Jewish brothers, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a very special man. God clearly showed this to you. God proved this by the powerful and amazing things he did through Jesus. You all saw these things. So you know this is true. ²³Jesus was given to you, and you killed him. With the help of bad men you nailed Jesus to a cross.

prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes prophets told about things that would happen in the future.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

prophesy To speak for God.

vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.

But God knew all this would happen. This was God's plan. God made this plan long ago. ²⁴Jesus suffered the pain of death, but God made him free. God raised Jesus from death. Death could not hold Jesus. ²⁵David* said this about Jesus:

- 'I saw the Lord before me always;
he is at my right side to keep me safe.
- 26 So my heart is happy,
and the words I speak are words of joy.
Yes, even my body will live with hope,
- 27 because you will not leave me
in the place of death.*
You will not let the body of your
Holy One rot in the grave.
- 28 You taught me how to live.
You will come close to me
and give me great joy.'

Psalm 16:8-11

²⁹“My brothers, I can tell you truly about David,* our ancestor. He died and was buried. His grave is still here with us today. ³⁰David was a prophet* and knew something God said. God promised David that he would make a person from David's family to be a king like David.* ³¹David knew this before it happened. That is why David said this about that person:

- 'He was not left in the place of death.*
His body did not rot in the grave.'

David was talking about the Christ* rising from death. ³²So Jesus is the One God raised from death, [not David!] We are all witnesses of this. We saw him! ³³Jesus was lifted up to heaven. Now Jesus is with God, at God's right side. The Father (*God*) has now given the Holy Spirit* to Jesus. The Holy Spirit is what God promised to give. So now Jesus is pouring out (*giving*) that Spirit. This is what you see and hear. ³⁴David* was not the one who was lifted up to heaven. [It was Jesus who was lifted up to heaven.] David himself said:

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

place of death Literally, “Hades.”

God promised ... like David See 2 Sam. 7:12,13 and Ps. 132:11.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

‘The Lord (*God*) said to my Lord:
 Sit at my right side,
 35 until I put your enemies
 under your power.*’ *Psalm 110:1*

36“So, all the Jewish people should know this truly: God has made Jesus to be Lord and Christ.* He is the man you nailed to the cross!”

37When the people heard this, they felt very, very sorry. They asked Peter and the other apostles,* “Brothers, what should we do?”

38Peter said to them, “Change your hearts and lives and be baptized,* each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Then God will forgive your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* 39This promise is for you. It is also for your children and for the people that are far away. It is for every person that the Lord our God calls to himself.”

40Peter warned them with many other words; he begged them, “Save yourselves from the evil of the people that live now!”

41Then those people who accepted (*believed*) what Peter said were baptized.* On that day about 3,000 people were added to the group of believers. 42The believers continued to meet together. They used their time to learn the teaching of the apostles.* The believers shared with each other. They ate* together and prayed together.

The Believers Share

43The apostles* were doing many powerful and amazing things; and every person felt great respect for God. 44All the believers stayed together. They shared everything. 45The believers sold their land and the things they owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those people who needed it. 46The

until I put ... power Literally, “until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

ate Literally, “broke bread.” This may mean a meal or the Lord’s Supper, the special meal Jesus told his followers to eat to remember him. Read Lk. 22:14–20.

believers met together in the temple* yard every day. They all had the same purpose. They ate* together in their homes. They were happy to share their food and ate with joyful hearts. 47The believers praised God, and all the people liked them. More and more people were being saved every day; the Lord was adding those people to the group [of believers].

Peter Heals a Crippled Man

3 One day Peter and John went to the temple* area. It was three o’clock in the afternoon. This was the time for the daily temple prayer service. 2When they were going into the temple yard, a man was there. This man had been crippled all his life. He could not walk, so some friends carried him. His friends brought him to the temple every day. They put the crippled man by one of the gates outside the temple. It was called Beautiful Gate. There the man begged for money from the people going to the temple. 3That day the man saw Peter and John going into the temple yard. He asked them for money. 4Peter and John looked at the crippled man and said, “Look at us!” 5The man looked at them; he thought they would give him some money. 6But Peter said, “I don’t have any silver or gold, but I do have something else I can give you: By the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth—stand up and walk!” 7Then Peter held the man’s right hand and lifted him up. Immediately the man’s feet and legs became strong. 8The man jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk. He went into the temple yard with them. The man was walking and jumping, and he was praising God. 9–10All the people recognized him. The people knew he was the crippled man who always sat by Beautiful Gate to beg for money. Now they saw this same man walking and praising God. The people were amazed. They could not understand how this could happen.

Peter Speaks to the People

11The man was holding on to Peter and John. All the people were amazed [because the man was healed]. They ran to Peter and John at

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Solomon's Porch.* ¹²When Peter saw this, he said to the people, "My Jewish brothers, why are you surprised at this? You are looking at us like it was our power that made this man walk. Do you think this was done because we are good? ¹³No! God did it! He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* He is the God of all our fathers.* He gave glory to Jesus, his special servant. But you gave Jesus to be killed. Pilate decided to let Jesus go free. But you told Pilate you did not want Jesus. ¹⁴Jesus was pure and good (*innocent*), but you said you did not want him. You told Pilate to give you a murderer* instead of Jesus. ¹⁵And so you killed the One that gives life! But God raised him from death. We are witnesses of this—we saw this with our own eyes. ¹⁶It was the power of Jesus that made this crippled man well. This happened because we trusted in the power of Jesus. You can see this man, and you know him. He was made completely well because of trust in Jesus. You all saw it happen!

¹⁷"My brothers, I know you did those things to Jesus because you did not understand what you were doing. Your leaders also did not understand. ¹⁸God said that these things would happen. God said through the prophets* that his Christ* would suffer and die. I have told you how God made this happen. ¹⁹So you must change your hearts and lives! Come back to God and he will forgive your sins. ²⁰Then the Lord (*God*) will give you times of spiritual rest. He will give you Jesus, the One he chose to be the Christ. ²¹But Jesus must stay in heaven until the time when all things will be made right again. God told about this time when he spoke long ago through his holy prophets. ²²Moses said, "The Lord your God will give

you a prophet.* That prophet will come from among your own people (*the Jews*). He will be like me. You must obey everything that prophet tells you. ²³And if any person refuses to obey that prophet, then that person will die, separated from God's people.* ²⁴Samuel, and all the other prophets who spoke for God after Samuel, talked about this time now. ²⁵You have received the things the prophets talked about. You have received the agreement that God made with your fathers.* God said to your father Abraham,* "Every nation on earth will be blessed through your descendants.**" ²⁶God has sent his special servant (*Jesus*). God sent him to you first. God sent Jesus to bless you. He does this by making each of you turn away from doing bad things."

Peter and John Before the Jewish Council

4 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, some men came to them. There were some Jewish priests, the captain of the soldiers that guarded the temple,* and some Sadducees.* ²They were upset because of what Peter and John were teaching the people. By telling people about Jesus, the two apostles* were teaching that people will rise from death. ³The Jewish leaders grabbed Peter and John and put them in jail. It was already night, so they kept Peter and John in jail until the next day. ⁴But many of the people that heard Peter and John believed the things they said. There were now about 5,000 men in the group of believers.

⁵The next day the Jewish leaders, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶Annas (the high priest*), Caiaphas, John, and Alexander were there. Everyone from the high priest's family was there. ⁷They made Peter and John stand before

prophet A person that spoke for God.

'The Lord ... people' Quote from Deut. 18:15, 19.

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.

descendants All the people born in a person's family after that person dies.

'Every ... descendants' Quote from Gen. 22:18; 26:24.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don't live again after death.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.

Solomon's Porch An area on the east side of the temple. It was covered by a roof.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob Three of the most important Jewish leaders during the time of the Old Testament.

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

murderer Barabbas, the man the Jews asked Pilate to let go free instead of Jesus. See Lk. 23:18.

prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

all the people there. The Jewish leaders asked them many times, “How did you make this crippled man well? What power did you use? With whose authority did you do this?”

⁸Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit.* He said to them, “Leaders of the people and you older leaders: ⁹Are you questioning us today about the good thing that was done to this crippled man? Are you asking us what made him well? ¹⁰We want all of you and all the Jewish people to know that this man was made well by the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth! You nailed Jesus to a cross. God raised him from death. This man was crippled, but he is now well. He is able to stand here before you because of the power of Jesus! ¹¹Jesus is

‘the stone* that you builders
thought was not important.
But this stone has become
the cornerstone.*” *Psalm 118:22*

¹²Jesus is the only One who can save people. His name is the only power in the world that has been given to save people. We must be saved through Jesus!”

¹³The Jewish leaders understood that Peter and John had no special training or education. But the leaders also saw that Peter and John were not afraid to speak. So the leaders were amazed. Then they realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. ¹⁴They saw the crippled man standing there beside the two apostles.* They saw that the man was healed. So they could say nothing against the apostles. ¹⁵The Jewish leaders told them to leave the meeting. Then the leaders talked to each other about what they should do. ¹⁶They said, “What shall we do with these men (*the apostles*)? Every person in Jerusalem knows that they have done a great miracle.* This is clear. We cannot say it is not true. ¹⁷But we must make them afraid to talk to people about this man

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

stone A picture or symbol meaning Jesus.

cornerstone The first and most important rock of a building.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.

(*Jesus*). Then this problem will not spread among the people.”

¹⁸So the Jewish leaders called Peter and John in again. They told the apostles* not to say anything or to teach anything in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, “What do you think is right? What would God want? Should we obey you or God? ²⁰We cannot be quiet. We must tell people about the things we saw and heard.” ^{21–22}The Jewish leaders could not find a way to punish the apostles, because all the people were praising God for what had been done. (This miracle* was a proof from God. The man that was healed was more than 40 years old!) So the Jewish leaders warned the apostles again and let them go free.

Peter and John Return to the Believers

²³Peter and John left the meeting of Jewish leaders and went to their own group. They told the group everything that the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders had said to them. ²⁴When the believers heard this, they all prayed to God. They all wanted the same thing. They prayed, “Master, you are the One who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything in the world. ²⁵Our ancestor David was your servant. With the help of the Holy Spirit* he wrote these words:

‘Why are the nations shouting?
Why are the people of the world
planning things [against God]?
It is hopeless!

²⁶ The kings of the earth prepare themselves
to fight,
and the rulers all come together
against the Lord (*God*)
and against his Christ.*”

Psalm 2:1–2

²⁷These things really happened when Herod,* Pontius Pilate, the nations, and the Jewish people all ‘came together’ against Jesus here in Jerusalem. Jesus is your holy Servant. He is the One you (*God*) made to be the Christ.*

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Herod Herod Antipas, tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.

²⁸These people that ‘came together’ against Jesus made your plan happen; it happened because of your power and your will. ²⁹And now, Lord, listen to what they are saying. They are trying to make us afraid! Lord, we are your servants. Help us to speak the things you want us to say without fear. ³⁰Help us to be brave by showing us your power: make sick people well, give proofs, and make miracles* happen by the power of Jesus, your holy servant.”

³¹After the believers prayed, the place where they were meeting shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit,* and they continued to speak God’s message* without fear.

The Believers Share

³²The group of believers were all the same in their thinking and in what they wanted. No person in the group said that the things he had were his own. Instead, they shared everything. ³³With great power the apostles* told the people that the Lord Jesus was truly raised from death. And God blessed all the believers very much. ³⁴They all received the things they needed. Everyone that owned fields (*land*) or houses sold them for money. They brought the money ³⁵and gave it to the apostles. Then each person was given the things he needed.

³⁶One of the believers was named Joseph. The apostles* called him Barnabas. (This name means “A person that helps others.”) He was a Levite* born in Cyprus. ³⁷Joseph owned a field. He sold the field, brought the money, and gave it to the apostles.

Ananias and Sapphira

5 There was a man named Ananias. His wife’s name was Sapphira. Ananias sold some land that he had. ²But he gave only part of the money to the apostles.* He secretly kept

miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

God’s message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Levite Levites were men from the family group of Levi who helped the Jewish priests in the temple.

some of the money for himself. His wife knew this, and she agreed with it. ³Peter said, “Ananias, why did you let Satan (*the devil*) rule your heart? You lied and tried to deceive (*fool*) the Holy Spirit.* You sold your field, but why did you keep part of the money for yourself? ⁴Before you sold the field, it belonged to you. And even after you sold it, you could have used the money any way you wanted. Why did you think of doing this bad thing? You lied to God, not to us men!” ^{5–6}When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. Some young men came and wrapped his body. They carried it out and buried it. And every person that heard about this was filled with fear.

⁷About three hours later his wife (*Sapphira*) came in. Sapphira did not know about this thing that had happened to her husband. ⁸Peter said to her, “Tell me how much money you got for your field. Was it this much (*the amount Ananias had said*)?”

Sapphira answered, “Yes, that was all we got for the field.”

⁹Peter said to her, “Why did you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! Do you hear those footsteps? The men that buried your husband are at the door! They will carry you out in the same way.” ¹⁰At that moment Sapphira fell down by his feet and died. The young men came in and saw that she was dead. The men carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹All the believers and all the other people that heard about these things were filled with fear.

Proofs from God

¹²The apostles* did many miracles* and powerful things. All the people saw these things. The apostles were together in Solomon’s Porch*; they all had the same purpose. ¹³None of the other people felt worthy to stand with them. All the people were saying good things about the apostles. ¹⁴And more and more people believed in the Lord (*Jesus*)—many men and women were added to the group of believers. ¹⁵So the people brought their sick people into the streets. [The people

Solomon’s Porch An area on the east side of the temple. It was covered by a roof.

heard that, Peter was coming by. So the people put their sick on little beds and mattresses. They thought that if the sick people could be close enough for Peter's shadow to touch them, it would be enough to heal them. ¹⁶People came from all the towns around Jerusalem. They brought their sick people and those that were bothered by evil spirits [from the devil]. All of these people were healed.

The Jewish Leaders Try to Stop the Apostles

¹⁷The high priest* and all his friends (a group called the Sadducees*) became very jealous. ¹⁸They grabbed the apostles* and put them in jail. ¹⁹But during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail. The angel led the apostles outside and said, ²⁰“Go and stand in the temple* yard. Tell the people everything about this new life [in Jesus].” ²¹When the apostles heard this, they obeyed and went to the temple area. It was early in the morning. The apostles began to teach the people.

The high priest* and his friends came [to the temple*]. They called a meeting of the Jewish leaders and all the important older men of the Jews. They sent some men to the jail to bring the apostles* to them. ²²When the men went to the jail, they could not find the apostles there. So they went back and told the Jewish leaders about this. ²³The men said, “The jail was closed and locked. The guards were standing at the doors. But when we opened the doors, the jail was empty!” ²⁴The captain of the temple guards and the leading priests heard this. They were confused. They wondered, “What will happen because of this?” ²⁵Then another man came and told them, “Listen! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple yard. They are teaching the people!” ²⁶Then the captain and his men went out and brought the apostles back. But the soldiers did not use force, because they were afraid of the people. The soldiers were afraid that the people would [become angry and] kill them (*the soldiers*) with rocks.

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don't live again after death.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

²⁷The soldiers brought the apostles* to the meeting and made them stand before the Jewish leaders. The high priest* questioned the apostles. ²⁸He said, “We told you never to teach about this man (*Jesus*)! But look what you have done! You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching. You are trying to make us responsible (*guilty*) for the death of this man (*Jesus*).”

²⁹Peter and the other apostles* answered, “We must obey God, not you! ³⁰You killed Jesus. You hung him on a cross. But God, the same God our fathers* had, raised Jesus up from death! ³¹Jesus is the One that God raised to his right side. God made Jesus our Leader and Savior. God did this so that all Jews can change their hearts and lives. Then God can forgive their sins. ³²We saw all these things happen, and we can say these things are true. The Holy Spirit* also shows that these things are true. God has given the Spirit to all people that obey him.”

³³The Jewish leaders heard these words. They became very angry. They began to plan a way to kill the apostles.* ³⁴One of the Pharisees* in the meeting stood up. His name was Gamaliel. He was a teacher of the law, and all the people respected him. He told the men to make the apostles leave the meeting for a few minutes. ³⁵Then he said to them, “Men of Israel, be careful of what you are planning to do to these men! ³⁶Remember when Theudas appeared? He said that he was an important man. About 400 men joined him. But he was killed. And all who followed him were scattered and ran away. They were able to do nothing. ³⁷Later, a man named Judas came from Galilee. It was at the time of the registration.* He led a group of followers, too. He was also killed. And all his followers were scattered and ran away. ³⁸And so now I tell you: Stay away from these men. Leave them

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

registration A census or counting of all the people and the things they own.

alone. If their plan comes from men, it will fail. ³⁹But if this is from God, then you will not be able to stop them. You might even be fighting against God himself!”

The Jewish leaders agreed with the thing that Gamaliel said. ⁴⁰They called the apostles* in again. They beat the apostles and told them not to talk to people about Jesus again. Then they let the apostles go free. ⁴¹The apostles left the meeting. The apostles were happy because they were given the honor of suffering dishonor (*shame*) for the name [of Jesus]. ⁴²The apostles did not stop teaching people. The apostles continued to tell the people the Good News—that Jesus is the Christ.* They did this every day in the temple* yard and in people’s homes.

Seven Men Chosen for a Special Work

6 More and more people were becoming followers of Jesus. But during this same time, the Greek-speaking followers had an argument with the other Jewish followers. They said that their widows* were not getting their share of the things that the followers received every day. ²The twelve apostles* called the whole group of followers together. The apostles said to them, “Our work of teaching God’s word has stopped. That’s not good! It is better for us to continue teaching God’s word than to help people have something to eat. ³So, brothers and sisters, choose seven of your own men. They must be men that people say are good. They must be full of wisdom and full of the Spirit.* We will give them this work to do. ⁴Then we can use all our time to pray and to teach the word [of God].”

⁵The whole group liked the idea. So they chose these seven men: Stephen (a man with great faith and full of the Holy Spirit*), Philip,* Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus (a man from Antioch, who had become a Jew). ⁶Then they put these men

before the apostles.* The apostles prayed and put their hands on* the men.

⁷The word of God was reaching more and more people. The group of followers in Jerusalem became larger and larger. Even a big group of Jewish priests believed and obeyed.

Some Jews Against Stephen

⁸Stephen (*one of the seven men*) received a great blessing. God gave Stephen power to do miracles* and to show proofs from God to the people. ⁹But some Jews came and argued with Stephen. These Jews were from a synagogue.* It was called a synagogue for Libertines.* (This synagogue was also for Jews from Cyrene, and for Jews from Alexandria.) Jews from Cilicia and Asia* were with them. They all came and argued with Stephen. ¹⁰But the Spirit* was helping Stephen speak with wisdom. His words were so strong that the Jews could not argue with him. ¹¹So the Jews paid some men to say, “We heard Stephen say bad things against Moses* and against God!” ¹²By doing this, these Jews upset the people, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law. They became so angry that they came and grabbed Stephen. They took him to a meeting of the Jewish leaders. ¹³The Jews brought some men into the meeting. They told these men to tell lies about Stephen. The men said, “This man (*Stephen*) always says bad things about this holy place (*the temple*). And he always says bad things against the law [of Moses]. ¹⁴We heard him say that Jesus from Nazareth will destroy this place. He also said that Jesus will change the things that Moses told us to do.” ¹⁵All the people sitting in the meeting watched Stephen closely. His face looked like the face of an angel, and they saw it.

put their hands on Here, this was a sign to show that these men were given a special work of God.

miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

Libertines Jews who had been slaves or whose fathers had been slaves, but were now free.

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

Moses One of the most important leaders of the Jewish people during the time of the Old Testament.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

widows A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Philip Not the apostle named Philip.

Stephen's Speech

7 The high priest* said to Stephen, “Are these things true?” ²Stephen answered, “My Jewish fathers and brothers, listen to me. Our glorious God appeared to Abraham, our ancestor. Abraham was in Mesopotamia. This was before he lived in Haran. ³God said to Abraham, ‘Leave your country and your people, and go to the country I will show you.’* ⁴So Abraham left the country of Chaldea.* He went to live in Haran. After Abraham’s father died, God sent him to this place here, where you live now. ⁵But God did not give Abraham any of this land. God did not give him even a foot of it. But God promised that in the future he would give Abraham this land for himself and for his children. (This was before Abraham had any children.) ⁶This is what God said to him: ‘Your descendants* will live in another country. They will be strangers. The people there will make them slaves and do bad things to them for 400 years. ⁷But I will punish the nation that made them slaves.’* And God also said, ‘After those things happen, your people will come out of that country. Then your people will worship me here in this place.’* ⁸God made an agreement with Abraham; the sign for this agreement was circumcision.* And so when Abraham had a son, he circumcised his son when he was eight days old. His son’s name was Isaac. Isaac also circumcised his son Jacob. And Jacob did the same for [his sons. These sons later became] the twelve fathers.*

⁹“These fathers* became jealous of Joseph (their younger brother). They sold Joseph to be a

slave in Egypt. But God was with Joseph. ¹⁰Joseph had many troubles there, but God saved him from all those troubles. Pharaoh was the king of Egypt. He liked Joseph and respected him because of the wisdom that God gave Joseph. Pharaoh gave Joseph the job of being a governor of Egypt. He even let Joseph rule over all the people in Pharaoh’s house. ¹¹But all the land of Egypt and of Canaan became dry. It became so dry that food could not grow there. This made the people suffer very much. Our fathers could not find anything to eat.

¹²But Jacob heard that there was food [stored] in Egypt. So he sent our fathers* there. (This was their first trip to Egypt.) ¹³Then they went there a second time. This time, Joseph told his brothers who he was. And Pharaoh learned about Joseph’s family. ¹⁴Then Joseph sent some men to invite Jacob, his father, to come to Egypt. He also invited all his relatives (75 persons altogether). ¹⁵So Jacob went down to Egypt. Jacob and our fathers [lived there until they] died. ¹⁶Later their bodies were moved to Shechem. They were put in a grave there. (It was the same grave that Abraham had bought in Shechem from the sons of Hamor. He paid them with silver.)

¹⁷“The number of Israelites* in Egypt grew. There were more and more of our people there. (The promise that God made to Abraham was soon to come true.) ¹⁸Then a different king began to rule Egypt. He knew nothing about Joseph. ¹⁹This king tricked (*deceived*) our people. He was bad to our ancestors. The king made them put their children outside to die. ²⁰This was the time when Moses was born. He was a very fine child. For three months they took care of Moses in his father’s house. ²¹When they put Moses outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him. She raised him like he was her own son. ²²The Egyptians taught Moses about all the things they knew. He was powerful in the things he said and did.

²³“When Moses was about 40 years old, he thought it would be good to visit his brothers,

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.

‘Leave ... show you’ Quote from Gen. 12:1.

Chaldea Or Babylonia, a land in the southern part of Mesopotamia. See verse 2.

descendants All the people born in a person’s family after that person dies.

‘Your ... slaves’ Quote from Gen. 15:13–14.

‘After those ... place’ Quote from Gen. 15:14; Ex. 3:12.

circumcision Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement that God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

fathers Important ancestors of the Jews. These sons of Jacob, who was also named Israel (see Gen. 35:10), were the leaders of the twelve Israelite (Jewish) family groups.

Israelites The Jewish nation; the Jews—God’s chosen people in the Old Testament.. They were from the twelve sons of Jacob, who is also called “Israel.”

the Israelites.* ²⁴Moses saw an Egyptian man doing wrong to an Israelite man. So he defended the Israelite. Moses punished the Egyptian for hurting the Israelite; Moses hit him so hard that he died. ²⁵Moses thought that his Israelite brothers would understand that God was using him to save them. But they did not understand. ²⁶The next day, Moses saw two Jewish men fighting. He tried to make peace between them. He said, ‘Men, you are brothers! Why are you doing wrong to each other?’ ²⁷The man who was doing wrong to the other man pushed Moses away. He said to Moses, ‘Did anyone say you could be our ruler and judge? No!’ ²⁸Will you kill me like you killed the Egyptian man yesterday?’* ²⁹When Moses heard him say this, he left Egypt. He went to live in the land of Midian. He was a stranger there. While Moses lived in Midian, he had two sons.

³⁰“After 40 years Moses was in the desert near Mount Sinai. An angel appeared to him in the flame of a burning bush. ³¹When Moses saw this, he was amazed. He went near to look closer at it. Moses heard a voice; it was the Lord’s (*God’s*). ³²The Lord said, ‘I am the same God your ancestors had—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*.’* Moses began to shake with fear. He was afraid to look at the bush. ³³The Lord said to him, ‘Take off your shoes, because the place where you are now standing is holy ground. ³⁴I have seen my people suffer much in Egypt. I have heard my people crying. I have come down to save them. Come now, Moses, I am sending you back to Egypt.’*

³⁵“This Moses was the same man the Israelites* said they did not want. They had said to him, ‘Did anyone say you could be our ruler and judge?’* No!’ Moses is the same man that God sent to be a ruler and savior. God

sent Moses with the help of an angel. This was the angel Moses saw in the burning bush. ³⁶So Moses led the people out. He did powerful things and miracles.* Moses did these things in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and then in the desert for 40 years. ³⁷This is the same Moses that said these words to the Jewish people: ‘God will give you a prophet.* That prophet will come from among your own people. He will be like me.’* ³⁸This is the same Moses who was with the gathering of God’s people in the desert. He was with the angel that spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and he was with our ancestors. Moses received commands from God that give life. Moses gave us those commands.

³⁹“But our ancestors did not want to obey Moses. They rejected him. They wanted to go back to Egypt again. ⁴⁰They said to Aaron, ‘Moses led us out of the country of Egypt. But we don’t know what has happened to him. So make some gods to go before us and lead us.’* ⁴¹So the people made an idol that looked like a calf. Then they brought sacrifices (*gifts*) to it. The people were very happy with what they had made with their own hands! ⁴²But God turned against them. God finished trying to stop them from worshiping the army [of false gods] in the sky. This is what is written in the book of the prophets*: God says,

‘ You Jewish people did not bring me blood offerings and sacrifices* in the desert for 40 years;

⁴³ You carried with you the tent (*place of worship*) for Moloch (*a false god*) and the image of the star of your god Rephan.

These were the idols you made to worship. So I will send you away beyond Babylon.’

Amos 5:25-27

Israelites The Jewish nation; the Jews—God’s chosen people in the Old Testament.. They were from the twelve sons of Jacob, who is also called “Israel.”

‘Did anyone ... yesterday’ Quote from Ex. 2:14.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob Three of the most important Jewish leaders during the time of the Old Testament.

‘I am ... Jacob’ Quote from Ex. 3:6.

‘Take off ... Egypt’ Quote from Ex. 3:5-10.

‘Did anyone ... judge’ Quote from Ex. 2:14.

miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.

prophet A person that spoke for God.

‘God will give ... me’ Quote from Deut. 18:15.

‘Moses led us out ... lead us’ Quote from Ex. 32:1.

prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

sacrifices Offerings or gifts to God.

⁴⁴“The Holy Tent* was with our ancestors in the desert. God told Moses how to make this tent. He made it like the plan that God showed him. ⁴⁵Later, Joshua led our ancestors to capture the lands of the other nations. Our people went in and God made the other people go out. When our people went into this new land, they took with them this same tent. Our people received this tent from their fathers, and our people kept it until the time of David. ⁴⁶God was very pleased with David. David asked God to let him build a house (*temple**) for him, the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷But Solomon (*David’s son*) was the person who built the temple.

⁴⁸“But the Most High (*God*) does not live in houses that men build with their hands. This is what the prophet* writes:

⁴⁹ ‘The Lord says,
Heaven is my throne.
The earth is a place to rest my feet.
What kind of house can you build for me?
There is no place where I need to rest!
⁵⁰ Remember, I made all these things!’”

Isaiah 66:1–2

⁵¹Then Stephen said, “You stubborn Jewish leaders! You have not given your hearts to God! You won’t listen to him! You are always against what the Holy Spirit* is trying to tell you. Your ancestors did this, and you are just like them! ⁵²Your ancestors persecuted* every prophet* that ever lived. Those prophets said long ago that the Righteous One (*Christ**) would come. But your ancestors killed those prophets. And now you have turned against the Righteous One and killed him. ⁵³You are the people that received the law [of Moses]. God gave you this law through his angels. But you don’t obey this law!”

Holy Tent Literally, “Tent of the Testimony,” the movable tent where the Ten Commandments were kept and where God lived among his people in the time of Moses.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

prophet Isaiah, who spoke for God about 740–700 B.C.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

persecute(d) To persecute is to hurt or do bad things to.

prophet A person that spoke for God.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Stephen Is Killed

⁵⁴The Jewish leaders heard Stephen say these things. They became very angry. The Jewish leaders were so mad that they were grinding their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵But Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit.* Stephen looked up into the sky. He saw the Glory of God. He saw Jesus standing at God’s right side. ⁵⁶Stephen said, “Look! I see heaven open. And I see the Son of Man* standing at God’s right side!”

⁵⁷Then the Jewish leaders all shouted with a loud voice. They closed (*covered*) their ears with their hands. They all ran at Stephen together. ⁵⁸They took him out of the city and threw rocks at him until he was dead. The men who told lies against Stephen gave their coats to a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹Then they threw rocks at Stephen. But Stephen was praying. He said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” ⁶⁰He fell on his knees and shouted, “Lord, don’t blame them for this sin!” After Stephen said this, he died.

8 Saul agreed that the killing of Stephen was a good thing.

Trouble for the Believers

^{2–3}Some men that truly worshiped God buried Stephen. They cried very loudly for him. On that day the Jews began to persecute* the group of believers in Jerusalem. The Jews made them suffer very much. Saul was also trying to destroy the group. Saul went into their houses. He dragged out men and women and put them in jail. All the believers left Jerusalem. Only the apostles* stayed. The believers went to different places in Judea and Samaria. ⁴The believers were scattered everywhere. Every place the believers went they told people the Good News.*

Philip Tells the Good News in Samaria

⁵Philip* went to the city of Samaria. He told people about the Christ.* ⁶The people there

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Philip Not the apostle named Philip.

heard Philip and saw the miracles* he was doing. They all listened carefully to the things Philip said. ⁷Many of these people had evil spirits [from the devil] inside them. But Philip made the evil spirits leave them. The spirits made a loud noise when they came out. There were also many weak and crippled people there. Philip made these people well, too. ⁸The people in that city were very happy because of this.

⁹But there was a man named Simon in that city. Before Philip came there, Simon used his power to do magic and he amazed all the people of Samaria. Simon boasted and called himself a great man. ¹⁰All the people—the least important and the most important—believed the things Simon said. The people said, “This man has the power of God that is called ‘the Great Power’!” ¹¹Simon amazed the people with his magic tricks so long that the people became his followers. ¹²But Philip told the people the Good News* about the kingdom of God and the power of Jesus Christ. Men and women believed Philip. They were baptized.* ¹³Simon himself also believed and was baptized. Simon stayed very close to Philip. He saw the miracles* and the very powerful things that Philip did. Simon was amazed.

¹⁴The apostles* were still in Jerusalem. They heard that the people of Samaria had accepted the word of God. So the apostles sent Peter and John to the people in Samaria. ¹⁵When Peter and John arrived, they prayed for the Samaritan believers to receive the Holy Spirit.* ¹⁶These people had been baptized* in the name of the Lord Jesus. But the Holy Spirit had not yet come down on any of them. This is why Peter and John prayed. ¹⁷The two apostles put their hands on* the people. Then the people received the Holy Spirit.

miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

put their hands on Here, doing this showed that the apostles had God’s authority or power to give people the special powers of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸Simon saw that the Spirit* was given to people when the apostles* put their hands on them. So Simon offered the apostles money. ¹⁹Simon said, “Give me this power so that when I put my hands on a person, he will receive the Holy Spirit.*”

²⁰Peter said to Simon, “You and your money should both be destroyed! You thought you could buy God’s gift with money. ²¹You cannot share with us in this work. Your heart is not right before God. ²²Change your heart! Turn away from this bad thing you have done. Pray to the Lord (*God*). Maybe he will forgive you for thinking this. ²³I see that you are full of bitter jealousy and ruled by sin.”

²⁴Simon answered, “Both of you pray for me to the Lord (*God*). Pray that the things you have said will not happen to me!”

²⁵Then the two apostles* told the people the things they had seen [Jesus do]. The apostles told the people the message* of the Lord. Then they went back to Jerusalem. On the way they went through many Samaritan towns and told people the Good News.*

Philip Teaches a Man from Ethiopia

²⁶An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip.* The angel said, “Get ready and go south. Go to the road that leads down to Gaza from Jerusalem—the road that goes through the desert.” ²⁷So Philip got ready and went. On the road he saw a man from Ethiopia. This man was a eunuch.* He was an important officer in the service of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He was responsible for taking care of all her money. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship. ²⁸Now he was on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot* and reading from the book of Isaiah, the prophet.* ²⁹The Spirit* said to Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” ³⁰So Philip went toward the chariot, and he heard the man reading. He was reading from Isaiah, the prophet. Philip said to him, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

Philip Not the apostle named Philip.

eunuch Man whose testicles have been removed. Rulers often gave such men important positions.

chariot Something like a wagon pulled by horses.

prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes prophets told about things that would happen in the future.

³¹The man said, “How can I understand? I need some person to explain it to me!” Then he invited Philip to climb in and sit with him.
³²The part of Scripture* that he was reading was this:

“He was like a sheep when it is taken to be killed.

He was like a lamb that makes no sound when someone cuts off its wool.

He said nothing.

³³ He was shamed, and all his rights were taken away.

His life on earth was ended.

There will be no story about his family (*descendants*).”

Isaiah 53:7–8

³⁴The officer said to Philip, “Please, tell me, who is the prophet* talking about? Is he talking about himself or about someone else?”
³⁵Philip began to speak. He started with this same Scripture and told the man the Good News* about Jesus.

³⁶While they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The officer said, “Look! Here is water! What is stopping me from being baptized*?” ^{37*} ³⁸Then the officer commanded the chariot to stop. Both Philip and the officer went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit* of the Lord took Philip away; the officer never saw him again. The officer continued on his way home. He was very happy. ⁴⁰But Philip appeared in a city called Azotus. He was going to the city of Caesarea. He told people the Good News* in all the towns on the way from Azotus to Caesarea.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes prophets told about things that would happen in the future.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Verse 37 Some late copies of Acts add verse 37: “Philip answered, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you can.’ The officer said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’”

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Saul Is Converted

9 [In Jerusalem] Saul was still trying to scare and kill the followers of the Lord (*Jesus*) all the time. So he went to the high priest.*
²Saul asked him to write letters to the Jews of the synagogues* in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the high priest to give him the authority to find people in Damascus who were followers of the Way [of Jesus]. If he found any believers there, men or women, he would arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem.

³So Saul went to Damascus. When he came near the city, a very bright light from the sky suddenly shined around him. ⁴Saul fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying to him: “Saul, Saul! Why are you doing these bad things to me?”

⁵Saul said, “Who are you, Lord?”

The voice answered, “I am Jesus. I am the One you are trying to hurt. ⁶Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do.”

⁷The men traveling with Saul stood there. They said nothing. The men heard the voice, but they saw no one. ⁸Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes, but he could not see. So the men with Saul held his hand and led him into Damascus. ⁹For three days Saul could not see; he did not eat or drink.

¹⁰There was a follower [of Jesus] in Damascus. His name was Ananias. The Lord (*Jesus*) spoke to Ananias in a vision.* The Lord said, “Ananias!”

Ananias answered, “Here I am, Lord.”

¹¹The Lord said to Ananias, “Get up and go to the street called Straight Street. Find the house of Judas.* Ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. He is there now, praying. ¹²Saul has seen a vision.* In this vision a man named Ananias came to him and put his hands on him. Then Saul could see again.”

¹³But Ananias answered, “Lord (*Jesus*), many people have told me about this man (*Saul*). They told me about the many bad

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.

Judas This is not either of the apostles named Judas.

things this man did to your holy people* in Jerusalem. ¹⁴Now he (*Saul*) has come here to Damascus. The leading priests have given him the power to arrest all people that believe in you.*”

¹⁵But the Lord (*Jesus*) said to Ananias, “Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. He must tell about me to kings, to the Jewish people, and to other nations. ¹⁶I will show Saul the things he must suffer for my name.”

¹⁷So Ananias left and went to the house of Judas. He put his hands on Saul and said, “Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the One you saw on the road when you came here. Jesus sent me so that you can see again and so that you can be filled with the Holy Spirit.*” ¹⁸Immediately, something that looked like fish scales fell off Saul’s eyes. Saul was able to see again! Saul got up and was baptized.* ¹⁹Then he ate some food and began to feel strong again.

Saul Begins to Tell About Jesus

Saul stayed with the followers [of Jesus] in Damascus for a few days. ²⁰Soon he began to go to the synagogues* and tell people about Jesus. He told the people, “Jesus is the Son of God!”

²¹All the people that heard Saul were amazed. They said, “This is the same man that was in Jerusalem. He was trying to destroy the people that trust in this name (*Jesus*)! He (*Saul*) has come here to do the same thing. He came here to arrest the followers [of Jesus] and take them back [to Jerusalem] to the leading priests.”

²²But Saul became more and more powerful. He proved that Jesus is the Christ.* His proofs were so strong that the Jews who lived in Damascus could not argue with him.

holy people Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

believe in you Literally, “call on your name,” meaning to show faith in Jesus by worshiping or praying to him.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Saul Escapes from Some Jews

²³After many days, some Jews made plans to kill Saul. ²⁴The Jews were watching the city gates day and night, [waiting for Saul]. They wanted to kill him. But Saul learned about their plan. ²⁵One night some followers that Saul had taught helped him leave the city. The followers put Saul in a basket. They put the basket through a hole in the city wall and lowered him down.

Saul in Jerusalem

²⁶Then Saul went to Jerusalem. He tried to join the group of followers (*believers*), but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe that Saul was really a follower [of Jesus]. ²⁷But Barnabas accepted Saul and brought him to the apostles.* Barnabas told the apostles that Saul had seen the Lord (*Jesus*) on the road [to Damascus]. Barnabas explained to the apostles how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Then he told the apostles that Saul spoke for the Lord (*Jesus*) without fear to the people in Damascus.

²⁸And so Saul stayed with the followers. He went everywhere in Jerusalem, speaking for the Lord (*Jesus*) without fear. ²⁹Saul often talked with the Jews that spoke Greek. He had arguments with them. But they were trying to kill him. ³⁰When the brothers (*believers*) learned about this, they took Saul to the city of Caesarea. From Caesarea they sent Saul to the city of Tarsus.

³¹The church (*believers*) everywhere in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had a time of peace. With the help of the Holy Spirit,* the group became stronger. The believers showed that they respected the Lord by the way they lived. Because of this, the group of believers grew larger and larger.

Peter in Lydda and Joppa

³²Peter traveled through all the towns [around Jerusalem]. He visited the believers* who lived in Lydda. ³³In Lydda he met a paralyzed (*crippled*) man named Aeneas. Aeneas had not been able to leave his bed for the past eight years. ³⁴Peter said to him,

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

believers Literally, “holy ones,” a name for people that believe in Jesus.

“Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Stand up and make your bed! You can do this for yourself now!” Aeneas stood up immediately. ³⁵All the people living in Lydda and on the plain of Sharon saw him. These people turned to (*believed in*) the Lord \lrcorner Jesus \lrcorner .

³⁶In the city of Joppa there was a follower \lrcorner of Jesus \lrcorner named Tabitha. (Her Greek name, Dorcas, means “a deer.”) She always did good things for people. She always gave money to people that needed it. ³⁷While Peter was in Lydda, Tabitha became sick and died. They washed her body and put it in a room upstairs. ³⁸The followers in Joppa heard that Peter was in Lydda. (Lydda is near Joppa.) So they sent two men to Peter. They begged him, “Hurry, please come quickly!” ³⁹Peter got ready and went with them. When he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows* stood around Peter. They were crying. They showed Peter the coats and other clothes that Dorcas (*Tabitha*) had made when she was still alive. ⁴⁰Peter sent all the people out of the room. He kneeled and prayed. Then he turned to Tabitha’s body and said, “Tabitha, stand up!” She opened her eyes. When she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹He gave her his hand and helped her stand up. Then he called the believers* and the widows into the room. He showed them Tabitha; she was alive! ⁴²People everywhere in Joppa learned about this. Many of these people believed in the Lord (*Jesus*). ⁴³Peter stayed in Joppa for many days. He stayed with a man named Simon who was a leatherworker.*

Peter and Cornelius

10 In the city of Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius. He was an army officer* in the “Italian” group \lrcorner of the Roman army \lrcorner . ²Cornelius was a good (*religious*) man. He and all the other people that lived in his home worshiped the true God. He gave much of his money to help the Jewish poor people. Cornelius prayed to God always. ³One

widows A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

believers Literally, “holy ones,” a name for people that believe in Jesus.

leatherworker Man who made leather from animal skins.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

afternoon about three o’clock, Cornelius saw a vision.* He saw it clearly. In the vision an angel from God came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

⁴Cornelius looked at the angel. He became afraid and said, “What do you want, sir?”

The angel said to Cornelius, “God has heard your prayers. He has seen the things you give to the poor people. God remembers you. ⁵Send some men now to the city of Joppa. Send your men to bring back a man named Simon. Simon is also called Peter. ⁶Simon is staying with a man, also named Simon, who is a leatherworker.* He has a house beside the sea.” ⁷The angel who spoke to Cornelius left. Then Cornelius called two of his servants and a soldier. This soldier was a good (*religious*) man. The soldier was one of Cornelius’ close helpers. ⁸Cornelius explained everything to these three men. Then he sent them to Joppa.

⁹The next day these men came near Joppa. At that time, Peter was going up to the roof to pray. It was about noon. ¹⁰Peter was hungry. He wanted to eat. But while they were preparing the food for Peter to eat, a vision* came to him. ¹¹He saw something coming down through the open sky. It looked like a big sheet coming down to the ground. It was being lowered to the ground by its four corners. ¹²Every kind of animal was in it—animals that walk, animals that crawl on the ground, and birds that fly in the air. ¹³Then a voice said to Peter, “Get up, Peter; kill any of these animals and eat it.”

¹⁴But Peter said, “I would never do that, Lord! I have never eaten food that is unholy or not pure.”

¹⁵But the voice said to him again, “God has made these things clean (*pure*). Don’t call them ‘unholy!’” ¹⁶This happened three times. Then the whole thing was taken back up into the sky. ¹⁷Peter wondered what this vision* meant.

The men that Cornelius sent had found Simon’s house. They were standing at the door. ¹⁸They asked, “Is Simon Peter staying here?”

¹⁹Peter was still thinking about the vision.* But the Spirit* said to him, “Listen! Three men

vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

are looking for you. ²⁰Get up and go downstairs. Go with these men and don't ask questions. I have sent them to you." ²¹So Peter went downstairs to the men. He said, "I am the man you are looking for. Why did you come here?"

²²The men said, "A holy angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house. Cornelius is an army officer.* He is a good man; he worships God. All the Jewish people respect him. The angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house so that he can listen to the things you have to say." ²³Peter asked the men to come in and stay for the night.

The next day Peter got ready and went away with the three men. Some of the brothers (*believers*) from Joppa went with Peter. ²⁴The next day they came into the city of Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them. He had already gathered his relatives and close friends [at his house]. ²⁵When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him. Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet and worshiped him. ²⁶But Peter told him to get up. Peter said, "Stand up! I am only a man like you." ²⁷Peter continued talking with Cornelius. Then Peter went inside and saw a large group of people together there. ²⁸Peter said to the people, "You people understand that it is against our Jewish law for a Jew to associate with or visit any person who is not a Jew. But God has shown me that I should not call any person 'unholy' or 'not clean.' ²⁹That is why I did not argue when the men asked me to come here. Now, please tell me why you sent for me."

³⁰Cornelius said, "Four days ago, I was praying in my house. It was at this same time—three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly, there was a man (*angel*) standing before me. He was wearing bright, shiny clothes. ³¹The man said, 'Cornelius! God has heard your prayer. God has seen the things you give to the poor people. God remembers you. ³²So send some men to the city of Joppa. Ask Simon Peter to come. Peter is staying in the house of a man, also named Simon, who is a leatherworker.* His house is beside the sea.' ³³So I sent for you immediately. It was very good of you to come here. Now we are all here

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

leatherworker Man who made leather from animal skins.

before God to hear everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

Peter Speaks in the House of Cornelius

³⁴Peter began to speak: "I really understand now that to God every person is the same. ³⁵And God accepts any person who worships him and does what is right. It is not important what country a person comes from. ³⁶God has spoken to the Jewish people. God sent them the Good News* that peace has come through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Lord (*Ruler*) of all people! ³⁷You know what has happened all over Judea. It began in Galilee after John* told the people they needed to be baptized.* ³⁸You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God made him the Christ* by giving him the Holy Spirit* and power. Jesus went everywhere doing good things for people. Jesus healed the people that were ruled by the devil. This showed that God was with Jesus. ³⁹We saw all the things that Jesus did in Judea and in Jerusalem. We are witnesses. But Jesus was killed. They put him on a cross made of wood. ⁴⁰But, on the third day [after his death], God raised Jesus to life! God let people see Jesus clearly. ⁴¹But Jesus was not seen by all the people. Only the witnesses that God had already chosen saw him. We are those witnesses! We ate and drank with Jesus after he was raised from death. ⁴²Jesus told us to go and speak to the people. He told us to tell them that he is the One that God chose to be the Judge of all people that are living and all people that have died. ⁴³Every person who believes (*trusts*) in Jesus will be forgiven. God will forgive the sins of that person through the name of Jesus. All the prophets* say this is true."

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

John John the Baptizer, the man that told people about Christ's coming. Read Mt. 3; Lk. 3.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

The Holy Spirit Comes to Non-Jews

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit* came down on all those people who were listening to his speech. ⁴⁵The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed. They were amazed that the Holy Spirit was poured out (*given*) to the non-Jewish people too. ⁴⁶These Jewish believers heard them speaking different languages and praising God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“We cannot refuse to allow these people to be baptized* in water. They have received the Holy Spirit the same as we did!” ⁴⁸So Peter commanded that Cornelius and his relatives and friends be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then the people asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Peter Returns to Jerusalem

11 The apostles* and the brothers (*other believers*) in Judea heard that non-Jewish people had accepted God’s teaching too. ²But when Peter came to Jerusalem, some Jewish believers* argued with him. ³They said, “You went into the homes of people that are not Jews and are not circumcised*! You even ate with them!”

⁴So Peter explained the whole story to them. ⁵Peter said, “I was in the city of Joppa. While I was praying, a vision* came to me. In the vision I saw something coming down from the sky. It looked like a big sheet. It was being lowered to the ground by its four corners. It came down and stopped very close to me. ⁶I looked inside it. I saw animals, both tame and wild. I saw animals that crawl and birds that fly in the air. ⁷I heard a voice say to me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill any of these

animals and eat it!’ ⁸But I said, ‘I would never do that, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is unholy or not pure.’ ⁹But the voice from the sky answered again, ‘God has made these things clean (*pure*). Don’t call them unholy!’ ¹⁰This happened three times. Then the whole thing was taken back into the sky. ¹¹Then three men came to the house where I was staying. These three men were sent to me from the city of Caesarea. ¹²The Spirit* told me to go with them without doubting. These six brothers (*believers*) here also went with me. We went to the house of Cornelius. ¹³Cornelius told us about the angel he saw standing in his house. The angel said to Cornelius, ‘Send some men to Joppa. Invite Simon Peter to come. ¹⁴He will speak to you. The things he will say will save you and all your family.’ ¹⁵After I began my speech, the Holy Spirit* came on them the same as he (*the Spirit*) came on us at the beginning.* ¹⁶Then I remembered the words of the Lord (*Jesus*). The Lord said, ‘John baptized* people in water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit!’ ¹⁷God gave to these people the same gift that he gave to us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. So could I stop the work of God? No!”

¹⁸When the Jewish believers heard these things, they stopped arguing. They praised God and said, “So God is allowing the non-Jewish people to change their hearts and have life the same as us!”

The Good News Comes to Antioch

¹⁹The believers were scattered by the persecution* that happened after Stephen was killed. Some of the believers went to places far away like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. The believers told the Good News* in these places; but they told it only to Jews. ²⁰Some of these believers were men from Cyprus and Cyrene. When these men came to Antioch, they also spoke to Greeks (*non-Jews*). They told these Greek people the Good News about the Lord

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Jewish believers Literally, “those of circumcision.” This may mean Jews who thought that all Christians must be circumcised and obey the law of Moses. See Gal. 2:12.

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement that God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.

beginning The beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost. Read Acts 2.

persecution A time when the Jews were punishing people that believed in Christ. Read Acts 8:1–4.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Jesus. ²¹The Lord was helping the believers. And a large group of people believed and started following the Lord (*Jesus*).

²²The church (*group of believers*) in Jerusalem heard about these new believers [in Antioch]. So the believers in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch. ^{23–24}Barnabas was a good man. He was full of the Holy Spirit* and full of faith. When Barnabas went to Antioch, he saw that God had blessed those people very much. This made Barnabas very happy. He encouraged all the believers in Antioch. He told them, “Never lose your faith. Always obey the Lord with all your hearts.” Many, many people became followers of the Lord [Jesus].

²⁵Then Barnabas went to the city of Tarsus. He was looking for Saul. ²⁶When he found Saul, Barnabas brought him to Antioch. Saul and Barnabas stayed there a whole year. Every time the group of believers came together, Saul and Barnabas met with them and taught many people. In Antioch the followers [of Jesus] were called “Christians” for the first time.

²⁷About that same time some prophets* went from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸One of these prophets was named Agabus. In Antioch, Agabus stood up and spoke. With the help of the Holy Spirit* he said, “A very bad time is coming to the whole world. There will be no food for people to eat.” (This time without food happened when Claudius was emperor.*) ²⁹The believers decided that they would all try to help their brothers and sisters who lived in Judea. Each believer planned to send them as much as he could. ³⁰They gathered the money and gave it to Barnabas and Saul. Then Barnabas and Saul brought it to the elders* in Judea.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

prophet(s) People that spoke for God.

emperor The ruler (leader) of the Roman empire.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (“shepherds”), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

Herod Agrippa Hurts the Church

12 During that same time King Herod* began to persecute* some of the people that belonged to the church (*group of believers*). ²Herod ordered James to be killed with a sword. James was the brother of John. ³Herod saw that the Jews liked this. So he decided to arrest Peter, too. (This happened during the time of the Jewish holiday called the Passover.*) ⁴Herod arrested Peter and put him in jail. A group of 16 soldiers guarded Peter. Herod wanted to wait until after the Passover festival. Then he planned to bring Peter before the people. ⁵So Peter was kept in jail. But the church was constantly praying to God for Peter.

Peter Leaves the Jail

⁶Peter was sleeping between two of the soldiers. He was bound with two chains. More soldiers were guarding the door of the jail. It was at night, and Herod* planned to bring Peter out before the people the next day. ⁷Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood there. A light shined in the room. The angel touched Peter on the side and woke him up. The angel said, “Hurry, get up!” The chains fell off Peter’s hands. ⁸The angel said to Peter, “Get dressed and put on your shoes.” And so Peter did this. Then the angel said, “Put on your coat and follow me.” ⁹So the angel went out and Peter followed. Peter did not know if the angel was really doing this. He thought he might be seeing a vision.* ¹⁰Peter and the angel went past the first guard and the second guard. Then they came to the iron gate that separated them from the city. The gate opened itself for them. Peter and the angel went through the gate and walked about a block. Then the angel suddenly left.

¹¹Peter realized then what had happened. He thought, “Now I know that the Lord really sent his angel to me. He rescued (*saved*) me from Herod.* The Jewish people thought that bad

Herod Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great.

persecute(d) To persecute is to hurt or do bad things to.

Passover An important Jewish holy day. The Jews ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.

things would happen to me. But the Lord saved me from all these things.”

¹²When Peter realized this, he went to the home of Mary. She was the mother of John. (John was also called Mark.) Many people were gathered there. They were all praying. ¹³Peter knocked on the outside door. A servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. ¹⁴Rhoda recognized Peter’s voice, and she was very happy. She even forgot to open the door. She ran inside and told the group, “Peter is at the door!” ¹⁵The believers said to Rhoda, “You are crazy!” But she continued to say that it was true. So they said, “It must be Peter’s angel.”

¹⁶But Peter continued to knock. When the believers opened the door, they saw Peter. They were amazed. ¹⁷Peter made a sign with his hand to tell them to be quiet. He explained to them how the Lord led him out of the jail. He said, “Tell James and the other brothers what happened.” Then Peter left to go to another place.

¹⁸The next day the soldiers were very upset. They wondered what happened to Peter. ¹⁹Herod* looked everywhere for Peter but could not find him. So Herod questioned the guards. Then he ordered that the guards be killed.

The Death of Herod Agrippa

Later Herod* moved from Judea. He went to the city of Caesarea and stayed there a while. ²⁰Herod was very angry with the people from the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Those people all came in a group to Herod. They were able to get Blastus on their side. Blastus was the king’s personal servant. The people asked Herod for peace because their country needed food from Herod’s country.

²¹Herod* decided a day to meet with them. On that day Herod was wearing a beautiful royal robe. He sat on his throne and made a speech to the people. ²²The people shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not a man!” ²³Herod [accepted this praise and] did not give the glory to God. So an angel of the Lord caused him to become sick. He was eaten by worms inside him, and he died.

Herod Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great.

²⁴The message* of God was spreading and influencing more and more people. The group of believers became larger and larger.

²⁵After Barnabas and Saul finished their work in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch. John Mark was with them.

Barnabas and Saul Given a Special Work

13 In the church (*group of believers*) at Antioch there were some prophets* and teachers. They were: Barnabas, Simeon (also called Niger), Lucius (from the city of Cyrene), Manaen (who had grown up with Herod,* the ruler) and Saul. ²These men were all serving the Lord and fasting.* The Holy Spirit* said to them, “Give Barnabas and Saul to me to do a special work. I have chosen them to do this work.”

³So the church fasted* and prayed. They put their hands on* Barnabas and Saul and sent them out.

Barnabas and Saul in Cyprus

⁴Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit.* They went to the city of Seleucia. Then they sailed from Seleucia to the island of Cyprus. ⁵When Barnabas and Saul came to the city of Salamis, they told the message* of God in the Jewish synagogues.* (John [Mark] was with them to help.)

⁶They went across the whole island to the city of Paphos. In Paphos they met a Jewish man who did magic. His name was Barjesus. He was a false prophet.* ⁷Barjesus always stayed close to Sergius Paulus, the governor. Sergius Paulus was a wise man. He asked Barnabas and Saul to come to him. He wanted

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

prophet(s) People that spoke for God.

fasting, fasted To fast is to live without food for a time of prayer or mourning.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

put their hands on Here, this was a sign to show that these men were given a special work of God.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

false prophet A person that says he speaks for God but does not really speak God’s truth.

to hear the message* of God. ⁸But Elymas, the magician, was against Barnabas and Saul. (Elymas is another name for Barjesus.) Elymas tried to stop the governor from believing [in Jesus]. ⁹But Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit.* Paul (Saul's other name) looked at Elymas (*Barjesus*) ¹⁰and said, "You son of the devil! You are an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of evil tricks and lies. You always try to change the Lord's truths into lies! ¹¹Now the Lord will touch you and you will be blind. For a time you will not be able to see anything—not even the light from the sun."

Then everything became dark for Elymas. He walked around lost. He was trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. ¹²When the governor (*Sergius Paulus*) saw this, he believed. He was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Go to Antioch in Pisidia

¹³Paul and those people with him sailed away from Paphos. They came to Perga, a city in Pamphylia. But John [Mark] left them; he returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴They continued their trip from Perga and went to Antioch, a city near Pisidia. In Antioch on the Sabbath day* they went into the Jewish synagogue* and sat down. ¹⁵The law of Moses and the writings of the prophets* were read. Then the leaders of the synagogue sent a message to Paul and Barnabas: "Brothers, if you have something to say that will help the people here, please speak!"

¹⁶Paul stood up. He raised his hand* and said, "My Jewish brothers and you other people that also worship the true God, please listen to me! ¹⁷The God of Israel (*the Jews*) chose our ancestors. God helped his people to

have success during the time they lived in Egypt as strangers. God brought them out of that country with great power. ¹⁸And God was patient with them for 40 years in the desert. ¹⁹God destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan. He gave their land to his people. ²⁰All this happened in about 450 years.

"After this, God gave [our people] judges (*leaders*) until the time of Samuel* the prophet.* ²¹Then the people asked for a king. God gave them Saul, the son of Kish. Saul was from the family group of Benjamin. He was king for 40 years. ²²After God took Saul away, God made David* their king. This is what God said about David: 'David, the son of Jesse, is a man who is like me in his thinking. He will do all the things I want him to do.' ²³God has brought one of David's descendants* to Israel (*the Jews*) to be their Savior.* That descendant is Jesus. God promised to do this. ²⁴Before Jesus came, John* told [God's message] to all the Jewish people. John told the people to be baptized* to show they wanted to change their lives. ²⁵When John was finishing his work, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the Christ.* He is coming later. I am not worthy to untie his shoes.'

²⁶"My brothers, sons in the family of Abraham,* and you non-Jews who also worship the true God, listen! The news about this salvation has been sent to us. ²⁷The [Jews] living in Jerusalem and the Jewish leaders did not realize that [Jesus] was the Savior. The words that the prophets* wrote [about Jesus] were read to the Jews every Sabbath day,* but they did not understand. The Jews condemned Jesus. When they did this, they made the words of the prophets come true! ²⁸They could not find any real reason why Jesus should die,

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Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

raised his hand A sign to make the people listen.

Samuel The last judge (leader) and first prophet of Israel.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

descendant(s) The people born in a person's family after that person dies.

Savior The One that God promised to send to save his people from punishment for their sins.

John John the Baptizer, the man that told people about Christ's coming. Read Mt. 3; Lk. 3.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.

but they asked Pilate to kill him. ²⁹These Jews did all the bad things that the Scriptures* said would happen to Jesus. Then they took Jesus down from the cross and put him in a grave. ³⁰But God raised him up from death! ³¹After this, for many days, the people that had gone with Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem saw Jesus. These people are now his witnesses to the people. ³²We tell you the Good News* about the promise God made to our ancestors. ³³We are their children (*descendants*), and God has made this promise come true for us. God did this by raising Jesus from death. We also read about this in Psalm 2:

‘You are my Son.
Today I have become your Father.’

Psalm 2:7

³⁴God raised Jesus from death. Jesus will never go back to the grave and become dust. So God said:

‘I will give you the true and holy promises
that I made to David.’ *Isaiah 55:3*

³⁵But in another Psalm it says:

‘You will not let [the body of] your Holy
One rot in the grave.’ *Psalm 16:10*

³⁶David did God’s will during the time he lived. Then he died and was buried like all his ancestors. And his body did rot in the grave! ³⁷But the One (*Jesus*) that God raised from death did not rot in the grave. ^{38–39}Brothers, you must understand what we are telling you: You can have forgiveness of your sins through this One (*Jesus*). The law of Moses could not free you from your sins. But every person who believes [in Jesus] is free from all his sins through him (*Jesus*). ⁴⁰The prophets* said some things would happen. Be careful! Don’t let these things happen to you. The prophets said:

⁴¹ ‘Listen, you people that doubt!
You can wonder, but then go away
and die;

because during your time,
I (*God*) will do something
that you will not believe.
You will not believe it,
even if someone explains it to you!’”

Habakkuk 1:5

⁴²While Paul and Barnabas were leaving [the synagogue*], the people asked Paul and Barnabas to [come again] on the next Sabbath day* and tell them more about these things. ⁴³After the meeting, many of the Jews followed Paul and Barnabas from that place. With the Jews there were many converts* to the Jewish religion. These converts also worshiped the true God. Paul and Barnabas were persuading them to continue trusting in God’s grace (*kindness*).

⁴⁴On the next Sabbath day,* almost all the people in the city came together to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵The Jews saw all these people there. So the Jews became very jealous. They said some very bad things and argued against the words that Paul said. ⁴⁶But Paul and Barnabas spoke very boldly. They said, “We must speak the message* of God to you Jews first. But you refuse to listen. You are making yourselves lost—not worthy of having eternal life! So we will now go to the people of other nations! ⁴⁷This is what the Lord (*God*) told us to do. The Lord said:

‘I have made you to be a light
for other nations,
so that you can show the way of salvation
to people all over the world.’”

Isaiah 49:6

⁴⁸When the non-Jewish people heard Paul say this, they were happy. They gave honor to the message* of the Lord. And many of the people believed the message. These were the people chosen to have life forever.

⁴⁹And so the message* of the Lord was being told through the whole country. ⁵⁰But the Jews caused some of the important

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

converts People that changed their religion to become Jews.

religious women and the leaders of the city to become angry and to be against Paul and Barnabas. These people did things against Paul and Barnabas and threw them out of town. ⁵¹So Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet.* Then they went to the city of Iconium. ⁵²But the followers [of Jesus in Antioch] were happy and full of the Holy Spirit.*

Paul and Barnabas in Iconium

14 Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Iconium. They entered the Jewish synagogue.* (This is what they did in every city.) They spoke to the people there. Paul and Barnabas spoke so well that many Jews and Greeks (*non-Jews*) believed what they said. ²But some of the Jews did not believe. These Jews excited the non-Jewish people and made them think bad things about the brothers (*believers*). ³So Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium a long time, and they spoke bravely for the Lord. Paul and Barnabas told the people about God's grace (*kindness*). The Lord proved that what they said was true by helping the apostles* (*Paul and Barnabas*) do miracles and wonders.* ⁴But some of the people in the city agreed with the Jews. Other people in the city believed Paul and Barnabas. So the city was divided.

⁵Some non-Jewish people, some Jews, and their Jewish leaders tried to hurt Paul and Barnabas. These people wanted to kill them with rocks. ⁶When Paul and Barnabas learned about this, they left that city. They went to Lystra and Derbe, cities in Lycaonia, and to the areas around those cities. ⁷They told the Good News* there too.

shook the dust off their feet A warning. It showed that they were finished talking to these people.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

miracles and wonders Amazing works or great things done by the power of God.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Paul in Lystra and Derbe

⁸In Lystra there was a man who had something wrong with his feet. He had been born crippled; he had never walked. ⁹This man was sitting and listening to Paul speak. Paul looked at him. Paul saw that the man believed that God could heal him. ¹⁰So Paul shouted, "Stand up on your feet!" The man jumped up and began walking around. ¹¹When the people saw what Paul did, they shouted in their own Lycaonian language. They said, "The gods have become like men! They have come down to us!" ¹²The people began to call Barnabas "Zeus.*" They called Paul "Hermes,*" because he was the main speaker. ¹³The temple of Zeus was near the city. The priest of this temple brought some bulls and flowers to the city gates. The priest and the people wanted to give an offering to [worship] Paul and Barnabas.

¹⁴But when the apostles,* Barnabas and Paul, understood what the people were doing, they tore their own clothes.* Then they ran in among the people and shouted to them: ¹⁵"Men, why are you doing these things? We are not gods! We are human just like you. We came to tell you the Good News.* We are telling you to turn away from these worthless things. Turn to the true living God. He is the One who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them. ¹⁶In the past, God let all the nations do what they wanted. ¹⁷But God was always there doing things that prove he is real. He gives you rain from the sky. He gives you good harvests at the right times. He gives you plenty of food, and he fills your hearts with joy." ¹⁸Paul and Barnabas told the people these things. But still Paul and Barnabas almost could not stop the people from offering sacrifices to [worship] them.

¹⁹Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium. They persuaded the people to be against Paul. And so the people threw rocks at Paul and dragged him out of the town. The

Zeus The most important of the many Greek gods.

Hermes Another Greek god. The Greeks believed he was a messenger for the other gods.

tore ... clothes This showed they were very angry.

people thought that they had killed Paul. ²⁰The followers [of Jesus] gathered around Paul and he got up and went back into the town. The next day, he and Barnabas left and went to the city of Derbe.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

²¹Paul and Barnabas told the Good News* in the city of Derbe too. Many people became followers [of Jesus]. Paul and Barnabas returned to the cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. ²²In those cities Paul and Barnabas made the followers [of Jesus] stronger. They helped them to stay in the faith. Paul and Barnabas said, “We must suffer many things on our way into God’s kingdom.” ²³Paul and Barnabas chose elders* for each church (*group of believers*). They fasted* and prayed for these elders. These elders were men who had trusted the Lord [Jesus]. So Paul and Barnabas put them in the Lord’s care.

²⁴Paul and Barnabas went through the country of Pisidia. Then they came to the country of Pamphylia. ²⁵They told people the message* [of God] in the city of Perga, and then they went down to the city of Attalia. ²⁶And from there Paul and Barnabas sailed away to Antioch [in Syria]. This is the city where the believers had put them into God’s care and sent them to do this work. Now they had finished the work.

²⁷When Paul and Barnabas arrived, they gathered the church (*group of believers*) together. Paul and Barnabas told them about all the things God had done with them. They said, “God opened a door so that the people of other nations (*non-Jews*) could also believe!” ²⁸Paul and Barnabas stayed there a long time with the followers [of Christ*].

The Meeting at Jerusalem

15 Then some men came [to Antioch] from Judea. They began teaching the non-Jewish brothers: “You cannot be saved if

you are not circumcised.* Moses taught us to do this.” ²Paul and Barnabas were against this teaching. They argued with these men about it. So the group decided to send Paul, Barnabas, and some other men to Jerusalem. These men were going there to talk more about this with the apostles* and elders.*

³The church helped the men leave on the trip. These men went through the countries of Phoenicia and Samaria. In these countries they told all about how the non-Jewish people had turned to the true God. This made all the brothers very happy. ⁴Paul, Barnabas, and the others arrived in Jerusalem. The apostles,* the elders,* and the whole group of believers welcomed them. Paul, Barnabas, and the others told about all the things that God had done with them. ⁵Some of the believers [in Jerusalem] had belonged to the Pharisees.* They stood up and said, “The non-Jewish believers must be circumcised.* We must tell them to obey the law of Moses!”

⁶Then the apostles* and the elders* gathered to study this problem. ⁷There was a long debate. Then Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, I know that you remember what happened in the early days. God chose me then from among you to tell the Good News* to the non-Jewish people. They heard the Good News from me and they believed. ⁸God knows the thoughts of all men, and he accepted these non-Jewish people. God showed this to us by giving them the Holy Spirit* the same as he did to us. ⁹To God, those people are not different from us. When they believed, God made their hearts pure. ¹⁰So now, why are you putting a heavy burden* around the necks of the non-Jewish brothers? Are you trying to make God angry? We and our fathers* were not able to

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement that God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

burden The Jewish law. Some of the Jews tried to make the non-Jewish believers follow this law.

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (“shepherds”), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

fasted To fast is to live without food for a time of prayer or mourning.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

carry that burden! ¹¹No, we believe that we and these people will be saved by the grace (*kindness*) of the Lord Jesus!”

¹²Then the whole group became quiet. They listened to Paul and Barnabas speak. Paul and Barnabas told about all the miracles and wonders* that God did through them among the non-Jewish people. ¹³Paul and Barnabas finished speaking. Then James spoke. He said, “My brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simon (*Peter*) has told us how God showed his love for the non-Jewish people. For the first time, God accepted the non-Jewish people and made them his people. ¹⁵The words of the prophets* agree with this too:

¹⁶ ‘I (*God*) will return after this.

I will build David’s* house again.

It has fallen down.

I will build again the parts of his house
that have been pulled down.

I will make his house new.

¹⁷ Then all other people will look for
the Lord (*God*)—

all the non-Jewish people that are
my people too.

The Lord (*God*) said this.

And he is the One who does
all these things. *Amos 9:11–12*

¹⁸ These things have been known
from the beginning of time.’

¹⁹“So I think we should not bother the non-Jewish brothers who have turned to God. ²⁰Instead, we should write a letter to them. We should tell them these things:

Don’t eat food that has been given to idols.*
(This makes the food unclean.)

Don’t do any kind of sexual sin.

Don’t eat meat from animals that have been
strangled (*choked*) or
any meat that still has the blood in it.

²¹They should not do these things, because there are still men (*Jews*) in every city who

miracles and wonders Amazing works or great things done by the power of God.

prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

idols The false gods that the non-Jewish people worshiped.

teach the law of Moses. The words of Moses have been read in the synagogue* every Sabbath day* for many years.”

The Letter to the Non-Jewish Believers

²²The apostles,* the elders,* and the whole church (*group of believers*) wanted to send some men with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. The group decided to choose some of their own men. They chose Judas (*also called Barsabbas*) and Silas. These men were respected by the brothers in Jerusalem. ²³The group sent the letter with these men. The letter said:

From the apostles* and elders,* your brothers.

To all the non-Jewish brothers in the city of Antioch and in the countries of Syria and Cilicia:

Dear Brothers:

²⁴We have heard that some men have come to you from our group. The things they said troubled and upset you. But we did not tell them to do this! ²⁵We have all agreed to choose some men and send them to you. They will be with our dear friends, Barnabas and Paul. ²⁶Barnabas and Paul have given their lives to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷So we have sent Judas and Silas with them. They will tell you the same things. ²⁸The Holy Spirit* thinks that you should have no more burdens, and we agree. You need to do only these things:

²⁹ Don’t eat food that has been given to idols.*

Don’t eat meat from animals that have been
strangled (*choked*) or
any meat that still has the blood in it.

Don’t do any kind of sexual sin.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (“shepherds”), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

If you stay away from these things, you will do well.

We say good-bye now.

³⁰So Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas left Jerusalem. They went to Antioch. In Antioch they gathered the group of believers and gave them the letter. ³¹When the believers read it, they were happy. The letter comforted them. ³²Judas and Silas were also prophets.* They said many things to help the brothers (*believers*) and make them stronger. ³³After Judas and Silas stayed there for a while, they left. They received a blessing of peace from the brothers. Judas and Silas went back to the brothers [in Jerusalem] who had sent them. ³⁴*

³⁵But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch. They and many others told the Good News* and taught the people the message* of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Separate

³⁶A few days later, Paul said to Barnabas, “We told the message* of the Lord in many towns. We should go back to all those towns to visit the brothers and sisters and see how they are doing.” ³⁷Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark with them too. ³⁸But [on their first trip] John Mark had left them at Pamphylia; he did not continue with them in the work. So Paul did not think it was a good idea to take him. ³⁹Paul and Barnabas had a big argument about this. They separated and went different ways. Barnabas sailed to Cyprus and took Mark with him. ⁴⁰Paul chose Silas to go with him. The brothers [in Antioch] put Paul into the Lord’s care and sent him out. ⁴¹Paul and Silas went through the countries of Syria and Cilicia, helping the churches* grow stronger.

Timothy Goes with Paul and Silas

16 Paul went to the cities of Derbe and Lystra. A follower [of Christ] named Timothy was there. Timothy’s mother was a

prophet(s) People that spoke for God.

Verse 34 Some Greek copies of Acts add verse 34: “... but Silas decided to remain there.”

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

churches Groups of believers in the towns where Paul and Barnabas went before.

Jewish believer. His father was a Greek (*not a Jew*). ²The believers in the cities of Lystra and Iconium respected Timothy. They said good things about him. ³Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him. But all the Jews living in that area knew that Timothy’s father was Greek (*not Jewish*). So Paul circumcised* Timothy to please the Jews. ⁴Then Paul and the men with him traveled through other cities.* They gave the believers the rules and decisions from the apostles* and elders* in Jerusalem. They told the believers to obey these rules. ⁵So the churches (*groups of believers*) were becoming stronger in the faith and were growing bigger every day.

Paul Is Called to Macedonia

⁶Paul and the men with him went through the countries of Phrygia and Galatia. The Holy Spirit* did not allow them to tell the Good News* in the country of Asia.* ⁷Paul and Timothy went near the country of Mysia. They wanted to go into the country of Bithynia. But the Spirit of Jesus did not let them go in. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went to the city of Troas. ⁹That night Paul saw a vision.* In this vision, a man from the country of Macedonia came to Paul. The man stood there and begged, “Come across to Macedonia. Help us!” ¹⁰After Paul had seen the vision, we immediately prepared to leave for Macedonia. We understood that God had called us to tell the Good News* to those people.

The Conversion of Lydia

¹¹We left Troas in a ship, and we sailed to the island of Samothrace. The next day we sailed to the city of Neapolis. ¹²Then we went

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement that God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

cities The cities where there were groups of believers.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (“shepherds”), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.

to Philippi. Philippi is an important city in that part of Macedonia. It is a city for Romans. We stayed in that city for a few days.

¹³On the Sabbath day* we went out the city gate to the river. At the river we thought we might find a special place for prayer. Some women had gathered there. So we sat down and talked with them. ¹⁴There was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira. Her job was selling purple cloth. She worshiped the true God. Lydia listened to Paul. The Lord opened her heart. She believed the things Paul said. ¹⁵She and all the people living in her home were baptized.* Then Lydia invited us into her home. She said, “If you think I am truly a believer in the Lord Jesus, then come stay in my house.” She persuaded us to stay with her.

Paul and Silas in Jail

¹⁶One time something happened to us while we were going to the place for prayer. A servant girl met us. She had a special spirit* in her. This spirit gave her the power to tell what would happen in the future. By doing this she earned a lot of money for the men who owned her. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and us. She said loudly, “These men are servants of the Most High God! They are telling you how you can be saved!” ¹⁸She continued doing this for many days. This bothered Paul, so he turned and said to the spirit, “By the power of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!” Immediately, the spirit came out.

¹⁹The men that owned the servant girl saw this. These men knew that now they could not use her to make money. So they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them into the meeting place of the city. The city officials were there. ²⁰The men brought Paul and Silas to the leaders and said, “These men are Jews. They are making trouble in our city. ²¹They are telling the people to do things that are not right for us. We are Roman citizens and cannot do these things.” ²²The people were against Paul

and Silas. Then the leaders tore the clothes of Paul and Silas and told some men to beat Paul and Silas with rods. ²³The men beat Paul and Silas many times. Then the leaders put Paul and Silas in jail. The leaders told the jailer, “Guard them very carefully!” ²⁴The jailer heard this special order. So he put Paul and Silas far inside the jail. He tied their feet between large blocks of wood.

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly, there was a big earthquake. It was so strong that it shook the foundation of the jail. Then all the doors of the jail opened. All the prisoners were freed from their chains. ²⁷The jailer woke up. He saw that the jail doors were open. He thought that the prisoners had already escaped. So the jailer got his sword and was ready to kill himself.* ²⁸But Paul shouted, “Don’t hurt yourself! We are all here!”

²⁹The jailer told someone to bring a light. Then he ran inside. He was shaking. He fell down in front of Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them outside and said, “Men, what must I do to be saved?”

³¹They said to him, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved—you and all these people from your house.” ³²So Paul and Silas told the message* of the Lord to the jailer and all the people that lived in his house. ³³It was late at night, but the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Then the jailer and all his people were baptized.* ³⁴After this the jailer took Paul and Silas home and gave them some food. All the people were very happy because they now believed in God.

³⁵The next morning, the leaders sent some soldiers to tell the jailer, “Let these men (*Paul and Silas*) go free!”

³⁶The jailer said to Paul, “The leaders have sent these soldiers to let you go free. You can leave now. Go in peace.”

³⁷But Paul said to the soldiers, “Your leaders did not prove that we did wrong. But they beat

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

spirit A spirit from the devil that gave special knowledge.

kill himself He thought the leaders would kill him for letting the prisoners escape.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

us in front of the people and put us in jail. We are Roman citizens,* [so we have rights]. Now the leaders want to make us go quietly. No! The leaders must come and bring us out!”

³⁸The soldiers told the leaders what Paul said. When the leaders heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens,* they were afraid. ³⁹So they came and told Paul and Silas they were sorry. They took Paul and Silas out of jail and asked them to leave the city. ⁴⁰But when Paul and Silas came out of the jail, they went to Lydia’s house. They saw some of the believers there and comforted them. Then Paul and Silas left.

Paul and Silas in Thessalonica

17 Paul and Silas traveled through the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia. They came to the city of Thessalonica. In that city there was a Jewish synagogue.* ²Paul went into this synagogue to see the Jews. This is what he always did. Every Sabbath day* for three weeks Paul talked with the Jews about the Scriptures.* ³Paul explained these Scriptures to the Jews. He showed that the Christ* must die and then rise from death. Paul said “This man Jesus that I am telling you about is the Christ.” ⁴Some of the Jews there believed Paul and Silas and decided to join them. Also, there were some Greek men who worshiped the true God and some important women. A large group of the men and many of the women joined Paul and Silas.

⁵But the Jews [that did not believe] became jealous. They hired some bad men from the city. These bad men gathered many people and made trouble in the city. They went to Jason’s house, looking for Paul and Silas. They wanted to bring Paul and Silas out before the people. ⁶But they did not find Paul and Silas. So the people dragged Jason and some of the other believers to the leaders of the city. The people yelled, “These men (*Paul and Silas*)

have made trouble everywhere in the world. And now they have come here too! ⁷Jason is keeping them in his house. They all do things against the laws of Caesar.* They say there is another king called Jesus.”

⁸The leaders of the city and the other people heard these things. They became very upset. ⁹They made Jason and the other believers pay a fine. Then they let the believers go free.

Paul and Silas Go to Berea

¹⁰That same night the believers sent Paul and Silas to another city named Berea. In Berea, Paul and Silas went to the Jewish synagogue.*

¹¹These Jews were better people than the Jews in Thessalonica. These Jews were very happy to listen to the things Paul and Silas said. These Jews in Berea studied the Scriptures* every day. They wanted to know if these things were true. ¹²Many of these Jews believed. Many important Greek men and Greek women also believed. ¹³But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was telling the word of God in Berea, they came to Berea too. The Jews from Thessalonica upset the people in Berea and made trouble. ¹⁴So the believers sent Paul away quickly to the sea. But Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. ¹⁵The believers that went with Paul took him to the city of Athens. These brothers carried a message from Paul back to Silas and Timothy. The message said, “Come to me as soon as you can.”

Paul in Athens

¹⁶Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens. Paul was upset because he saw that the city was full of idols.* ¹⁷In the synagogue,* Paul talked with the Jews and the Greeks who worshiped the true God. Paul also talked with some people in the business area of the city. Paul did this every day. ¹⁸Some of the Epicurean and some of the Stoic philosophers* argued with him.

Some of them said, “This man doesn’t really know what he is talking about. What is he

Roman citizens Roman law said that Roman citizens must not be beaten before their trial.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

idols The false gods that the non-Jewish people worshiped.

philosophers People who study and talk about their own ideas and the ideas and teachings of other people.

trying to say?” Paul was telling them the Good News about Jesus’ rising from death. So they said, “He seems to be telling us about some other gods.”¹⁹ They got Paul and took him to a meeting of the Areopagus council.* They said, “Please explain to us this new idea that you have been teaching.”²⁰ The things that you are saying are new to us. We have never heard these things before. We want to know what this teaching means.”²¹ (All the people of Athens and the people from other countries who lived there always used their time talking about all the newest ideas.)

²² Then Paul stood before the meeting of the Areopagus council.* Paul said, “Men of Athens, I can see that you are very religious in all things.²³ I was going through your city and I saw the things you worship. I found an altar that had these words written on it: ‘TO THE GOD WHO IS NOT KNOWN.’ You worship a god that you don’t know. This is the God I am telling you about!²⁴ He is the God who made the whole world and everything in it. He is the Lord (*Ruler*) of the land and the sky. He does not live in temples* that men build!²⁵ This God is the One who gives life, breath, and everything else to people. He does not need any help from people. God has everything he needs.²⁶ God began by making one man (*Adam*). From him God made all the different people. God made them to live everywhere in the world. God decided exactly when and where they must live.²⁷ God wanted the people to look for him. Maybe they could search all around for him and find him. But he is not far from any of us:

²⁸ ‘We live with him.
We walk with him.
We are with him.’

Some of your own writers have said:

‘For we are his children.’

²⁹ That’s right. We are God’s children. So, you must not think that God is like something that people imagine or make. He is not made of gold, silver, or rock.³⁰ In the past, people did

Areopagus council A group of important leaders in Athens. They were like judges.

temples Buildings where people go to worship.

not understand God, and God overlooked this. But now God tells everyone in the world to change and turn to him.³¹ God has decided a day when he will judge all the people in the world. He will be fair. He will use a man (*Jesus*) to do this. God chose this man long ago. And God has proved this to every person. He proved it by raising that man from death!”

³² When the people heard about *Jesus* being raised from death, some of them laughed. The people said, “We will hear more about this from you later.”³³ Paul went away from them.³⁴ But some of the people believed Paul and joined him. One of the people that believed was Dionysius. He was a member of the Areopagus council.* Another person who believed was a woman named Damaris. There were also some other people that believed.

Paul in Corinth

18 Later, Paul left Athens and went to the city of Corinth.² In Corinth Paul met a Jewish man named Aquila. Aquila was born in the country of Pontus. But Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, had recently moved *to Corinth* from Italy. They left Italy because Claudius* commanded that all Jews must leave Rome. Paul went to visit Aquila and Priscilla.³ They were tentmakers, the same as Paul. So Paul stayed with them and worked with them.⁴ Every Sabbath day* Paul talked with the Jews and Greeks in the synagogue.* Paul tried to persuade these people *to believe in Jesus*.

⁵ Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia to Paul in Corinth. After this, Paul used all his time telling people the Good News.* He showed the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.*⁶ But the Jews there would not accept Paul’s teaching. They said some very bad things. So Paul shook off the dust from his clothes.* He

Claudius The emperor (ruler) of Rome, 41–54 A.D.

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

shook off the dust from his clothes This was a warning. It showed that Paul was finished talking to these Jews.

said to the Jews, “If you are not saved, it will be your own fault! I have done all I can do! After this, I will go only to non-Jewish people!”⁷ Paul left the synagogue* and moved into the home of Titius Justus. This man worshiped the true God. His house was next to the synagogue.⁸ Crispus was the leader of that synagogue. Crispus and all the people living in his house believed in the Lord (*Jesus*). Many other people in Corinth also listened to Paul. They too believed and were baptized.*

⁹During the night, Paul had a vision.* The Lord said to him, “Don’t be afraid! Continue talking to people and don’t stop! ¹⁰I am with you. No one will be able to hurt you. Many of my people are in this city.” ¹¹Paul stayed there for a year and a half, teaching God’s truth to the people.

Paul Is Brought Before Gallio

¹²Gallio became the governor of the country of Achaia. At that time, some of the Jews came together against Paul. They took Paul to the court. ¹³The Jews said to Gallio, “This man is teaching people to worship God in a way that is against our Jewish law!”

¹⁴Paul was ready to say something, but Gallio spoke to the Jews. Gallio said, “I would listen to you Jews if you were complaining about a bad crime or some wrong. ¹⁵But the things you Jews are saying are only questions about words and names—arguments about your own Jewish law. So you must solve this problem yourselves. I don’t want to be a judge of these things!” ¹⁶Then Gallio made them leave the court.

¹⁷Then they all grabbed Sosthenes. (Sosthenes was now the leader of the synagogue.*) They beat Sosthenes before the court. But this did not bother Gallio.

Paul Returns to Antioch

¹⁸Paul stayed with the brothers (*believers*) for many days. Then he left and sailed for

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.

Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were also with him. At Cenchrea, Paul cut off his hair.* [This showed that] he had made a promise (*vow*) to God. ¹⁹Then they went to the city of Ephesus. This is where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. While Paul was in Ephesus, he went into the synagogue* and talked with the Jews. ²⁰The Jews asked Paul to stay longer, but he refused. ²¹Paul left them and said, “I will come back to you again if God wants me to.” And so Paul sailed away from Ephesus.

²²Paul went to the city of Caesarea. Then he went and said hello to the church (*group of believers*) in Jerusalem. After that, Paul went to the city of Antioch. ²³Paul stayed in Antioch for a while. Then he left Antioch and went through the countries of Galatia and Phrygia. Paul traveled from town to town in these countries. He made all the followers [of Jesus] stronger.

Apollos in Ephesus and Achaia (Corinth)

²⁴A Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus. Apollos was born in the city of Alexandria. He was an educated man. He knew very much about the Scriptures.* ²⁵Apollos had been taught about the Lord (*Jesus*). Apollos was always very excited* when he talked to people about Jesus. The things Apollos taught about Jesus were right. But the only baptism* that Apollos knew about was the baptism that John* taught. ²⁶Apollos began to speak very boldly in the synagogue.* Priscilla and Aquila heard him speak. They took him to their home and helped him understand the way of God better. ²⁷Apollos wanted to go to the country of Achaia. So the brothers [in Ephesus] helped him. They wrote a letter to the followers [of Jesus in Achaia]. In the letter they asked these followers to accept Apollos. These followers [in Achaia] had believed in Jesus because of God’s grace (*kindness*). When Apollos went there, he helped them very much. ²⁸He argued

cut off his hair Jews did this to show that the time of a special promise to God was finished.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

very excited Or, “on fire with the Spirit.”

baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

John John the Baptizer, the man that told people about Christ’s coming. Read Mt. 3; Lk. 3.

very strongly against the Jews before all the people. Apollos clearly proved that the Jews were wrong. He used the Scriptures and showed that Jesus is the Christ.*

Paul in Ephesus

19 While Apollos was in the city of Corinth, Paul was visiting some places on the way to the city of Ephesus. In Ephesus Paul found some followers [of the Lord]. ²Paul asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit* when you believed?”

These followers said to him, “We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit!”

³So Paul asked them, “What kind of baptism* did you have?”

They said, “It was the baptism that John* taught.”

⁴Paul said, “John told people to be baptized* to show they wanted to change their lives. John told people to believe in the One who would come after him. That person is Jesus.”

⁵When these followers heard this, they were baptized* in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶Then Paul put his hands on them* and the Holy Spirit* came into them. They began speaking different languages and prophesying.* ⁷There were about twelve men in this group.

⁸Paul went into the synagogue* and spoke very boldly. Paul continued doing this for three months. He talked with the Jews and persuaded them to accept the things he said about the kingdom of God. ⁹But some of the Jews became stubborn. They refused to believe. These Jews said some very bad

things about the Way [of Jesus]. All the people heard these things. So Paul left those Jews and took the followers [of Jesus] with him. Paul went to a place where a man named Tyrannus had a school. There Paul talked with people every day. ¹⁰Paul did this for two years. Because of this work, every Jew and Greek (*non-Jew*) in the country of Asia* heard the word of the Lord.

The Sons of Sceva

¹¹God used Paul to do some very special miracles.* ¹²Some people carried away handkerchiefs and clothes that Paul had used. The people put these things on sick people. When they did this, the sick people were healed, and evil spirits [from the devil] left them.

^{13–14}Some Jews also were traveling around and making evil spirits go out of people. The seven sons of Sceva were doing this. (Sceva was a high priest.*) These Jews tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus to make the evil spirits go out of people. They all said, “By the same Jesus that Paul talks about, I order you to come out!”

¹⁵But one time an evil spirit said to these Jews, “I know Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”

¹⁶Then the man, who had the evil spirit [from the devil] inside him, jumped on these Jews. He was much stronger than all of them. He beat them up and tore their clothes off. These Jews ran away from that house. ¹⁷All the people in Ephesus, Jews and Greeks (*non-Jews*), learned about this. They all began to have great respect [for God]. And the people gave great honor to the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁸Many of the believers began to confess and tell all the bad things they had done. ¹⁹Some of the believers had used magic. These believers brought their magic books and burned them before everyone. Those books were worth about 50,000 silver coins.* ²⁰This is how the word of the Lord was influencing more and more people in a powerful way. And more and more people believed.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

baptism, baptized Greek words meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

John John the Baptizer, the man that told people about Christ’s coming. Read Mt. 3; Lk. 3.

put his hands on them Here, doing this was a sign to show that Paul had God’s authority or power to give these people special powers of the Holy Spirit.

prophesying Speaking or teaching things from God.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.

silver coins Probably drachmas. One coin was enough to pay a man for working one day.

Paul Plans a Trip

²¹After these things, Paul made plans to go to Jerusalem. Paul planned to go through the countries of Macedonia and Achaia, and then go to Jerusalem. Paul thought, “After I visit Jerusalem, I must also visit Rome.” ²²Timothy and Erastus were two of Paul’s helpers. Paul sent them ahead to the country of Macedonia. Paul stayed in Asia* for a while.

Trouble in Ephesus

²³But during that time, there was some bad trouble in Ephesus. This trouble was about the Way [of Jesus]. This is how it all happened: ²⁴There was a man named Demetrius. He worked with silver. He made little silver models that looked like the temple* of the goddess Artemis. The men that did this work made much money. ²⁵Demetrius had a meeting with these men and some other men who did the same kind of work. Demetrius told them, “Men, you know that we make much money from our business. ²⁶But look at what this man Paul is doing! Listen to what he is saying! Paul has influenced and changed many people. He has done this in Ephesus and all over the country of Asia.* Paul says the gods that men make are not real. ²⁷These things that Paul says might turn the people against our work. But there is also another problem: People will begin to think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is not important! Her greatness will be destroyed. Artemis is the goddess that everyone in Asia and the whole world worships.”

²⁸When the men heard this, they became very angry. They shouted, “Artemis, the goddess of the city of Ephesus, is great!” ²⁹All the people in the city became upset. The people grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus. (These two men were from Macedonia and were traveling with Paul.) Then all the people ran to the stadium. ³⁰Paul wanted to go in and talk to the people, but the followers [of Jesus] did not let him go. ³¹Also, some leaders of the country were friends of Paul. These leaders sent him a

message. They told Paul not to go into the stadium. ³²Some people were yelling one thing and other people were yelling other things. The meeting was very confused. Most of the people did not know why they had come there. ³³The Jews made a man named Alexander stand before the people. The people told him what to do. Alexander waved his hand because he wanted to explain things to the people. ³⁴But when the people saw that Alexander was a Jew, they all began shouting the same thing. They continued shouting for two hours. The people said, “Great is Artemis of Ephesus! Great is Artemis of Ephesus! Great is Artemis ...!”

³⁵Then the city clerk persuaded the people to be quiet. He said, “Men of Ephesus, all people know that Ephesus is the city that keeps the temple* of the great goddess Artemis. All people know that we also keep her holy rock.* ³⁶No person can say that this is not true. So you should be quiet. You must stop and think before you do anything. ³⁷You brought these men,* but they have not said anything bad against our goddess. They have not stolen anything from her temple. ³⁸We have courts of law and there are judges. Do Demetrius and those men that work with him have a charge against anyone? They should go to the courts! That is where they can argue with each other! ³⁹Is there something else you want to talk about? Then come to the regular town meeting of the people. It can be decided there. ⁴⁰I say this because some person might see this trouble today and say that we are rioting (*making trouble*). We could not explain all this trouble, because there is no real reason for this meeting.” ⁴¹After the city clerk said these things, he told the people to go home. And all the people left.

Paul Goes to Macedonia and Greece

20 When the trouble stopped, Paul invited the followers [of Jesus] to come visit him. He said things to comfort them and then told them good-bye. Paul left and went to the country of Macedonia. ²He said many things

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

temple The special building in Ephesus where the people worshiped the false goddess Artemis.

holy rock Probably a meteorite or rock that the people thought looked like Artemis and worshiped.

men Gaius and Aristarchus, the men traveling with Paul.

to strengthen the followers [of Jesus] in the different places on his way through Macedonia. Then Paul went to Greece (*Achaia*). ³He stayed there three months. He was ready to sail for Syria, but some Jews were planning something against him. So Paul decided to go back through Macedonia to Syria. ⁴Some men were with him. They were: Sopater, the son of Pyrrhus, from the city of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus, from the city of Thessalonica, Gaius, from the city of Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus, two men from Asia.* ⁵These men went first, ahead of Paul. They waited for us in the city of Troas. ⁶We sailed from the city of Philippi after the [Jewish] Festival of Unleavened Bread.* We met these men in Troas five days later. We stayed there seven days.

Paul's Last Visit to Troas

⁷On Sunday,* we all met together to eat [the Lord's Supper].* Paul talked to the group. He was planning to leave the next day. Paul continued talking until midnight. ⁸We were all together in a room upstairs, and there were many lights in the room. ⁹There was a young man named Eutychus sitting in the window. Paul continued talking, and Eutychus became very, very sleepy. Finally, Eutychus went to sleep and fell out of the window. He fell to the ground from the third floor. When the people [went and] lifted him up, he was dead. ¹⁰Paul went down to Eutychus. He knelt down and hugged Eutychus. Paul said to the other believers, "Don't worry. He is alive now." ¹¹Paul went upstairs again. He divided the bread and ate. Paul spoke to them a long time. When he finished talking, it was early morning. Then Paul left. ¹²The people took the young man

(*Eutychus*) home. He was alive, and the people were very much comforted.

The Trip from Troas to Miletus

¹³We sailed for the city of Assos. We went first, ahead of Paul. He planned to meet us in Assos and join us on the ship there. Paul told us to do this because he wanted to go to Assos by land. ¹⁴Later, we met Paul at Assos, and then he came on the ship with us. We all went to the city of Mitylene. ¹⁵The next day, we sailed away from Mitylene. We came to a place near the island of Chios. Then the next day, we sailed to the island of Samos. A day later, we came to the city of Miletus. ¹⁶Paul had already decided not to stop at Ephesus. He did not want to stay too long in Asia.* He was hurrying because he wanted to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost* if possible.

Paul Speaks to the Elders from Ephesus

¹⁷In Miletus Paul sent a message back to Ephesus. Paul invited the elders* (*leaders*) of the church in Ephesus to come to him. ¹⁸When the elders came, Paul said to them, "You know about my life from the first day I came to Asia.* You know the way I lived all the time I was with you. ¹⁹The Jews planned things against me, and this gave me much trouble. But you know that I always served the Lord, sometimes with tears. I never thought about myself first. ²⁰I always did what was best for you. I told you the Good News* about Jesus in public before the people and also taught in your homes. ²¹I told all people—Jewish people and Greek (*non-Jewish*) people—to change their hearts and turn to God. I told them all to believe in our Lord Jesus. ²²But now I must obey the Holy Spirit* and go to Jerusalem. I don't know what will happen to me there. ²³I know only that in every city the Holy Spirit

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

Festival of Unleavened Bread An important Jewish holiday week. In the Old Testament it began the day after Passover, but by this time the two holidays had become one.

Sunday Literally, "first day of the week," which for the Jews began at sunset on Saturday. But if Luke is using Greek time here, then the meeting was Sunday night.

to eat the Lord's Supper Literally, "to break bread." This may mean a meal or the Lord's Supper, the special meal Jesus told his followers to eat to remember him. Read Lk. 22:14–20.

Pentecost Jewish festival celebrating the wheat harvest.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" ("shepherds"), they have the work of caring for God's people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

tells me that troubles and even jail wait for me [in Jerusalem].²⁴ I don't care about my own life. The most important thing is that I finish my work. I want to finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do—to tell people the Good News about God's grace (*kindness*).

²⁵“And now listen to me. I know that none of you will ever see me again. All the time I was with you, I told you the Good News* about the kingdom of God. ²⁶So today I can tell you one thing that I am sure of: God will not blame me if some of you are not saved! ²⁷I can say this because I know that I told you everything that God wants you to know. ²⁸Be careful for yourselves and for all the people that God has given you. The Holy Spirit* gave you the work of caring for this flock.* You must be like shepherds to the church (*people*) of God.* This is the church that God bought with his own blood.* ²⁹I know that after I leave, some men will come into your group. They will be like wild wolves. They will try to destroy the flock. ³⁰Also, men from your own group will become bad leaders. They will begin to teach things that are wrong. They will lead some followers [of Jesus] away from the truth. ³¹So be careful! Always remember this: I was with you for three years. During this time, I never stopped warning you. I taught you night and day. I often cried for you.

³²“Now I am giving you to God. I am depending on the message* about God's grace (*kindness*) to make you strong. That message is able to give you the blessings that God gives to all his holy people.* ³³When I was with you, I never wanted anyone's money or fine clothes. ³⁴You know that I always worked to take care of my own needs and the needs of the people that were with me. ³⁵I always

showed you that you should work like I did and help people that are weak. I taught you to remember the words of the Lord Jesus. Jesus said, ‘You will be happier when you give than when you receive.’”

³⁶When Paul finished saying these things, he kneeled down and they all prayed together. ^{37–38}They all cried and cried. The men were very sad because Paul had said that they would never see him again. They hugged Paul and kissed him. They went with him to the ship to say good-bye.

Paul Goes to Jerusalem

21 We all said good-bye to the elders.* Then we sailed away. We sailed straight to Cos island. The next day, we went to the island of Rhodes. From Rhodes we went to Patara. ²At Patara we found a ship that was going to the area of Phoenicia. We went on the ship and sailed away. ³We sailed near the island of Cyprus. We could see it on the north side, but we did not stop. We sailed to the country of Syria. We stopped at the city of Tyre because the ship needed to unload its cargo there. ⁴We found some followers [of Jesus] in Tyre, and we stayed with them for seven days. They warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem because of what the Holy Spirit* had told them. ⁵But when we finished our visit, we left. We continued our trip. All the followers [of Jesus], even the women and children, came outside the city with us to say good-bye. We all kneeled down on the beach and prayed. ⁶Then we said good-bye and got on the ship. The followers went home.

⁷We continued our trip from Tyre and went to the city of Ptolemais. We greeted the brothers (*believers*) there and stayed with them one day. ⁸The next day we left Ptolemais and went to the city of Caesarea. We went into the home of Philip and stayed with him. Philip had the work of telling the Good News.* He was one of the seven helpers.* ⁹He had four daughters who were not married. These

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

flock A flock is many sheep. Here, it means a group of God's people who follow their leaders (elders) like sheep follow a shepherd.

of God Some Greek copies say, “of the Lord.”

his own blood Or, “the blood of his own son.”

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (“shepherds”), they have the work of caring for God's people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

seven helpers Men chosen for a special work. Read Acts 6:1–6.

daughters had the gift of prophesying.* ¹⁰After we had been there for many days, a prophet* named Agabus came from Judea. ¹¹He came to us and borrowed Paul's belt. Then Agabus used the belt to tie his own hands and feet. Agabus said, "The Holy Spirit* tells me, 'This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man that wears this belt.* Then they will give him to the people that don't know God.'"

¹²We all heard these words. So we and the other followers [of Jesus] there begged (*asked*) Paul not to go to Jerusalem. ¹³But Paul said, "Why are you crying? Why are you making me so sad? I am ready to be tied in Jerusalem. I am also ready to die for the name of the Lord Jesus!"

¹⁴We could not persuade him to stay away from Jerusalem. So we stopped begging him and said, "We pray that what the Lord wants will be done."

¹⁵After this, we got ready and left for Jerusalem. ¹⁶Some of the followers [of Jesus] from Caesarea went with us. These followers took us to the home of Mnason, a man from Cyprus. Mnason was one of the first people to be a follower [of Jesus]. They took us to his home so that we could stay with him.

Paul Visits James

¹⁷In Jerusalem the believers were very happy to see us. ¹⁸The next day, Paul went with us to visit James. All the elders* (*church leaders*) were there too. ¹⁹Paul greeted all of them. Then he told them about how God used him to do many things among the non-Jewish people. He told them all the things that God did through him. ²⁰When the leaders heard these things, they praised God. Then they said to Paul, "Brother, you can see that thousands of Jews have become believers. But they think it is very

important to obey the law of Moses. ²¹These Jews have heard about your teaching. They heard that you tell the Jews who live in other countries among non-Jews to leave the law of Moses. They heard that you tell those Jews not to circumcise* their children and not to obey Jewish customs. ²²What should we do? The Jewish believers here will learn that you have come. ²³So we will tell you what to do: Four of our men have made a vow* (*promise*) to God. ²⁴Take these men with you and share in their cleansing (*washing*) ceremony.* Pay their expenses. Then they can shave their heads.* Do this and it will prove to everyone that the things they have heard about you are not true. They will see that you obey the law of Moses in your own life. ²⁵We have already sent a letter to the non-Jewish believers. The letter said:

'Don't eat food that has been given to idols.*
Don't eat meat from animals that have been strangled (*choked*) or
any meat that still has the blood in it.
Don't do any kind of sexual sin.'"

Paul Is Arrested

²⁶So Paul took the four men with him. The next day, Paul shared in their cleansing (*washing*) ceremony.* Then he went to the temple* area. He announced the time when the days of the cleansing ceremony would be finished. On the last day an offering would be given for each of the men.

²⁷The seven days were almost finished. But some Jews from Asia* saw Paul in the temple* area. They caused all the people to be upset, and they grabbed Paul. ²⁸They shouted, "You Jewish men, help us! This is the man who is teaching things that are against the law of Moses, against our people, and against this place (*the temple*).

prophesying Speaking or teaching things from God.

prophet A person that spoke for God.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

belt Paul's belt; so Agabus means that the Jews in Jerusalem will tie (arrest) Paul.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" ("shepherds"), they have the work of caring for God's people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

circumcise To cut off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

vow Probably a Nazirite vow, a time of special service that Jews promised to give to God.

cleansing ceremony The special things Jews did to end the Nazirite vow.

shave their heads To show their vow was finished.

idols The false gods that the non-Jewish people worshiped.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

This man is teaching these things to all people everywhere. And now he has brought some Greek (*non-Jewish*) men into the temple yard! He has made this holy place unclean!”²⁹(The Jews said this because they had seen Trophimus with Paul in Jerusalem. Trophimus was a Greek man from Ephesus. The Jews thought that Paul had taken him into the holy area of the temple.)

³⁰All the people in Jerusalem became very upset. They all ran and grabbed Paul. They dragged him out of the holy area of the temple.* The temple gates were closed immediately.³¹The people were trying to kill Paul. The commander of the Roman army in Jerusalem learned that there was trouble in the whole city.³²Immediately the commander went to the place where the people were. He brought some army officers* and soldiers with him. The people saw the commander and his soldiers. So they stopped beating Paul.³³The commander went to Paul and arrested him. The commander told his soldiers to tie Paul with two chains. Then the commander asked, “Who is this man? What has he done wrong?”³⁴Some people there were yelling one thing and other people were yelling other things. Because of all this confusion and shouting, the commander could not learn the truth about what had happened. So the commander told the soldiers to take Paul to the army building.^{35–36}All the people were following them. When the soldiers came to the steps, they had to carry Paul. They did this to protect Paul, because the people were ready to hurt him. The people shouted, “Kill him!”

³⁷The soldiers were ready to take Paul into the army building. But Paul spoke to the commander. Paul asked, “Do I have the right to say something to you?”

The commander said, “Oh, you speak Greek? ³⁸Then you are not the man I thought you were? I thought you were the Egyptian man who started some trouble against the government not long ago. That Egyptian man led 4,000 killers out to the desert.”

³⁹Paul said, “No, I am a Jewish man from Tarsus. Tarsus is in the country of Cilicia. I am

a citizen of that important city. Please, let me speak to the people.”

⁴⁰The commander let Paul speak to the people. So Paul stood on the steps. He waved his hand so that the people would be quiet. The people became quiet and Paul spoke to them. He used the Jewish language.*

Paul Speaks to the People

22 Paul said, “My brothers and my fathers, listen to me! I will make my defense to you.”²The Jews heard Paul speaking the Jewish language.* So they became very quiet. Paul said,³“I am a Jew. I was born in Tarsus in the country of Cilicia. I grew up in this city (*Jerusalem*). I was a student of Gamaliel.* He carefully taught me everything about the law of our fathers.* I was very serious about serving God, the same as all of you here today.⁴I persecuted* the people that followed the Way of Jesus. Some of them were killed because of me. I arrested men and women. I put them in jail.⁵The high priest* and the whole council of older Jewish leaders can tell you that this is true! One time these leaders gave me some letters. The letters were to the Jewish brothers in the city of Damascus. I was going there to arrest the followers of Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

Paul Tells About His Conversion

⁶“But something happened to me on my way to Damascus. It was about noon when I came close to Damascus. Suddenly a bright light from the sky shined all around me.⁷I fell to the ground. I heard a voice saying to me: ‘Saul, Saul, why are you doing these bad things to me?’⁸I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The voice said, ‘I am Jesus from Nazareth. I am the One you are persecuting.’⁹The men who were with me did not understand the voice. But they saw the light.¹⁰I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ The

Jewish language Hebrew or Aramaic, a language like Hebrew that was spoken by many Jews in the first century.

Gamaliel A very important teacher of the Pharisees, a Jewish religious group. See Acts 5:34.

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

persecute(d) To persecute is to hurt or do bad things to.

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

army officers Centurions, Roman army officers who had authority over 100 soldiers.

Lord (*Jesus*) answered, ‘Get up and go into Damascus. There you will be told all the things I have planned for you to do.’ ¹¹I could not see, because the bright light had made me blind. So the men led me into Damascus.

¹²“In Damascus a man named Ananias* came to me. Ananias was a man that truly worshiped God; he obeyed the law [of Moses]. All the Jews who lived there respected him. ¹³Ananias came to me and said, ‘Saul, my brother, you can see again!’ Immediately I was able to see him. ¹⁴Ananias told me, ‘The God of our fathers* chose you long ago. God chose you to know his plan. He chose you to see the Righteous One (*Jesus*) and to hear words from him. ¹⁵You will be his witness to all people. You will tell men about the things you have seen and heard. ¹⁶Now, don’t wait any longer. Get up, be baptized* and wash your sins away. Do this, trusting in him (*Jesus*) [to save you].’

¹⁷“Later, I came back to Jerusalem. I was praying in the temple* yard, and I saw a vision.* ¹⁸I saw Jesus, and Jesus said to me: ‘Hurry! Leave Jerusalem now! The people here will not accept the truth about me.’ ¹⁹I said, ‘But Lord, the people know that I was the one who put the believers in jail and beat them. I went through all the synagogues* to find and arrest the people who believe in you. ²⁰The people also know that I was there when Stephen, your witness, was killed. I stood there and agreed that they should kill Stephen. I even held the coats of the men who were killing him!’ ²¹But Jesus said to me, ‘Leave now. I will send you far away to the non-Jewish people.’”

²²The people stopped listening when Paul said this last thing [about going to the non-Jewish people]. They all shouted, “Kill him! Get him out of the world! A man like this should not be allowed to live!” ²³They yelled and threw off

their coats.* They threw dust into the air.*

²⁴Then the commander told the soldiers to take Paul into the army building. He told the soldiers to beat Paul. He wanted to make Paul tell why the people were shouting against him like this. ²⁵So the soldiers were tying Paul, preparing to beat him. But Paul said to an army officer* there, “Do you have the right to beat a Roman citizen* who has not been proven guilty?”

²⁶When the officer heard this, he went to the commander and told him about it. The officer said, “Do you know what you are doing? This man (*Paul*) is a Roman citizen!”

²⁷The commander came to Paul and said, “Tell me, are you really a Roman citizen?”

Paul answered, “Yes.”

²⁸The commander said, “I paid much money to become a Roman citizen.”

But Paul said, “I was born a citizen.”

²⁹The men who were preparing to question Paul moved away from him immediately. The commander was afraid because he had already tied Paul, and Paul was a Roman citizen.*

Paul Speaks to the Jewish Leaders

³⁰The next day the commander decided to learn why the Jews were speaking against Paul. So he commanded the leading priests and the Jewish council to meet together. The commander took Paul’s chains off. Then he brought Paul out and stood Paul before their meeting.

23 Paul looked at the Jewish council meeting and said, “Brothers, I have lived my life in a good way before God. I have always done what I thought was right.”

²Ananias,* the high priest,* was there. Ananias heard Paul and told the men who were standing near Paul to hit him on his mouth.

³Paul said to Ananias, “God will hit you too! You are like a [dirty] wall that has been painted

Ananias In Acts there are three men with this name. See Acts 5:1 and 23:2 for the other two.

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

threw off their coats This showed that the Jews were very angry at Paul.

threw dust into the air A sign of very strong anger.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

Roman citizen Roman law said that Roman citizens must not be beaten before their trial.

Ananias Not the same man named Ananias in Acts 22:12.

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.

white! You sit there and judge me, using the law [of Moses]. But you are telling them to hit me, and that is against the law [of Moses].”

⁴The men standing near Paul said to him, “You cannot talk like that to God’s high priest.* You are insulting him!”

⁵Paul said, “Brothers, I did not know this man was the high priest. It is written in the Scriptures,* ‘You must not say bad things about a leader of your people.’**”

⁶Some of the men in the meeting were Sadducees* and some others were Pharisees.* So Paul had an idea: He shouted to them, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee and my father was a Pharisee! I am on trial here because I hope (*believe*) that people will rise from death!”

⁷When Paul said this, there was a big argument between the Pharisees* and the Sadducees.* The group was divided. ⁸(The Sadducees believe that after people die, they will not live again as an angel or as a spirit. But the Pharisees believe in both.) ⁹All these Jews began shouting louder and louder. Some of the teachers of the law, who were Pharisees, stood up and argued, “We find nothing wrong with this man! Maybe an angel or a spirit really did speak to him!”

¹⁰The argument became a fight. The commander was afraid that the Jews would tear Paul to pieces. So the commander told the soldiers to go down and take Paul away from these Jews and to put him in the army building.

¹¹The next night the Lord [Jesus] came and stood by Paul. He said, “Be brave! You have told people in Jerusalem about me. You must also go to Rome to tell people there about me!”

Some Jews Plan to Kill Paul

¹²The next morning some of the Jews made a plan. They wanted to kill Paul. The Jews made a promise (*vow*) to themselves that they would not eat or drink anything until they had

killed Paul. ¹³There were more than 40 Jews who made this plan. ¹⁴These Jews went and talked to the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders. The Jews said, “We have made a serious promise to ourselves. We promised that we will not eat or drink until we have killed Paul! ¹⁵So this is what we want you to do: Send a message to the commander from you and all the Jewish leaders. Tell the commander you want him to bring Paul out to you. Tell the commander that you want to ask Paul more questions. We will be waiting to kill Paul while he is on the way here.”

¹⁶But Paul’s nephew heard about this plan. He went to the army building and told Paul about the plan. ¹⁷Then Paul called one of the army officers* and said to him, “Take this young man to the commander. He has a message for him.” ¹⁸So the army officer brought Paul’s nephew to the commander. The officer said, “The prisoner, Paul, asked me to bring this young man to you. He wants to tell you something.”

¹⁹The commander led the young man to a place where they could be alone. The commander asked, “What do you want to tell me?”

²⁰The young man said, “Some Jews have decided to ask you to bring Paul down to their council meeting tomorrow. Those Jews want you to think that they plan to ask Paul more questions. ²¹But don’t believe them! There are more than 40 Jews who are hiding and waiting to kill Paul. They have all promised (*vowed*) not to eat or drink until they have killed him! Now they are waiting for you to say yes.”

²²The commander sent the young man away. The commander told him, “Don’t tell anyone that you have told me about their plan.”

Paul Is Sent to Caesarea

²³Then the commander called two army officers.* He said to them, “I need some men to go to Caesarea. Get 200 soldiers ready. Also, get 70 soldiers on horses and 200 men to carry spears. Be ready to leave at nine

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

‘You must not say ... people’ Quote from Ex. 22:28.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don’t live again after death.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

army officers Centurions, Roman army officers who had authority over 100 soldiers.

o'clock tonight. ²⁴Get some horses for Paul to ride. He must be taken to Governor Felix safely." ²⁵The commander wrote a letter. This is what the letter said:

²⁶From Claudius Lysias.

To the Most Excellent Governor Felix:

Greetings:

²⁷The Jews had taken this man (*Paul*), and they planned to kill him. But I learned that he is a Roman citizen,* so I went with my soldiers and saved him. ²⁸I wanted to know why they were accusing him. So I brought him before their council meeting. ²⁹This is what I learned: The Jews said Paul did some things that were wrong. But these charges were about their own Jewish laws. And none of these things were worthy of jail or death. ³⁰I was told that some of the Jews were making a plan to kill Paul. So I send him to you. I also told those Jews to tell you the things they have against him.

³¹The soldiers did the things they were told. The soldiers got Paul and took him to the city of Antipatris that night. ³²The next day the soldiers on horses went with Paul to Caesarea. But the other soldiers and the spearmen went back to the army building [in Jerusalem]. ³³The soldiers on horses entered Caesarea and gave the letter to the governor (*Felix*). Then they gave Paul to him. ³⁴The governor read the letter. Then he asked Paul, "What country are you from?" The governor learned that Paul was from Cilicia. ³⁵The governor said, "I will hear your case when the Jews who are against you come here too." Then the governor gave orders for Paul to be kept in the palace. (This building had been built by Herod.)*

Some Jews Accuse Paul

24 Five days later Ananias went to the city of Caesarea. Ananias was the high priest.* Ananias also brought some of the older

Roman citizen Roman law said that Roman citizens must not be beaten before their trial.

Herod Herod I (the Great), ruler of Judea, 40 B.C. to 4 B.C.

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.

Jewish leaders and a lawyer named Tertullus. They went to Caesarea to make charges against Paul before the governor. ²Paul was called into the meeting, and Tertullus began to make his charges.

Tertullus said, "Most Excellent Felix! Our people enjoy much peace because of you, and many wrong things in our country are being made right through your wise help. ³We are very thankful to accept these things from you. We accept these things always and in every place. ⁴But I don't want to take any more of your time. So I will say only a few words. Please be patient. ⁵This man (*Paul*) is a troublemaker. He makes trouble with the Jews everywhere in the world. He is a leader of the Nazarene group. ⁶⁻⁸Also, he was trying to make the temple* unclean, but we stopped him.* You can decide if all these things are true. Ask him some questions yourself." ⁹The other Jews agreed. They said, "These things are really true!"

Paul Defends Himself Before Felix

¹⁰The governor made a sign for Paul to speak. So Paul answered, "Governor Felix, I know that you have been a judge over this nation (*Israel*) for a long time. So I am happy to defend myself before you. ¹¹I went to worship in Jerusalem only twelve days ago. You can learn for yourself that this is true. ¹²These Jews who are accusing me did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple.* I was not making trouble with the people. And I was not making trouble or arguing in the synagogues* or any other place in the city. ¹³These Jews cannot prove the things they are saying against me now. ¹⁴But I will tell you this: I worship the God of our fathers* as a follower of the Way [of Jesus]. The Jews say that the Way [of Jesus] is not the right way. But I believe everything that is taught in the law [of

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Verses 6-8 After "... but we stopped him." some Greek copies add 6b-8a: "And we wanted to judge him by our own law.

⁷But the officer Lysias came and used much force to take him from us. ⁸And Lysias commanded those people that wanted to accuse him to come to you."

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

Moses, And I believe everything that is written in the books of the prophets.* 15I have the same hope in God that these Jews have—the hope that all people, good and bad, will be raised from death. 16This is why I always try to do what I believe is right before God and men.

17“I was away from Jerusalem for many years. I went back there to bring money to my people and to give some offerings (*gifts*). 18I was doing this when some Jews saw me at the temple.* I had finished the cleansing (*washing*) ceremony.* I had not made any trouble; no people were gathering around me. 19But some Jews from Asia* were there. They should be here, standing before you. If I have really done anything wrong, those Jews from Asia are the ones who should accuse me. They were there! 20Ask these Jews here if they found any wrong in me when I stood before the Jewish council meeting in Jerusalem. 21I did say one thing when I stood before them: I said, ‘You are judging me today because I believe that people will rise from death!’”

22Felix already understood a lot about the Way of Jesus. He stopped the trial and said, “When commander Lysias comes here, I will decide about these things.” 23Felix told the army officer* to keep Paul guarded. But he told the officer to give Paul some freedom and to let Paul’s friends bring the things that Paul needed.

Paul Speaks to Felix and His Wife

24After a few days Felix came with his wife, Drusilla. She was a Jew. Felix asked for Paul to be brought to him. Felix listened to Paul talk about believing in Christ Jesus. 25But Felix became afraid when Paul spoke about things like living right, self-control, and the judgment that will come in the future. Felix said, “Go away now! When I have more time, I will call you.” 26But Felix had another reason

for talking with Paul. Felix hoped that Paul would pay him a bribe.* So Felix sent for Paul often and talked with him.

27But after two years, Porcius Festus became governor. So Felix was no longer governor. But Felix left Paul in prison, because Felix wanted to do something to please the Jews.

Paul Asks to See Caesar

25 Festus became governor, and three days later he went from Caesarea to Jerusalem. 2The leading priests and the important Jewish leaders made charges against Paul before Festus. 3They asked Festus to do something for them; the Jews wanted Festus to send Paul back to Jerusalem. They had a plan to kill Paul on the way. 4But Festus answered, “No! Paul will be kept in Caesarea. I myself will go to Caesarea soon. 5Some of your leaders should go with me. They can accuse the man (*Paul*) there in Caesarea, if he has really done something wrong.”

6Festus stayed in Jerusalem another eight or ten days. Then he went back to Caesarea. The next day Festus told the soldiers to bring Paul before him. Festus was seated on the judgment seat. 7Paul came into the room. The Jews who had come from Jerusalem stood around him. The Jews said that Paul had done many wrong things. But they could not prove any of these things. 8This is what Paul said to defend himself: “I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law, against the temple,* or against Caesar.*”

9But Festus wanted to please the Jews. So he asked Paul, “Do you want to go to Jerusalem? Do you want me to judge you there on these charges?”

10Paul said, “I am standing at Caesar’s* judgment seat now. This is where I should be judged! I have done nothing wrong to the Jews; you know this is true. 11If I have done something wrong, and the law says I must die, then I agree that I should die. I don’t ask to be saved from death. But if these charges are not true, then no person can give me to these Jews. No! I want Caesar to hear my case!”

prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

cleansing ceremony The special things Jews did to end the Nazirite vow.

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

bribe Money to pay for Paul’s freedom.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

¹²Festus talked about this with his advisers. Then he said, “You have asked to see Caesar,* so you will go to Caesar!”

Festus Asks King Agrippa About Paul

¹³A few days later King Agrippa* and Bernice* came to Caesarea to visit Festus. ¹⁴They stayed there many days. Festus told the king about Paul’s case. Festus said, “There is a man that Felix left in prison. ¹⁵When I went to Jerusalem, the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders there made charges against him. These Jews wanted me to order his death. ¹⁶But I answered, ‘When a man is accused of doing something wrong, Romans don’t give the man to other people to judge. First, the man must face the people that are accusing him. And he must be allowed to defend himself against their charges.’ ¹⁷So these Jews came here [to Caesarea] for the trial. And I did not waste time. The next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded that the man (*Paul*) be brought in. ¹⁸The Jews stood up and accused him. But the Jews did not accuse him of any bad crimes. I thought they would. ¹⁹The things they said were about their own religion and about a man named Jesus. Jesus died, but Paul said that he is still alive. ²⁰I did not know much about these things, so I did not ask questions. But I asked Paul, ‘Do you want to go to Jerusalem and be judged there?’ ²¹But Paul asked to be kept in Caesarea. He wants a decision from the Emperor (*Caesar**). So I commanded that Paul be held until I could send him to Caesar [in Rome].”

²²Agrippa* said to Festus, “I would like to hear this man, too.”

Festus said, “Tomorrow you can hear him!”

²³The next day Agrippa* and Bernice* appeared. They dressed and acted like very important people. Agrippa and Bernice, the army leaders, and the important men of Caesarea went into the judgment room. Festus commanded the soldiers to bring Paul in.

²⁴Festus said, “King Agrippa and all of you men gathered here with us, you see this man (*Paul*). All the Jewish people, here and in Jerusalem, have complained to me about him. When they complain about him, they shout that he should be killed. ²⁵When I judged him, I could find nothing wrong. I found no reason to order his death. But he asked to be judged by Caesar.* So I decided to send him [to Rome]. ²⁶But I don’t really know what to tell Caesar that this man has done wrong. So I have brought him before all of you—especially you, King Agrippa. I hope that you can question him and give me something to write to Caesar. ²⁷I think it is foolish to send a prisoner [to Caesar] without making some charges against him.”

Paul Before King Agrippa

26 Agrippa* said to Paul, “You may now speak to defend yourself.”

Then Paul raised his hand* and began to speak. ²He said, “King Agrippa, I will answer all the charges that the Jews say against me. I think it is a blessing that I can stand here before you today and do this. ³I am very happy to talk to you, because you know much about all the Jewish customs and the things that the Jews argue about. Please listen to me patiently.

⁴“All the Jews know about my whole life. They know the way I lived from the beginning in my own country and later in Jerusalem. ⁵These Jews have known me for a long time. If they want to, they can tell you that I was a good Pharisee.* And the Pharisees obey the laws of the Jewish religion more carefully than any other group of Jewish people. ⁶Now I am on trial because I hope for the promise that God made to our fathers.* ⁷This is the promise that all the twelve tribes (*family groups*) of our people hope to receive. For this hope the Jews serve God day and night. My king, the Jews have accused me because I hope for this same promise! ⁸Why do you people think it is impossible for God to raise people from death?

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Agrippa Herod Agrippa II, great-grandson of Herod the Great.

Bernice King Agrippa’s sister. She was the oldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

raised his hand A sign to make the people listen.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

⁹“When I was a Pharisee*, even I thought I should do many things against the name of Jesus from Nazareth. ¹⁰And in Jerusalem I did many things against the believers.* The leading priests gave me the power to put many of these people (*believers*) in jail. When the followers of Jesus were being killed, I agreed that it was a good thing. ¹¹In every synagogue* I punished them. I tried to make them say bad things against* Jesus. I was so angry against these people (*believers*) that I went to other cities to find them and hurt them.

Paul Tells About Seeing Jesus

¹²“One time the leading priests gave me permission and the power to go to the city of Damascus. ¹³I was on the way to Damascus. It was noon. I saw a light from the sky. The light was brighter than the sun. The light shined all around me and the men who were traveling with me. ¹⁴We all fell to the ground. Then I heard a voice talking to me in the Jewish language.* The voice said, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you doing these bad things to me? You are only hurting yourself by fighting me.’ ¹⁵I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord said, ‘I am Jesus. I am the One you are persecuting. ¹⁶Stand up! I have chosen you to be my servant. You will be my witness—you will tell people the things that you have seen about me today and the things that I will show you. This is why I have come to you today. ¹⁷I will not let your own people (*the Jews*) hurt you. And I will keep you safe from the non-Jewish people too. I am sending you to these people. ¹⁸You will show the people the Truth. The people will turn away from darkness (*sin*) to the light (*good*). They will turn away from the power of Satan, and they will turn to God. Then their sins can be forgiven. They can have

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

believers Literally, “holy ones,” a name for people that believe in Jesus.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

say bad things against Literally, “blaspheme,” the same as saying they did not believe in Jesus.

Jewish language Hebrew or Aramaic, a language like Hebrew that was spoken by many Jews in the first century.

a share with those people who have been made holy* by believing in me.”

Paul Tells About His Work

¹⁹Paul continued speaking: “King Agrippa,* after I had this vision* from heaven, I obeyed it. ²⁰I began telling people that they should change their hearts and lives and turn back to God. I told the people to do things that show that they really changed their hearts. I told these things first to people in Damascus. Then I went to Jerusalem and to every part of Judea and told these things to the people there. I also went to the non-Jewish people. ²¹This is why the Jews grabbed me and were trying to kill me at the temple.* ²²But God helped me, and he is still helping me today. With God’s help I am standing here today and telling all people the things I have seen. But I am saying nothing new. I am saying the same things that Moses and the prophets* said would happen. ²³They said that the Christ* would die and be the first to rise from death. Moses and the prophets said that the Christ would bring light to the Jewish people and to the non-Jewish people.”

Paul Tries to Persuade Agrippa

²⁴While Paul was saying these things to defend himself, Festus shouted, “Paul, you are crazy! Too much study has made you crazy!”

²⁵Paul said, “Most Excellent Festus, I am not crazy. The things I say are true. My words are not the words of a foolish man; I am in my right mind. ²⁶King Agrippa* knows about these things. I can speak freely to him. I know that he has heard about all of these things. Why? Because these things happened where all people could see. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the things the prophets* wrote? I know you believe!”

²⁸King Agrippa* said to Paul, “Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so easily?”

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

Agrippa Herod Agrippa II, great-grandson of Herod the Great.

vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

²⁹Paul said, “It is not important if it is easy or if it is hard; I pray to God that not only you but every person listening to me today could be saved and be like me—except for these chains I have!”

³⁰King Agrippa,* Governor Festus, Bernice,* and all the people sitting with them stood up ³¹and left the room. They were talking to each other. They said, “This man should not be killed or put in jail; he has done nothing really bad!” ³²And Agrippa said to Festus, “We could let this man go free, but he has asked to see Caesar.”*

Paul Sails for Rome

27 It was decided that we would sail for Italy. An army officer* named Julius guarded Paul and some other prisoners. Julius served in the emperor’s* special army. ²We got on a ship and left. The ship was from the city of Adramyttium and was ready to sail to different places in Asia.* Aristarchus went with us. He was a man from the city of Thessalonica in Macedonia. ³The next day we came to the city of Sidon. Julius was very good to Paul. He gave Paul freedom to go visit his friends. These friends took care of Paul’s needs. ⁴We left the city of Sidon. We sailed close to the island of Cyprus because the wind was blowing against us. ⁵We went across the sea by Cilicia and Pamphylia. Then we came to the city of Myra in Lycia. ⁶In Myra the army officer* found a ship from the city of Alexandria. This ship was going to Italy. So he put us on it.

⁷We sailed slowly for many days. It was hard for us to reach the city of Cnidus because the wind was blowing against us. We could not go any farther that way. So we sailed by the south side of the island of Crete near Salmone. ⁸We sailed along the coast, but the sailing was hard. Then we came to a place called Safe Harbors. The city of Lasea was near there.

⁹But we had lost much time. It was now dangerous to sail, because it was already after the Jewish day of fasting.* So Paul warned them, ¹⁰“Men, I can see that there will be much trouble on this trip. The ship and the things in the ship will be lost. Our lives may even be lost!” ¹¹But the captain and the owner of the ship did not agree with Paul. So the army officer* did not believe Paul. Instead, the officer believed what the captain and owner of the ship said. ¹²And that harbor (*Safe Harbors*) was not a good place for the ship to stay for the winter. So most of the men decided that the ship should leave there. The men hoped we could go to Phoenix. The ship could stay there for the winter. (Phoenix was a city on the island of Crete. It had a harbor that faced southwest and northwest.)

The Storm

¹³Then a good wind began to blow from the south. The men on the ship thought, “This is the wind we wanted, and now we have it!” So they pulled up the anchor. We sailed very close to the island of Crete. ¹⁴But then a very strong wind named the “Northeaster” came from across the island. ¹⁵This wind took the ship and carried it away. The ship could not sail against the wind. So we stopped trying and let the wind blow us. ¹⁶We went below a small island named Cauda. Then* we were able to bring in the lifeboat, but it was very hard to do. ¹⁷After the men took the lifeboat in, they tied ropes around the ship to hold the ship together. The men were afraid that the ship would hit the sandbanks of Syrtis.* So they lowered the sail and let the wind carry the ship. ¹⁸The next day the storm was blowing us so hard that the men threw some things out of the ship.* ¹⁹A day later they threw out the ship’s equipment. ²⁰For many days we could not see the sun or the stars. The storm was very bad. We lost all hope of staying alive—we thought we would die.

Agrippa Herod Agrippa II, great-grandson of Herod the Great.

Bernice King Agrippa’s sister. She was the oldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

emperor The ruler (leader) of the Roman empire.

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

day of fasting The day of Atonement, an important Jewish holy day in the fall of the year. This was the time of year that bad storms happened on the sea.

Then While the island protected them from the wind.

Syrtis Shallow area in the sea near the Libyan coast.

threw some things ... ship The men did this to make the ship lighter so that it would not sink easily.

²¹The men did not eat for a long time. Then one day Paul stood up before them and said, “Men, I told you not to leave Crete. You should have listened to me. Then you would not have all this trouble and loss. ²²But now I tell you to be happy. None of you will die! But the ship will be lost. ²³Last night an angel came to me from God. This is the God I worship. I am his. ²⁴God’s angel said, ‘Paul, don’t be afraid! You must stand before Caesar.* And God has given you this promise: He will save the lives of all those men sailing with you.’ ²⁵So men, be happy! I trust in God. Everything will happen like his angel told me. ²⁶But we will crash on an island.”

²⁷On the fourteenth night we were floating around in the Adriatic Sea.* The sailors thought we were close to land. ²⁸They threw a rope into the water with a weight on the end of it. They found that the water was 120 feet deep. They went a little farther and threw the rope in again. It was 90 feet deep. ²⁹The sailors were afraid that we would hit the rocks. So they threw four anchors into the water. Then they prayed for daylight to come. ³⁰Some of the sailors wanted to leave the ship. They lowered the lifeboat to the water. The sailors wanted the other men to think that they were throwing more anchors from the front of the ship. ³¹But Paul told the army officer* and the other soldiers, “If these men do not stay in the ship, then your lives cannot be saved!” ³²So the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat fall into the water.

³³Just before dawn Paul began persuading all the people to eat something. He said, “For the past two weeks you have been waiting and watching. You have not eaten for 14 days. ³⁴Now I beg (*ask*) you to eat something. You need it to stay alive. None of you will lose even one hair off your heads.” ³⁵After he said this, Paul took some bread and thanked God for it before all of them. He broke off a piece and began eating. ³⁶All the men felt better.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Adriatic Sea The sea between Greece and Italy, including the central part of the Mediterranean Sea.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

They all started eating too. ³⁷(There were 276 people on the ship.) ³⁸We ate all we wanted. Then we began making the ship lighter by throwing the grain into the sea.

The Ship Is Destroyed

³⁹When daylight came the sailors saw land. But they did not know what land it was. They saw a bay with a beach. The sailors wanted to sail the ship to the beach if they could. ⁴⁰So they cut the ropes to the anchors and left the anchors in the sea. At the same time, they untied the ropes that were holding the rudders. Then they raised the front sail into the wind and sailed toward the beach. ⁴¹But the ship hit a sandbank. The front of the ship stuck there. The ship could not move. Then the big waves began to break the back of the ship to pieces.

⁴²The soldiers decided to kill the prisoners so that none of the prisoners could swim away and escape. ⁴³But the army officer* (*Julius*) wanted to let Paul live. So he did not allow the soldiers to kill the prisoners. Julius told the people that could swim to jump into the water and swim to land. ⁴⁴The other people used wooden boards or pieces of the ship. And this is how all the people went to land. None of the people died.

Paul on the Island of Malta

28 When we were safe on land, we learned that the island was called Malta. ²It was raining and very cold. But the people that lived there were very good to us. They made a fire for us and welcomed all of us. ³Paul gathered a pile of sticks for the fire. Paul was putting the sticks on the fire. A poisonous snake came out because of the heat and bit Paul on the hand. ⁴The people living on the island saw the snake hanging from Paul’s hand. They said, “This man must be a murderer! He did not die in the sea, but Justice* does not want him to live.” ⁵But Paul shook the snake off into the fire. Paul was not hurt. ⁶The people thought that Paul would swell up or fall down dead. The people waited and watched Paul for a long time, but nothing bad happened to him. So the people

Justice The people thought there was a goddess named Justice who would punish bad people.

changed their opinion of Paul. They said, “He is a god!”

⁷There were some fields around that same area. A very important man on the island owned these fields. His name was Publius. He welcomed us into his home. Publius was very good to us. We stayed in his house for three days. ⁸Publius’ father was very sick. He had a fever and dysentery.* But Paul went to him and prayed for him. Paul put his hands on the man and healed him. ⁹After this happened, all the other sick people on the island came to Paul. Paul healed them too. ^{10–11}The people on the island gave us many honors. We stayed there three months. When we were ready to leave, the people gave us the things we needed.

Paul Goes to Rome

We got on a ship from the city of Alexandria. The ship had stayed on the island of Malta during the winter. On the front of the ship was the sign for the twin gods.* ¹²We stopped at the city of Syracuse. We stayed in Syracuse three days and then left. ¹³We came to the city of Rhegium. The next day a wind began to blow from the southwest, so we were able to leave. A day later we came to the city of Puteoli. ¹⁴We found some brothers (*believers*) there. They asked us to stay with them a week. Finally, we came to Rome. ¹⁵The believers in Rome heard that we were there. They came out to meet us at the Market of Appius* and at the Three Inns.* When Paul saw these believers, he felt better. Paul thanked God.

Paul in Rome

¹⁶Then we went to Rome. In Rome Paul was allowed to live alone. But a soldier stayed with Paul to guard him.

¹⁷Three days later Paul sent for some of the most important Jews. When they came together, Paul said, “My Jewish brothers, I have done nothing against our people (the

Jews). I have done nothing against the customs of our fathers.* But I was arrested in Jerusalem and given to the Romans. ¹⁸The Romans asked me many questions. But they could not find any reason why I should be killed. So they wanted to let me go free. ¹⁹But the Jews there did not want that. So I had to ask [to come to Rome] to have my trial before Caesar.* But I am not saying that my people (*the Jews*) have done anything wrong. ²⁰That is why I wanted to see you and talk with you. I am bound with this chain because I believe in the hope of Israel.*”

²¹The Jews answered Paul, “We have received no letters from Judea about you. None of our Jewish brothers who have traveled from there (*Judea*) brought news about you or told us anything bad about you. ²²We want to hear your ideas. We know that people everywhere are speaking against this group (*Christians*).”

²³Paul and the Jews chose a day for a meeting. On that day many more of these Jews met with Paul at his house. Paul spoke to them all day long. Paul explained the kingdom of God to them. Paul tried to persuade them to believe the things about Jesus. He used the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets* to do this. ²⁴Some of the Jews believed the things Paul said, but others did not believe. ²⁵They had an argument. The Jews were ready to leave, but Paul said one more thing to them: “The Holy Spirit* spoke the truth to your fathers* through Isaiah the prophet.* He said,

²⁶ ‘Go to this people (*the Jews*) and tell them:
You will listen and you will hear,
but you will not understand!
You will look and you will see,
but you will not understand
what you see!

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

dysentery A very bad sickness like diarrhea.

twin gods Statues of Castor and Pollux, Greek gods.

Market of Appius A town about 43 miles (69km) from Rome.

Three Inns A town about 30 miles (48km) from Rome.

ACTS 28:27–31**1310**

²⁷ Yes, the minds of these people (*the Jews*)
are now closed.
They have ears, but they don't listen.
And they refuse to see [the truth].
If their minds were not closed,
they might see with their eyes;
they might hear with their ears;
they might understand with their minds.
Then they might turn back to me and
be healed.”

Isaiah 6:9–10

²⁸“I want you Jews to know that God has
sent his salvation to the non-Jewish people.
They will listen!” ^{29*}

³⁰Paul stayed two full years in his own
rented house. He welcomed all people that
came and visited him. ³¹Paul told people
about the kingdom of God. He taught about
the Lord Jesus Christ. He was very bold
(*brave*), and no one tried to stop him from
speaking.

Verse 29 Some late copies of Acts add verse 29: “After Paul said
this, the Jews left. They were arguing very much with
each other.”

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