

ACTS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [Dear] **Theophilus, in my former letter** [i.e., the Gospel of Luke] **I wrote to you concerning what all Jesus did and taught since the beginning** [of His ministry], **2) up until the day He returned to heaven.** [Just before that time] **He had given** [certain] **instructions to His** [specially] **selected apostles through** [the direction of] **the Holy Spirit.** **3) Now, following His death on the cross** [and His resurrection], **Jesus appeared alive** [to His apostles] **for forty days, and demonstrated by many convincing proofs** [that He had been raised bodily from the dead]. [During that time] **He also spoke to them about the** [coming] **kingdom of God.** **4) [One day, as He was] gathered with these apostles, He urged them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there until they received what the Father had promised them. (Jesus had previously discussed this with them).** [See Luke 24:49]. **5) [Jesus then said,] "For John immersed you [men] in water but [this time] you will be immersed in the Holy Spirit, and [it will happen] in just a few more days."** [See Matt. 3:11].

6) When the apostles had come together, they asked [Jesus], "Lord, are you ready to restore the kingdom [of God] to [the nation of] Israel [at this time]?" **7) Jesus replied, "You are not permitted to know the [specific] time or date [when this will happen]. For the Father has appointed it [to happen] when He determines [the right time].** **8) But, you apostles will receive power when the Holy Spirit descends on you and [then] you will become My witnesses** [i.e., to tell what you know] **in Jerusalem, in [the countries of] Judea and Samaria, and [even] to the distant regions of the earth."**

9) And when Jesus had said these things, just as the apostles were watching [Him], He was taken up by a cloud [and disappeared] out of their sight. **10) And while they gazed up into the sky as He ascended, suddenly two men wearing white clothing appeared beside them** **11) and said, "You men from Galilee, why are you standing there looking up at the sky? This Jesus who was received up from your presence into the sky will return in the same way you saw Him go there."**

12) Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the place

called "Mount of Olives," which was about three-fourths of a mile from Jerusalem. 13) Upon arriving at the house where they were staying, they went upstairs. [Those present were]: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, the son of Alpheus, Simon the Zealous [one] and Judas, the son of James. [Note: Judas Iscariot, the twelfth apostle, had already committed suicide]. 14) These men continued in united prayer [for the kingdom to come? See 1:6; Matt. 6:10] along with [certain] women, Mary the mother of Jesus and His [half-] brothers.

15) And during this time Peter stood up to speak to a gathering of about one hundred twenty persons. 16) [He said], "Brothers, it was necessary that the Scriptures be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke through King David about Judas, who guided the soldiers who came to arrest Jesus. 17) For he was one of our number and shared with us [in the responsibility of] this ministry.@ 18) (Now this man [Judas] paid for [in a sense] a [burial] field with the reward money he had received for his sinful act [of betraying Jesus, See Matt. 27:3-10]. [Then, some time after Judas hanged himself, See Matt. 27:5] he fell down headlong, [his swollen body] bursting so that his intestines gushed out. 19) This incident became known to everyone who lived in Jerusalem so that the [burial] field purchased with the reward money became known, in their own [i.e., the Jewish] language, as "Akeldama" [an Aramaic word], which means "Field of Blood.") 20) AFor it was written [about Judas] in the book of Psalms [69:25]: >Let the place where he lives become deserted, with no one living there= and [Psa. 109:8] >Let someone else fill his ministry.= 21) The person [to replace Judas] would have to be one of those who accompanied us [disciples] during the time the Lord traveled around with us, 22) from His immersion by John [the Immerser] until He was received up from us [in a cloud]. Of these people [we must choose] someone to become a witness with us [i.e., to tell people] of Jesus' resurrection [from the dead].@

23) And so they presented two men [for consideration]: Joseph, called Barsabbas (and also called Justus) and Matthias. 24) Then they prayed, "Lord, you know the inner thoughts of all men, so show us which one of these two men should be selected 25) to replace Judas in this ministry and this group of apostles, from which he fell away to go to where he belonged" [i.e., to the place of punishment for unrepentant sinners]. 26) So, they drew lots [i.e., devices used for making random choices] and the lot [i.e., the choice]

avored Matthias, so he was added to the other eleven apostles.

CHAPTER TWO

1) And when the day of Pentecost came [Note: This was a Jewish festival held fifty days following the Passover Festival. Lev. 23:15-21], **they** [i.e., the twelve apostles] **were all gathered together in one place** [i.e., probably the Temple area]. **2) Suddenly a rushing sound, like a fierce wind blowing, came from the sky above them, and [its noise] filled the entire house where they were sitting.** **3) Then they saw what appeared to be flames of fire shooting down and landing on each one of them.** **4) And they** [i.e., the apostles] **were all filled with [the power of] the Holy Spirit and began to speak** ["the mighty accomplishments of God," See verse 11] **in different languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them the ability.**

5) Now some devoted Jews from every nation of the world were visiting Jerusalem [for the Pentecost festival]. **6) And when they heard the noise** [of the blowing wind] **a large number of them assembled** [around the apostles] **and were puzzled over how they could hear them speaking in their native languages.** **7) Being so amazed and astounded** [at something so unusual happening], **they exclaimed, "Look! are not all these men who are speaking from [the country of] Galilee?** **8) How is it then, that we are hearing them speak in our own native languages:** **9) Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappodocia, Pontus, Asia,** **10) Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt and areas of Libya around Cyrene, Jewish and proselyte travelers from Rome,** **11) Cretans and Arabians. How can it be that we hear [these apostles] speaking about the mighty accomplishments of God in the language of our national origin?** **12) And they were amazed and perplexed** [over this] **and began saying to one another, "What does all this mean?"** **13) But others made fun of them, saying, "Oh, they are just drunk** [i.e., full of new wine]."

14) But Peter [responded by] **standing up with the eleven [other] apostles and, lifting up his voice, began to speak. He said, "People of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, listen to what I am saying so you will understand this situation.** **15) For these men** [i.e., the twelve apostles] **are not drunk as you suppose, since it is only nine o'clock in the morning.** [Note: The use of Jewish time

calculations are employed in this verse]. **16) But what you see happening is simply** [the fulfillment of] **what was predicted by the prophet Joel [2:28ff], 17) God said that >in the last days** [of the Jewish nation?] **I will pour out My Holy Spirit upon all people** [i.e., both Jews and Gentiles], **and your sons and daughters will speak out** [in prophecies] **and your young men will see** [supernatural] **visions, and your old men will have** [supernatural] **dreams. 18) Yes, and I will pour out my Holy Spirit on my male and female** [spiritual] **slaves in those days so that they will speak out in prophecies. 19) And I will display miracles in the sky above and** [supernatural] **signs on the earth below** [consisting of] **blood, fire and smoky vapor. 20)** [In that day] **the sun will become dark and the moon will** [appear] **as blood.** [This will all happen] **before the great and wonderful day when the Lord comes.** [Note: Some view these last two verses as a reference to events occurring at the end of time. See Matt. 24:29-30]. **21) And the time will come when every person who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'** [i.e., whoever appeals to God through obedient faith in Christ].

22) "You people of Israel, listen to this message: Jesus from Nazareth was a man whom God [demonstrated] **His approval of by powerful deeds, miracles and** [supernatural] **signs which He accomplished through Jesus in your very presence --- and you all know this! 23) Yet, He was handed over to you so that, by lawless men** [i.e., the Romans], **He was put to death by crucifixion. Now this was all done in harmony with God's full pre-knowledge and** [divine] **purpose. 24) But God raised Him up, having released Him from the sharp pains** [He experienced when dying], **because it was not possible that He could be held in death's grip. 25) King David said this about Jesus** [Psa. 16:8ff], **'I always see the Lord in front of me, He is at my right side for protection; 26) therefore, I was glad in my heart, and my mouth expressed this** [joy]. **In addition, my body will live in hope** [of being raised] **27) because you** [i.e., God] **will not allow my soul** [i.e., this is a reference to Jesus] **to remain in Hades** [i.e., the unseen place of the departed spirits], **neither will you allow** [the body of] **your Holy One to decay. 28) You have made known to me what life is all about. You will make me completely happy by your very presence.'** **29) Brothers, I would like to speak very plainly about the patriarch David** [Note: A patriarch was the ruling father of the family]. **He died and was buried and his grave can be seen today. 30) Since he was a prophet and knew that God had pledged**

His word that one of his [i.e., David's] descendants would sit on his throne [as king]; 31) David, foreseeing this, spoke of Christ being raised from the dead. [He said Jesus' spirit] would not be left in the unseen place of departed spirits, nor would His body decay. 32) So, God raised this Jesus up [from the dead] and we [apostles] are all witnesses [of it]. 33) Jesus is [now] exalted at the right side of God, and having received the promised Holy Spirit from His Father, He has poured out what you have seen and heard [here this day]. 34) Now David is not the one who ascended into heaven for he [spoke of Jesus when he] said [Psa. 110:1], 'The Lord [i.e., God] said to my [i.e., David's] Lord [i.e., Jesus], sit at my right side 35) until I put your enemies [in subjection] beneath your feet.' 36) Therefore, let all those who make up the household of Israel [i.e., God's people] know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

37) Now when the people heard this message [of Peter and the other apostles, See verse 14], they were convicted [of its truth] in their hearts and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do [about our condemned condition]?"

38) And Peter replied, "Every one of you must repent [i.e., change your hearts and lives] and be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ [i.e., by His authority] so that your sins will be forgiven [by God] and then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit [to live in your hearts]. 39) For the promise [of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit] is being given to you [Jews] and to your descendants and [also] to all those who are far away [i.e., Gentiles. See Eph. 2:17]. [This promise is] to as many as [respond to] the Lord, our God's call [through the Gospel, See II Thess. 2:14]."

40) So, Peter testified and urged the crowd with many additional words, saying, "Save yourselves from [the condemnation coming on] this sinful generation [by responding to this message]." 41) Then those who responded [by faith] to the words [spoken by Peter and the apostles] were immersed, and about three thousand persons were added to them [i.e., the apostles] on that day.

42) And these [new converts] continued regularly [to listen] to the teaching of the apostles and to share with them; they broke bread [in memory of Jesus] and continued praying.

43) Everyone [who saw this happen] was filled with awe at the many miracles and [supernatural] signs performed by the apostles. 44) And all the believers [in Jesus] were together and

shared everything. 45) They sold their belongings and property and divided [the money] among all [the believers] according to each one's need. 46) And every day they continued to meet together in the Temple [i.e., for teaching and worship]. They were enjoying their meals and the close fellowship they shared in the various homes, and were 47) praising God and enjoying favor with all the people [of the area]. And every day the Lord added to their number [i.e., to the church] those who were being saved [i.e., upon their obedience to the Gospel].

CHAPTER THREE

1) Now Peter and John were going to the Temple at three o'clock one afternoon [Note: Jewish time calculations are employed here], during the regular [Jewish] prayer hour. 2) [On their way] they met a certain man who had been crippled from birth. Every day he had been carried [by friends] and placed at the "Beautiful Gate" [as it was called] of the Temple [enclosure] where he begged for money from those entering the Temple. 3) When he saw Peter and John about to enter the Temple he asked them [also] for money. 4) Peter looked directly at the man and, together with John, said [to him], "Look [at me]." 5) And the man responded, expecting to receive some coins from them. 6) But instead, Peter said, "I do not have any money [i.e., silver or gold], but I will give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus from Nazareth [i.e., by His authority], get up and walk." 7) And Peter took him by his right hand and lifted him up. Immediately the man's feet and ankles became strong [enough to walk on]. 8) He [then] jumped up, stood on his feet and began to walk. And [as] he entered the Temple with Peter and John he was able to walk and [even] jump, while praising God [for his complete healing]. 9) And all the people [there in the Temple area] saw him walking and [heard him] praising God. 10) And they recognized him as the same person who had sat at the "Beautiful Gate" of the Temple begging for money, and they were filled with wonder and amazement over what had happened to him.

11) And as this [former] crippled man stayed close beside Peter and John, all the people rushed toward them at "Solomon's Portico" [Note: This was a large covered area, with rows of columns, on the side of the Temple enclosure], completely astonished [at what

had happened]. 12) **And when Peter saw** [the crowd assembling] **he gave this explanation:** "Men of Israel, why are you so shocked at [what happened to] **this man? And why are you gazing at us, as though it were by our power or godly qualities that we caused him to walk?** 13) **The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob --- the God of our forefathers --- has highly honored His servant Jesus, whom you people turned over** [to the Roman authorities] **and denied** [Him freedom] **in the presence of** [governor] **Pilate, who had already decided to release Him.** 14) **But you denied the Holy and Righteous One** [His rightful freedom] **and asked for a murderer to be released to you** [instead]. 15) [Then, at the hands of the Roman authorities] **you killed the Prince of** [never ending] **life, but God raised Him from the dead, and we** [apostles] **were** [reliable] **witnesses of it.** 16) **And by** [means of] **the name** [of Jesus], **that is, by faith in the** [power of His] **name, this** [crippled] **man, whom you now see and know, was healed. Yes, it is the faith that comes through Jesus that is responsible for this man's perfect health, as you now all see.**

17) **"And now brothers, I know that** [both] **you and your** [Jewish] **rulers acted in ignorance** [of what you were really doing]. 18) **But this is the way God fulfilled the things which He had predicted through the prophets about the suffering of Christ.** 19) **Therefore, you people** [must] **repent** [i.e., change your hearts and lives] **and turn** [back] **again** [to God] **so that your sins will be blotted out and so that you may enjoy times of** [spiritual] **refreshment from the presence of the Lord** [i.e., through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit]. 20) **And** [also] **that God may send Christ** [to you], **the One whom He has appointed for your** [benefit]. **This** [is] **Jesus,** 21) **who must be received into heaven until** [God's appointed] **times when everything will be restored** [to its intended purpose]. **God had spoken about this through the proclamations of His holy prophets of long ago.** 22) **Moses** [expressed it when he] **said** [Deut. 18:15], **'The Lord God will raise up a prophet for you from among your brothers; He will be like me** [in some ways] **and you must all pay attention to Him in everything He says to you.'** 23) [Deut. 18:19 says], **'And it will be** [at that time] **that every person who does not listen to that prophet will be completely destroyed** [spiritually] **from among** [God's] **people.'** 24) **Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel on down, who have spoken, have predicted these days.** 25) **You people are descendants of these prophets and** [recipients] **of the Agreement God made with your forefathers when He said to Abraham** [Gen. 12:3], **'And**

through your seed [i.e., your descendant Jesus] all the people of the earth will receive the blessings [of God].' 26) You [Jews] were the first ones to receive this blessing when God raised up [i.e., selected] His Servant [i.e., Jesus] and sent Him to turn all of you [away] from your sins."

CHAPTER FOUR

1) As they were speaking to the [crowd of] people, the [Jewish] priests, the captain of the Temple [guard] and the Sadducees [i.e., a sect of the Jewish religion] approached them 2) and were greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that Jesus had been raised from the dead. 3) So, these [Jewish] leaders arrested Peter and John and put them in jail until the next day because it was [already] evening. 4) But many of the people who heard the message [of God] believed [in Jesus] and the number of men [alone] came to be about five thousand.

5) And the next day the [Jewish] rulers, elders and teachers of the Law of Moses gathered together in Jerusalem. 6) [They were]: Annas, the head priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all the head priest's family [members]. 7) And when these men had Peter and John brought before them, they asked, "By whose authority or in what name have you done this thing [i.e., healed the crippled man]?"

8) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, addressed them, saying, "Rulers and elders of the people, 9) if we are being questioned today concerning how this man with a serious handicap was made completely well, 10) we want you men and all the people of Israel to know that this man was made completely well through the name of Jesus Christ from Nazareth. [He is the One] whom you people put to death on the cross, but God raised from the dead. 11) He is that [Psa. 118:22], 'stone that was rejected by you builders but was made the principal stone by which the entire building is aligned.' 12) And there is salvation in no other One [than Jesus] for there is no other Name in the whole world, proclaimed by men, by which [a person] can be saved."

13) Now when these men saw how boldly Peter and John spoke, and perceived that they were uneducated and [even] ignorant men, they were quite surprised; then they recognized that they had been with Jesus. 14) And when they saw the healed man

standing there with Peter and John, there was nothing they could say [to refute the obvious miracle]. 15) But when the Council [of Jewish leaders] made Peter and John leave [the meeting], they discussed the matter among themselves, 16) saying, "What should we do to these men? For we cannot deny that a significant miracle was performed by them, and everybody living in Jerusalem knows it. 17) But we do not want this [teaching] to spread any further so let us threaten them [and demand] that they do not speak to anyone about Jesus anymore."

18) And so they called Peter and John in and warned them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus [anymore]. 19) But Peter and John replied, "You decide whether it is right before God to listen to you men or to Him; 20) we cannot help but speak about the things we have seen and heard."

21) And when the Council had threatened them some more, they [finally] released them because they could not find any reason to punish them. [Actually] they were worried about how the people felt [about the matter], since everybody was giving honor to God for the miracle that had been performed. 22) Now the man who was healed was over forty years old.

23) So, after Peter and John were released, they went [back to the other disciples] and reported everything the leading priests and elders [of the Jews] had said to them. 24) And when the disciples heard this report they united their voices to God in prayer [saying]: "O, Lord, You made the heaven, the earth, the sea and everything in them. 25) [You] said, through the Holy Spirit and by means of [the inspired writings of] our forefather David, your servant, [Psa. 2:1-2], 'Why did the [unconverted] Gentiles rage [at the Messiah], and the people [of Israel] devise useless plans [for opposing Christ]? 26) The kings of the earth [i.e., Herod and Pilate] took their stand [against Jesus], and the rulers [of the Jews] gathered against the Lord and against His Anointed One [i.e., Christ].' 27) For [truly] it was both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, who gathered together in this city [of Jerusalem] against your Holy Servant Jesus 28) to do what your plan and wisdom predetermined should happen. 29) So, now Lord, take account of the threats [of these Jewish leaders] and give your servants all the boldness [we need] to speak your message, 30) while you perform [miraculous] healings and signs and wonders through the name [i.e., by the authority] of your Holy Servant Jesus."

31) And after they had prayed, the place where they were gathered shook, and these disciples were all filled with [the power of] the Holy Spirit and they were able to speak the message of God with boldness.

32) So, the large number of believers was united in heart and soul [i.e., mind and spirit] and not one of them said that anything he owned [really] belonged to him, but they shared all things in common. 33) And the apostles testified concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and the favor [of God] was upon all of them. 34) And no one lacked anything, for all who owned property or houses sold [some of] them and brought the money 35) and gave it to the apostles, who distributed it to each person who had a need.

36) And Joseph, who was called by the apostles, Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), was a descendant of the Jewish tribe of Levi, whose family originated from [the island of] Cyprus. 37) He owned a field, but [due to the great need] sold it and brought the money and gave it to the apostles [for distribution].

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Now a certain married couple named Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property 2) and brought [only] a part of the selling price and gave it to the apostles; but the man and his wife had kept this a secret. 3) But Peter said to Ananias, "Why has Satan filled your heart [causing you] to deceive the Holy Spirit by keeping back part of the selling price of the land [while representing it as the full price]? 4) While you owned it, was it not yours? Then after you sold it, did you not [still] have control over [what you did with] the money? Why did you decide in your heart to do such a thing? You [really] have not lied to men, but to God [about this matter]."

5) When Ananias heard these words he fell dead [instantly] and his spirit left his body, [causing] everyone who heard [about it] to be gripped with fear. 6) Then young men wrapped up his body and took him out and buried him.

7) About three hours later Sapphira came in, not knowing what had happened [to her husband]. 8) And Peter said to her, "Tell me, did you sell the land for such and such a price?" She answered,

"Yes, we did." 9) Then Peter said to her, "Why did you agree together [with your husband] to put the Holy Spirit of the Lord to the test? Look, the ones who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out [to bury you, too]." 10) And instantly she fell dead right in front of him, and her spirit left her body. [Just then the] young men came in and found her dead. They carried her out and buried her with her husband. 11) So, the whole church and everyone else who heard about these things were filled with great fear.

12) And many [miraculous] signs and wonders were performed through the apostles' hands in front of the people. And all [the disciples] were united together in "Solomon's Portico" [See 3:11]. 13) But none [of the outsiders] dared to associate with the disciples, yet the [majority of the] people commended them. 14) And more and more believers in the Lord, both men and women, were [being] added to the [people of the] Lord. 15) [One of the miracles performed was that] sick people were even carried into the streets on beds and couches so that, as he passed them, Peter's shadow would fall on someone [in hope of it producing a miraculous healing]. 16) Large crowds also came from the towns surrounding Jerusalem, bringing people who were sick and those troubled by evil spirits, and all of them were [miraculously] healed.

17) But the head priest and the Jewish sect of the Sadducees became very jealous, 18) and arrested the apostles and put them in jail. 19) But an angel from the Lord one night [miraculously] opened the jail doors and released them, saying, 20) "You men, go and stand in the Temple and speak to all the people words about this Life [i.e., about Jesus]." [See John 14:6].

21) And when the apostles heard this, they entered the Temple about dawn and began teaching [about Jesus].

[A little later] the head priest and the Sadducees [see verse 17] called the Council [i.e., the Sanhedrin] and all of the ruling body of Jewish leaders together and sent to the jail to have the apostles brought in to them [for further questioning]. 22) But when the officers arrived at the jail the apostles were gone, so they returned to the Council and reported, 23) "We found the jail securely locked, with guards on duty at the doors, but when we went inside there was no one there!" 24) Now when the captain of the Temple [guard] and the leading priests heard about this, they became frustrated over how far this [teaching] would [eventually] spread.

25) [Just then] someone came in and said, "Look, the men you put in jail are [now] standing in the Temple teaching people." 26) [Immediately] the captain, with his officers, went [to the Temple] and brought the apostles back again, but did not use any violence because they feared that the people might stone them.

27) And so they brought them in [to their headquarters] to appear before the Council [for questioning]. The head priest spoke to them, [saying], 28) "We strictly commanded you not to teach in this name [i.e., the name of Jesus] and look [what you have done]; you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you intend to hold us responsible for this man's [i.e., Jesus'] death." 29) But Peter and the apostles answered them, "We must obey God instead of [you] men [in this situation]. 30) The God of our forefathers raised up Jesus [from the dead], whom you put to death by hanging Him on a tree [i.e., the cross]. 31) But God exalted Him at His right side to be a Prince and Savior and to give the people of Israel [an opportunity] to repent [i.e., change their hearts and lives] and [receive] forgiveness of [their] sins [through Him]. 32) We apostles are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to every person who obeys Him."

33) But when the Jewish officials heard this, they were deeply convicted in their hearts and determined to kill the apostles. 34) But [then] Gamaliel, a Council member, who was a Pharisee [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion], and an expert in the Law of Moses and highly regarded by all the people, stood up and ordered the apostles to step outside [of the Council meeting] briefly. 35) And he said [to the Council members], "Men of Israel, be careful how you deal with these men. 36) For [remember that] some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be someone [important], and that about four hundred people rallied [to his cause], but he was killed and all his men left him and nothing ever came of it. 37) Later on another man, named Judas of Galilee, appeared during the census [Note: The time and circumstances of this census were probably known to the original readers], and led [a group of] people away after him, but he also was killed and all of his followers were scattered. 38) And so now I say, hold off your accusations and let these men alone, for if their planning and effort is [merely] of human origin, it will be defeated, 39) but if [it happens to be] of God, you will not be able to defeat them. And [if you try to], you may [actually] be fighting against [the work of] God."

40) And so the Council agreed [with Gamaliel's advice] and when they called the apostles back in, they had them beaten and ordered them never to speak in the name of Jesus [again]; then they released them.

41) When the apostles left the Council meeting, they were rejoicing over being considered worthy to suffer [such] shame for the name [of Jesus]. 42) So, every day, they never stopped teaching and preaching that Jesus was the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one], in the Temple and in private homes.

CHAPTER SIX

1) Now during the days when the disciples were multiplying in number [in Jerusalem. See verse 7], some Greek-[speaking] Jews began to complain to the Hebrews that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution [of food]. 2) So, the twelve apostles called the whole group of disciples together and said to them, "It is not right that we should neglect preaching the word of God in order to serve meals [to people]. 3) Brothers, select from among you seven men with good reputations, who are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to take care of this matter. 4) But we will continue earnestly in prayer and the preaching of God's word."

5) This arrangement pleased the whole group, so they selected Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolaus, a proselyte [i.e., convert to the Jewish religion] from Antioch. 6) [Then] they presented these men to the apostles, who prayed for them while placing their hands on them [to signify their appointment].

7) So, the message of God increased [in its influence] and the disciples multiplied in number greatly in Jerusalem, [so that even] a large number of [Jewish] priests became obedient to [the message of] the faith.

8) And Stephen [i.e., one of the seven men chosen to minister to widows, verse 5], who was full of [God's] favor and power, performed great wonders and [miraculous] signs in front of the [Jewish] people. 9) But several men from the synagogue, made up

of freed slaves from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia and Asia, began arguing with Stephen. 10) But they could not stand up to the wisdom and [power of] the Holy Spirit by which Stephen spoke.

11) Then they enlisted men to say [i.e., to testify falsely against Stephen, verse 13], "We heard him criticizing Moses and [even] God." 12) And they stirred up the people, the elders and the teachers of the Law of Moses and searched for him, seized him and brought him before the Council. 13) They had arranged for the false witnesses to say, "This man will not stop speaking against the Temple and the Law of Moses, 14) for we [ourselves] heard him saying that this Jesus from Nazareth would destroy the Temple and change the customs handed down to us by Moses." 15) Then, as all the Council members stared at Stephen, his face appeared to them like an angel's.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) Then the head priest asked [Stephen], "Are these charges true?" 2) And he answered, "Brothers and fathers, listen to me: Our glorious God appeared to our forefather Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, [even] before he lived in Haran 3) and told him, 'Leave your country and relatives and go to the country where I will lead you.'

4) "So, he left Chaldea [Note: This was another name for Mesopotamia], and lived in Haran, and after his father died he was sent [by God] to this country where you people now live. 5) But God gave him no inheritance [here at that time], no, not even a place [of his own] to stand on. Yet God promised that He would [someday] give it to him and to his descendants after him [i.e., the Israelites], as a [permanent] possession, even though [at that time] he had no child yet. 6) And God had spoken about this [beforehand] by saying that Abraham's descendants would live in a foreign country and that they would [eventually] be ill-treated as slaves for four hundred years. 7) And God said, 'I will judge the nation [i.e., Egypt] that enslaves them and [then] after my people are liberated, they will serve me in this place [i.e., Palestine].' 8) And God gave Abraham the Agreement which required circumcision [as an identifying mark] so when Abraham fathered Isaac he circumcised him when he was eight days old. Then Isaac had a son, Jacob; and Jacob had [as sons] the

twelve patriarchs [i.e., ruling fathers of families].

9) "[And when] **these patriarchs**, [still living in Canaan as young men], **became jealous of** [their brother] **Joseph, they sold him** [as a slave to traveling merchants who took him] **to Egypt. But God was with him** [during all that time], 10) **and rescued him from all his troubles and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him a governor over Egypt and his** [i.e., the king's] **household.**

11) "Now a great famine occurred all over Egypt and Canaan, causing extreme hardships, and our forefathers did not have enough to live on. 12) But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent his sons [down there] on their first trip. 13) On their second trip Joseph identified himself to his brothers, and Pharaoh was made aware of his origins. 14) Joseph then sent [to Canaan] for his father Jacob and all seventy-five of his relatives. 15) So, Jacob went down to Egypt and died there, along with our forefathers. 16) Their bodies were carried back [from Egypt] to Shechem and buried in the tomb that Abraham had purchased in Shechem from the sons of Hamor for a sum of silver. [Note: "Shechem" was a town in Israel, the country which in New Testament times was known as Samaria].

17) "But as the time when [the fulfillment of] the promise [God had made] to Abraham approached, the number of people [i.e., Hebrews] in Egypt grew 18) until a new king, who had not known Joseph, began to rule. 19) This king exploited the Hebrews and mistreated our forefathers, even requiring that they abandon their [small] babies, leaving them to die [See Exodus 1:22].

20) "It was at that time that Moses was born, and he was a very handsome child. He was cared for in his father's home for three months 21) and then, when he was abandoned [as the Egyptians required], the daughter of Pharaoh took him in and cared for him as her own son. 22) Now Moses was educated according to all the wisdom of the Egyptians and became an accomplished speaker and an effective leader. 23) But when he was about forty years old he felt led to visit his relatives, the Israelites [i.e., called Hebrews at that time]. 24) And when Moses observed one [of his relatives] being mistreated, he came to his defense by hitting the Egyptian, 25) assuming his relatives would understand that God was using him to rescue them [from such abuse], but they did not [seem to] understand. 26) The next day Moses came across a couple

of his relatives who were fighting and tried to settle their dispute by saying, 'Brothers, since you are fellow-countrymen, why are you hurting each other?' 27) But the one who was trying to harm his neighbor pushed Moses away saying, 'Who gave you the right to act as a ruler and judge over us? 28) Are you going to kill me like you did that Egyptian yesterday?' 29) When Moses heard this, he ran away and traveled to the country of Midian where he settled down and had two sons.

30) "Then after [another] forty years passed, an angel appeared to him [one day] out of a flaming bush in the wilderness near Mt. Sinai. 31) Moses marveled at the sight [of the burning bush] and, as he went to look at it more closely, the voice of the Lord spoke out, 32) 'I am the God of your forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses shook with fear, not [even] wanting to look [at the bush]. 33) And the Lord said to him, 'Take off your shoes, [Moses], for the place you are standing on is holy ground. 34) I have surely seen the mistreatment of my people there in Egypt and I have heard their groaning and I have determined to rescue them. Now [get ready], I will send you to Egypt [to lead out in their rescue].' 35) But the Hebrews refused [to acknowledge Moses as their leader], saying, 'Who made you a ruler and judge [over us]?' [Nevertheless], God sent him [to Egypt] to be both a ruler and liberator [of the people] through the direction of [His] angel who appeared [to Moses] from the bush. 36) This man led them out [of Egypt], performing wonders and [miraculous] signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.

37) "This is the Moses who had said to the Israelites [Deut. 18:15], 'God will raise up a prophet from among your countrymen who will be like me [in some ways].' 38) This is the man who was with our forefathers and with the assembly [of Hebrews] in the wilderness [after] the angel had spoken to him at Mt. Sinai. He [is the one] who received the living messages [from God at Mt. Sinai] and gave them to us. 39) [And yet] our forefathers refused to obey him, but rejected [his leadership] and turned back to Egypt in their hearts. 40) They said to Aaron [i.e., Moses' brother], 'Make gods to lead us, because we do not know what happened to this Moses who led us when we first left the country of Egypt.' 41) And so the people fashioned a calf [out of gold] and offered [an animal] sacrifice to this idol and [then] celebrated joyously over what they had done [See Exodus 32:4-6; 17-19]. 42) But God turned [away from them]

and allowed them to worship heavenly bodies [i.e., stars], just as it was written in the prophet [Amos 5:25ff], 'Did you offer me slain animals as sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness, you Israelites? 43) [No], you set up a tent for Moloch [i.e., a heathen idol worshiped by the Ammonites] and [another one for] the star [representing the false god] Rephan and images used in worshipping them. I will allow you to be transported beyond [the country of] Babylon.'

44) "Our forefathers had the Tabernacle of the Testimony in the wilderness [i.e., the tent containing the Ten Commandments], which God instructed Moses to make according to the model he was shown. 45) Our forefathers also brought this Tabernacle with them under Joshua's leadership when they entered [Canaan] to occupy the land of these Gentile nations. God removed these nations as our forefathers advanced through the land, up until the reign of King David, 46) who found favor in God's sight and asked for permission to build a [special] house for the God of Jacob's [descendants] to live in. 47) But [eventually] it was Solomon who [actually] built this house [for God]. 48) However, the Highest [i.e., God] does not live in a house made by human beings, as the prophet said [Isaiah 66:1ff], 49) 'Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footrest. What kind of a house do you plan to build for me? the Lord asked. Or what sort of a place is suitable for me to rest in? 50) Did I not really make everything [myself]?'

51) You people are unbending and unrepentant in your hearts and [unwilling to listen with] your ears. You are always resisting [the desires of] the Holy Spirit just like your forefathers did. 52) Which one of the prophets did your forefathers not persecute? They [even] killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One [i.e., Jesus], whom you people betrayed and murdered. 53) You received the law that was ordained through [the medium of] angels [See Gal. 3:19] and yet have not obeyed its requirements."

54) Now when the Council members heard these things they were enraged and ground their teeth at him. 55) But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw God's splendor and Jesus standing at His right side. 56) He said, "Look, I see heaven opened up and the Son of man standing at the right side of God." 57) But they shouted loudly and refused to listen, and then all of them rushed at him. 58) They threw him out of the city and stoned him [to death]. Those who witnessed [the incident] placed

their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59) So, they stoned Stephen [to death] as he called out to the Lord, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit [as I die]." 60) Then he kneeled down and called out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold them responsible for this sin [of killing me]." And when he said this he fell asleep [in death].

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) And Saul was in full agreement with Stephen being put to death.

And a great persecution broke out against the Jerusalem church, and all the disciples, except the apostles, were scattered throughout the districts of Judea and Samaria. 2) The godly men who buried Stephen's body mourned over his loss very deeply. 3) But Saul brought devastation to the church by entering everyone's house and dragging men and women off to jail.

4) Now the disciples, who had become scattered all over, went everywhere preaching the message [of God]. 5) And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed Christ to them. 6) Great crowds of people joined together in accepting Philip's message when they heard and saw the [miraculous] signs he was able to perform. 7) Evil spirits came out, with loud shrieks, from many persons and large numbers of people were healed of their paralysis and crippled conditions. 8) And there was much rejoicing in Samaria [over the wonderful effects of Philip's ministry].

9) But a certain man named Simon, from there in Samaria, who had been amazing the people with his magical powers, was claiming to be someone great. 10) Everyone, from the least to the greatest [in importance], was being impressed by him. They were saying, "This man is being called Great [and has] power from God." 11) And people were paying attention to him because he had been amazing them with his magic for a long time. 12) When people believed the good news about God's kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ, which Philip was preaching, both men and women were immersed [in water]. 13) And [this] Simon also believed [Philip's message] and was immersed. [After that] he continued [to travel] with Philip and was amazed by the [supernatural] signs and great miracles he saw [him perform].

14) Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had responded to the message of God, they sent Peter and John to them. 15) When these two apostles had come [to Samaria] they prayed for some [of the disciples] to receive [miraculous power from] the Holy Spirit, 16) for as yet [such power] had not fallen on any of them; they had only been immersed into the name of the Lord Jesus [i.e., with no accompanying miraculous powers]. 17) Then the apostles placed their hands on [some of] them [and prayed, see verse 15] and they received [miraculous power from] the Holy Spirit.

18) Now when Simon saw that through the placing of the apostles' hands [on people] the Holy Spirit was given [Note: The fact that Simon "saw" something happen suggests it was supernatural and therefore highly desirable by Simon], he offered to pay them money [for this power], 19) saying, "Give me also the ability to place my hands on people [and pray] so that they will receive [the miraculous power of] the Holy Spirit." 20) But Peter said to him, "You and your money will both be destroyed for thinking you could buy the gift from God with money. 21) You do not have any share or involvement in this matter because your heart is not right before God. 22) So, repent [i.e., change your heart and life] of such a terrible thing and pray for the Lord to forgive you for even thinking of such a thing. Perhaps He will [if you are really sincere]. 23) For I can see that your life is as bitter gall [i.e., very evil] and you are enslaved by [your] sins." 24) And Simon answered, "[Please] pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said about me will [really] happen."

25) When Peter and John had testified [regarding the truth] and had proclaimed the message of God [to the people] they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the good news [about Jesus] in many Samaritan villages [on their way back].

26) [Meanwhile] an angel [sent] from the Lord spoke to Philip and said, "Get up and travel south on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza; that is a deserted region." 27) So, he went and [eventually] came across a man who was the Ethiopian Queen Candace's treasurer. He was a high official and was also a eunuch [Note: This was a man without normal sexual activity], who had been to Jerusalem to worship [i.e., probably as a Jewish proselyte]. 28) He was returning [to his home in Ethiopia] and was sitting in his chariot [Note: Chariots were stopped on long journeys occasionally for resting, eating, reading, etc.] reading [a scroll of] the prophet Isaiah. 29) The

Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go on up close to the chariot." 30) So, Philip ran over to it and [when he got near enough] he heard the Ethiopian eunuch reading from Isaiah the prophet and asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31) And the man replied, "How can I, except with someone's guidance?" Then he urged Philip to come and sit with him [in the chariot].

32) Now the passage of Scripture he was reading said [Isa. 53:7ff], "He was led out to be slaughtered as a sheep; He made no sound, just like a lamb when it was being sheared. 33) He was subjected to [terrible] humiliation and deprived of justice. Who will [there be to] trace His descendants, since His life was taken from Him, [leaving no posterity]." 34) The [Ethiopian] eunuch then asked Philip "Please tell me, is the prophet [Isaiah] writing about himself or about someone else?" 35) So, Philip opened his mouth, and beginning [his message] from this Scripture [passage], he preached to him [about] Jesus.

36) As they [i.e., Philip, the Ethiopian eunuch and his attendants] traveled along they came to a certain [body of] water. The [Ethiopian] eunuch said, "Look, here is [a body of] water, why can't I be immersed [right now]?" {{Verse 37) is absent from many manuscripts}}. 38) So, the eunuch ordered the chariot to be stopped; then both Philip and the [Ethiopian] eunuch went down into the water and Philip immersed the eunuch [into Christ]. 39) And when they came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit of the Lord [supernaturally?] directed Philip to go elsewhere and the eunuch did not see him anymore, as he continued on his journey rejoicing. 40) But [later on] Philip appeared at Azotus and after leaving there he preached the good news [of Jesus] to all the towns along the way until he reached Caesarea. [Note: Caesarea was a town on the west coast of Palestine, named after the emperor Caesar].

CHAPTER NINE

1) With every breath [it seemed], Saul [expressed his desire to] threaten and murder the Lord's disciples and [even] went to the head priest 2) to ask for letters [authorizing him to go] to Damascus and to enter [Jewish] synagogues looking for people of "the Way" [Note: This was a designation for Christians at that time]. And if he found any, whether men or women, he would tie them up and take

them to Jerusalem. 3) And when he got close to Damascus, suddenly a [bright, See 22:6] light from the sky shone all around him. 4) He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" 5) Saul replied, "Who are you, sir?" And the voice said, "It is I, Jesus, whom you are persecuting, 6) but get up, and enter the city [of Damascus] and [there] you will be told what you must do."

7) And the men who were traveling with Saul were speechless, having heard the sound, but not seeing anyone. 8) Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes but could not see anything, so had to be led by the hand into Damascus. 9) For three days he was blind and neither ate nor drank anything.

10) Now [in the meantime] the Lord spoke in a vision to a certain disciple named Ananias [who lived] in Damascus. He called to him by name, "Ananias." "Yes, Lord, here I am" Ananias replied. 11) The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to Straight Street and ask for a person named Saul, from Tarsus, at the home of Judas; you will find him [there] praying." 12) (Now Saul had seen [in a vision] a man named Ananias coming in and placing his hands on him, restoring his sight). 13) But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many people about how much harm this man has done to your holy people at Jerusalem. 14) And [now] he is here with authority from the leading priests to tie up [and imprison] everyone who calls on your name." 15) But the Lord replied to him, "Go on your way, for Saul is someone I have especially chosen to carry my name to the [unconverted] Gentiles, kings and the Israelites. 16) I will show him how many things he will have to suffer for my name's sake."

17) So, Ananias left and went to Judas' house and placed his hands on Saul saying, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you as you were traveling on the road [to Damascus] sent me so you could receive your sight [back] and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18) And suddenly, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes and his sight was [immediately] restored. So, he got up and was immersed [See 22:16]; 19) then ate a meal and received strength.

And he stayed on for a number of days with the disciples at Damascus. 20) And so Saul began proclaiming that Jesus was the Son of God in the synagogues [of the Damascus area]. 21) And everyone who heard him was amazed and exclaimed, "Is this not

the man who tried to destroy all the people who called on [Jesus'] name in Jerusalem and has now come here [to Damascus] for the purpose of arresting them and bringing them before the leading priests?" 22) But Saul was strengthened [spiritually] and proceeded to confound the Jews living [there] in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

23) And after a number of days had passed [these] Jews conspired together to kill Saul, 24) but he found out about their plan. And so they watched the gates [of the city] day and night [looking for their chance] to kill him. 25) [However], his disciples lowered him in a basket over the [city] wall at night [and so he escaped].

26) And when he came [back] to Jerusalem, Saul attempted to associate himself with the disciples but they were afraid of him [because of his past], and could not believe that he was a [true] disciple. 27) So, Barnabas brought him to the [other] apostles and explained to them how he had seen the Lord [while] traveling on the road [to Damascus] and how he had boldly preached in the name of Jesus in that city. 28) Saul then traveled in and out of Jerusalem with the apostles, 29) preaching boldly in the name of the Lord [and] speaking and arguing with the Greek-[speaking] Jews, but they were out to kill him. 30) And when the brothers [in the Jerusalem church] learned about this, they brought him down to Caesarea and then sent him on to Tarsus, [his home town].

31) So, the church throughout all of Judea, Galilee and Samaria was multiplied in number, enjoyed peace, was built up [spiritually] and lived in awe of the Lord and was comforted by the Holy Spirit.

32) Then after that, Peter traveled throughout the entire region until he came down to visit God's holy people who lived in Lydda. [Note: This was a town on the west coast of Palestine]. 33) And there he found a certain man named Aeneas who had been [confined to his] bed, paralyzed for eight years. 34) Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ is healing you, so get up and make your bed." And immediately he got up [out of his bed, completely healed]. 35) When everyone who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him [i.e., that the man was healed], they turned [their lives over] to the Lord.

36) Now at Joppa [Note: This was also a town on the west coast of Palestine, today called "Jaffa," and is now a part of Tel Aviv] there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (she was also called

Dorcas, which means "Gazelle"). She practiced many good deeds and always gave money to poor people. 37) But as time went on, she became [very] sick and [eventually] died. Her body was washed [by the women attendants] and placed in an upstairs room [during the mourning process]. 38) And since Lydda was very close to Joppa, the disciples [at Joppa], hearing that Peter was at Lydda [See verse 32], sent two men there to urge him, "Do not delay your coming [here] to us."

39) So, Peter got up and went with them. When he arrived they took him to the upstairs room [where Dorcas' body lay]. All the widows [i.e., her friends] stood near Peter, crying and showing [him] the coats and [other] clothing which Dorcas had made when she was alive. 40) Then Peter asked them all to leave [the room]; he knelt down and prayed over her body, saying, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41) Peter then reached out his hand and raised her up; he called the saints [i.e., God's holy people] and the widows [back into the room] and presented her [to them] alive. 42) And this [miracle] became known throughout all of Joppa and many people believed in [Jesus as] the Lord. 43) And Peter lived for some time in Joppa with Simon, who was an [animal hide] tanner.

CHAPTER TEN

1) Now there was a certain man in Caesarea named Cornelius. He was [a military man] in charge of one hundred soldiers and belonged to the "battalion of Italy." 2) He was very devoted [to his religious principles] and had great respect for God, along with the members of his household. He gave [money] liberally to poor people and prayed to God regularly. 3) About three o'clock one afternoon [Note: This is based on Jewish time calculations; if Roman time were employed, it would have been 9 AM], while he was wide awake, he had a vision in which an angel of God came to him [and spoke his name] "Cornelius." 4) As he stared at [the angel] in fright, he asked, "What is it, Lord?" [Note: The word "Lord" here could also be translated "Sir," and its correct rendering depends on whether or not Cornelius understood the angel to be from God]. And the angel replied, "Your [continual] prayers and [generous] gifts to poor people have not gone unnoticed before God. 5) And now send men

to Joppa to get Simon Peter; 6) he is staying with Simon, a tanner [of animal hides], whose house is close to the [Mediterranean] sea."

7) When the angel who spoke with him had left, Cornelius called two of his house servants and a soldier who was devoted [to God], men who worked for him regularly, 8) and after explaining the whole situation to them, he sent them on to Joppa.

9) As they were traveling the next day, and were coming close to the city [of Joppa], Peter went up about noontime [Note: Or 6 AM if calculating by Roman time], to the top of the house to pray [Note: The roofs of houses were flat areas, often used for resting, meals, prayer, etc.]. 10) He became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while lunch was being prepared he was overcome by a "trance" [i.e., a semi-conscious, vision-like state] 11) and could see the sky open up and a huge sheet-like container being lowered to the ground by its four corners. 12) It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, crawling [reptiles] and birds. 13) A voice then directed Peter with the words, "Get up; kill and eat [one of] them." 14) But Peter answered, "No, Lord, I cannot. I have never eaten any such ordinary or [ceremonially] unfit creatures." 15) So, the voice spoke again, saying, "What God has made [ceremonially] acceptable, you must not consider ordinary [and therefore defiled]." 16) And after this was done three times, the huge sheet-like container was lifted back up into the sky.

17) Now while Peter was much perplexed over the meaning of this vision, the men sent by Cornelius, having learned where Simon [the tanner] lived, arrived at the gate [of his house], 18) and asked if Simon Peter were staying there.

19) While Peter was thinking about [the meaning of] the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, "Look, there are three men [here] looking for you. 20) Go downstairs and [then] leave with them. Do not worry about anything because I have sent them [to you]." 21) So, Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. Why have you come here?" 22) They said, "Cornelius, a [military] man in charge of one hundred soldiers, [and] a man who does what is right, [and] who respects God and who has a good reputation among all the Jews [who know him], was urged by God through a holy angel to have you come to his house so he could hear you speak [about salvation, See 11:14]." 23) So, Peter invited them to stay [for the night].

The next day Peter got up and went with the men, [who

were] accompanied by certain [Christian] brothers from Joppa. 24) The following day they arrived at Caesarea where they found Cornelius, gathered with his relatives and close friends, waiting for them. 25) When Peter entered [the house] Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet [and attempted] to worship him. 26) But Peter lifted him up, saying, "I am just a man, myself."

27) As they talked, Peter went into the house and found many people gathered together [there]. 28) And he said to them, "You people know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with, or even go near a person from another [i.e., non-Jewish] country, and yet God showed me that I should not consider any person ordinary or [ceremonially] unacceptable. 29) So, I came [here] when I was sent for, without objecting. [Now,] why have you sent for me?" 30) Cornelius [then] said, "Four days ago, when I was at home, praying at the appointed hour (i.e., three o'clock in the afternoon) [See verse 3], suddenly a man in bright clothing appeared in front of me. 31) He said to me, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and God has taken account of your giving money to poor people. 32) Therefore, send [men] to Joppa and ask for Simon Peter to come to you. He is staying at the house of Simon, a tanner [of animal hides] who lives close to the [Mediterranean] sea.' 33) So, I proceeded to send [my men] for you and you have done the right thing in coming [here]. Now, therefore, we are all assembled here before God, to hear everything you were commanded by the Lord [to tell us]."

34) Then Peter began to speak. He said, "I perceive that God truly does not show favoritism toward anyone, 35) but that whoever respects Him and does what is right, whatever country he may be from, is acceptable to Him. 36) He sent His message [first] to the Israelites; [it involved] preaching the good news through Jesus Christ (who is Lord of all). 37) You yourselves know [all this, and] how this message was proclaimed throughout Judea, having begun from Galilee after the preaching of the immersion [taught and practiced] by John. 38) This message was about Jesus from Nazareth and how God specially chose Him [and signified it] by giving Him the Holy Spirit and power. He traveled all over doing good [for people] and healing everyone who was [being] oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. 39) And we [apostles] are witnesses of all that He did, both in the region where Jews lived and in Jerusalem [as well]. But they killed Him by hanging Him on a tree [i.e., the cross]. 40) However, God raised Him up the third day

and made it possible for Him to appear [following His resurrection], 41) not to everyone, but to us [apostles] who were specially chosen by God to be witnesses [of His resurrected body], and to eat and drink with Him after He arose from the dead. 42) And He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He [i.e., Jesus] is the One whom God ordained to be the Judge of people who are [now] alive and those who have [already] died. 43) All the prophets have testified [in their writings], that it is through the name of Jesus that every person who believes in Him will receive the forgiveness of sins."

44) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit descended upon all those who were listening to this message [i.e., Cornelius and his household]. 45) And the believers of Jewish descent, who had come with Peter, were amazed [when they saw] that the gift of the Holy Spirit had [now] been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46) For [as evidence of it] they heard them speaking in [other] languages [supernaturally] and lifting up God [in praise].

Peter then said, 47) "Who can keep these people [i.e., Cornelius' household] from being immersed in water now that they have received the Holy Spirit just like we [apostles] have?" [See 2:4]. 48) So, Peter commanded them to be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ. Then Cornelius and his household asked Peter to stay on for a number of days.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) Now the apostles and the [other] brothers in Judea heard that the Gentiles had responded to the message of God. 2) And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those [believers] of Jewish descent began to argue with him, 3) saying, "You went in and ate with non-Jewish people, did you not?"

4) Then Peter began to explain the whole matter to them, step by step, saying, 5) "I was in the city of Joppa and [one day], while praying, I fell into a trance [i.e., a semi-conscious, vision-like state] and saw a huge sheet-like container being lowered down from the sky by its four corners. As it came into view 6) I gazed at it and wondered [about it], as I saw [it full of] four-legged [domestic] animals, wild animals, crawling [reptiles] and birds of the sky. 7) I

also heard a voice telling me to get up and kill and eat [one of them]. 8) But I said, 'O no, Lord, for I have never even tasted anything ordinary or [ceremonially] unfit [for Jews to eat].' 9) Then the voice spoke from the sky again, saying, 'Do not consider something [to be] ordinary that God has made acceptable.' 10) And this was done three times before it was all lifted back up into the sky.

11) "Then, just about that time, three men sent from Caesarea to get me, walked up to the house where we were [staying]. 12) The Holy Spirit directed me to go with them, without showing any discrimination. With these six brothers accompanying me, we went into Cornelius' house 13) and he told us about seeing an angel standing in his house and saying [to him] 'Send to Joppa for Simon Peter and bring him [here] 14) so he can speak words to you that will bring salvation to you and your household.'

15) "And while I was speaking, [the power of] the Holy Spirit descended on them [i.e., Cornelius' Gentile household] just like [it fell] on us [Jewish apostles] at the beginning [i.e., the day of Pentecost, See chapter 2]. 16) Then I remembered what the Lord had said [See 1:4-5]: 'John immersed you [people] in water but you [apostles] will be immersed in the Holy Spirit.' 17) [Therefore], if God gave to them [i.e., the Gentiles] the same gift as He gave to us [Jews] when we [apostles, See chapter 1-2] believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, how could I stand against [the will of] God [by refusing to immerse them]?'@

18) So, when the apostles and the brothers from Judea heard these things, they stopped arguing [See verse 2] and gave honor to God, saying, A[This means] that God has permitted the Gentiles also [as well as the Jews] to repent [i.e., change their hearts and lives] so they, too, could have [the promise of never ending] life.@

19) Those who were scattered everywhere as a result of the persecution [being waged against the church] because of Stephen's [death], traveled as far away as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, declaring the message to Jews only. 20) But when some men from Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch, they preached [about] the Lord Jesus to the Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] also. 21) The power of the Lord was upon their efforts so that a large number of people who believed [the message] turned to the Lord [in faithful obedience].

22) And the news about [what was being done by] these people reached the church in Jerusalem, so that they sent Barnabas to Antioch [in Syria]. 23) When he got there and saw how God was

favoring the people [with salvation] he was very happy and [stayed on and] encouraged everyone to remain close to the Lord with a heartfelt purpose. 24) [Now] Barnabas was a good man who was full of the Holy Spirit and of faith [in the Lord], and many people were added to the [church of the] Lord.

25) Then he went on to Tarsus to look for Saul [Note: Tarsus was the home town of Saul, who was later called Paul], 26) and when he found him, he brought him [back] to Antioch. So, for an entire year Saul and Barnabas gathered the church together and taught many people. [It was] here in Antioch that the disciples were first [divinely] called Christians.

27) During those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28) One of them, a man named Agabus, stood up and indicated by [the direction of] the Holy Spirit that there was going to be a severe worldwide famine, which [actually] took place during the time that Claudius ruled. 29) [In response to this prediction], the disciples decided to send as much relief as they could to help the brothers living in Judea. 30) So, they sent [what was donated] to the elders [of the Judean churches] by Barnabas and Saul.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) Now about that time King Herod began a persecution of certain people in the [Jerusalem] church. [Note: This man was the grandson of Herod the Great. See Matt. 2:1]. 2) He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. 3) When he realized that this act pleased the Jews, he proceeded to have Peter arrested also. [This happened] during the Festival of Unleavened Bread [See Exodus 12:15ff]. 4) So, Peter was arrested and put in jail with four groups of four soldiers each guarding him. Herod planned to have him brought before the people after the Passover Festival was over.

5) So, Peter was kept in jail, but the church continued to pray earnestly to God for him. [See verse 12].

6) Then on the night that Herod was planning to have him brought [before the court], Peter was asleep, chained between two soldiers, with guards stationed at the jail doors. 7) [Then it happened]: [Suddenly] an angel from the Lord stood beside Peter as a light shone into his cell. [The angel] gently struck his side, waking

him up, saying, "Get up quickly." His chains fell from his hands. 8) The angel [then] said to him, "Put on your belt and sandals," so he did. Then the angel said, "Throw your [outer] robe around you and follow me." 9) So, he followed the angel out [of the jail], not fully realizing what had happened, thinking [perhaps] he had seen [all this in] a vision. 10) And when they passed the first two guards, they came to the iron gate leading out into the city, which opened by itself. So, they went out and, as they walked down the street, the angel [suddenly] left him.

11) Then when Peter realized what had actually happened, he said, "Now I know for certain that [it was] the Lord who sent His angel to rescue me from Herod's custody and from all that the Jewish people had planned [to do to me]." 12) After thinking about the matter [for awhile], he decided to go to the house of Mary, mother of John Mark, where a large gathering [of Christians] was praying. 13) When Peter knocked at the entryway door, a young woman named Rhoda answered. 14) And when she recognized Peter's voice [speaking to her from outside], she ran back in [to where the prayer group was assembled] without even opening the door, and joyously told them that it was Peter [knocking]. 15) And they said to her, "You are crazy." But she insisted that [what she reported] was true. They replied, "It is [only] his angel." 16) But Peter continued to knock and when they [finally] opened [the door] they saw that it [really] was Peter and were amazed. 17) [Upon entering the house] he held up his hand to quiet them, and then went on to explain how the Lord had rescued him from jail. He said to them, "[Go] tell all this to James [the Lord's half-brother] and to [the rest of] the brothers." Then he left [them] and went elsewhere.

18) Now as soon as it got daylight there was a lot of commotion among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. 19) When Herod's search for him turned up nothing, he questioned the guards, and then ordered them to be led away and executed. He then left Judea and went to Caesarea, where he stayed for awhile.

20) Now Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon [Note: These were seaport cities not under his jurisdiction]. They came to him as a group, having befriended Blastus, an officer of the king [Herod], and tried to arrange a peaceful relationship [with him] because their country [i.e., the cities of Tyre and Sidon] was dependant on him for their food supply.

21) And then, on a particular day, Herod, dressed in his

royal robes, delivered a speech [to the people] from his throne. 22) The people began shouting, "His is the voice of a god and not a man." 23) Suddenly, an angel from God struck him [with a terrible condition] because he refused to honor God [by what he said in his speech], so he was consumed by worms and died.

24) But the [influence of the] message of God grew and [the number of disciples] multiplied.

25) Barnabas and Saul returned [to Antioch] from Jerusalem after they had fulfilled their mission [i.e., of taking the contribution for the famine-stricken people of Judea. See 11:27-30]. They took John Mark [back to Antioch with them].

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) Now in the church at Antioch there were [these] prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Symeon, called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod the Tetrarch [i.e., governor of Galilee], and Saul. 2) As these men were ministering to the Lord [i.e., this probably means worshipping] and fasting, the Holy Spirit said [to one of them by way of inspiration]: "Set Barnabas and Saul apart for Me, [commissioning them] to do the work for which I have called them." 3) Then, as these prophets and teachers fasted and prayed [for the two men], they placed their hands on them [signifying their appointment for this ministry] and sent them away.

4) So, as they were sent out by [the direction of] the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia [a seaport], and from there they sailed on to [the island of] Cyprus. 5) After arriving at Salamis [a town on the island], they proclaimed the message of God in the Jewish synagogues [there], with John [Mark] attending [to various details of their ministry].

6) When they had traveled across the whole island they came to Paphos [a town on the island of Cyprus]; [there] they met a certain magician named Bar-Jesus, who was a Jewish false prophet. 7) He was with an intelligent governor, [a Roman official named] Sergius Paulus. This man called for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the message of God. 8) But the magician, [also] named Elymas [an Arabic-Semitic word] (which means "the magician") opposed them, trying to discourage the governor from hearing about the faith. 9) But Saul, [now] also called Paul, being

filled with [the power of] the Holy Spirit, looked at him intently 10) and said, "You child of the devil; you enemy of all that is right; you are full of deceit and every kind of evil [thing]. When will you stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? 11) Now look, the power of the Lord is coming on you to cause [such] blindness that you will not [even] be able to see the sun for awhile." And immediately a misty darkness fell on him and he kept trying to find people to lead him [around] by the hand. 12) When the governor saw this miracle performed, he became a believer [in Christ] and was [continually] amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

13) Now Paul and his companions sailed from Paphos and arrived at Perga [a town in the province] of Pamphylia. [It was here that] John Mark left the party [of evangelists and attendants] and returned to [his home in] Jerusalem. [See 12:12]. 14) Then they traveled on past Perga and arrived at Antioch in Pisidia where they entered the [Jewish] synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. 15) And after the reading of the Law of Moses and [the writings of] the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent [word] to Paul and Barnabas, saying, "Brothers, if you [men] have any message that will exhort [or encourage] the people, you may speak."

16) So, Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand [to get their attention], he said, "You Israelites and those who have great respect for God, listen [to me]. 17) The God of Israel chose our forefathers [to be His people] and made them a great people when they lived in Egypt, and with His mighty power He led them out of it. 18) For about forty years He tenderly cared for them in the wilderness. 19) And then He destroyed seven nations in the country of Canaan and gave the Israelites the land as an inheritance for about four hundred and fifty years.

20) "After that He gave the people judges [i.e., local military rulers] until the time of Samuel the [first] prophet. [See 3:24]. 21) And after that the people asked for a king [to rule their nation] so God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, from the [Israelite] tribe of Benjamin, who ruled as king for forty years. 22) And when God removed him [from the throne of Israel] He raised up David to be their king. God said about him, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, to be a man close to my heart [i.e., whom I loved very much] and he will do all that I want him to.' 23) [Now] it was this David's descendant Jesus who was sent to Israel as their Savior, just as God had promised. 24) His coming occurred after John [the Immerser]

had preached to Israel that those who repented should be immersed [as evidence that they had done so]. 25) As John was completing his ministry he said [to the great crowds], 'Who do you people think I am? [No], I am not the Messiah. But look, Someone is coming [to Israel] after [I complete] my mission whose sandal straps I am not even worthy to unfasten.'

26) "You brothers, descendants of Abraham's family and those of you who respect God very much, this message of salvation was intended for us. 27) For the people living in Jerusalem, together with their ruling officials, did not understand [that Jesus was the Messiah] or what the message of the prophets, which is read every Sabbath day, really meant. So, [because of this] they [actually] made these Scripture predictions come true by condemning Jesus. 28) They asked Pilate to have Him put to death, even though they could not find any [legitimate] reason to execute Him. 29) And when they had done everything that was predicted about Him, they took Jesus down from the tree [i.e., the cross] and placed Him in a tomb. 30) But God raised Him up from the dead 31) so that He was seen for many days by those [apostles] who came with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem. These men are now His witnesses before the people. 32) And we bring you good news concerning the promise [God] made to our forefathers 33) and has now fulfilled to [us], their children, in raising up Jesus [to be the Messiah], just as it was written in the second Psalm [2:7]: "You [i.e., Jesus] are my Son; this day I have become Your Father." 34) [Now] in regard to God raising Him up from the dead, never to decay, He said this about it [Isa. 55:3], "I will give you the sacred and certain blessings promised to David." 35) God said in another Psalm [16:10], "You will not allow your Holy One to decay." 36) For David died and was buried with his forefathers and [his body] decayed after he had served his generation according to the purpose of God. 37) But Jesus, whom God raised up [from the dead], never did decay.

38) "Brothers, you should know, therefore, that forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed [to people] through this man [Jesus], 39) and [it is] by Him that every believer is made right with God in every way that he could not have been made right by [observing the requirements of] the Law of Moses. 40) Beware that what was spoken by the prophets does not happen to you: 41) [Hab. 1:5 says], "Look, you people who despise [God], and be amazed [at what He can do] and be destroyed [for rejecting Him]; for I [i.e., God] will

accomplish such a work during your days that you will not believe [it could happen, even] if someone told you about it."

42) As Paul and Barnabas left [the synagogue], the people urged them to speak [more] about this message the next Sabbath day. 43) Now when the synagogue service was over, many of the Jews and devoted proselytes [i.e., converts to the Jewish religion] followed Paul and Barnabas, who urged them to continue accepting the unearned favor of God.

44) On the following Sabbath day almost everyone in the town [of Antioch in Pisidia] gathered to listen to the message of God. 45) But when the Jews saw the large crowds [gathered to hear the Gospel] they became very jealous and took sharp issue with the things Paul said, and [even] spoke against them. 46) But Paul and Barnabas [continued to] speak out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the message of God be delivered to you [Jews] first. But since you have rejected it and [thereby] consider yourselves to be unworthy of [receiving] never ending life, we [i.e., Paul and Barnabas] will now begin proclaiming it to the [unconverted] Gentiles. 47) For the Lord commanded us to do this by saying, 'I have appointed you to be a light to the [unconverted] Gentiles, so that you should be [the occasion] for [bringing] salvation to the farthest corner of the earth.'" 48) And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad and gave honor to the message of God [i.e., they accepted it as true]. And all those who were appointed [by God] to receive never ending life [through faith and obedience] became believers.

49) And the Lord's message was spread far and wide over the entire region. 50) But the Jews incited the devoted [non-Jewish] women who held respected positions, and the principal men of the city, by stirring up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and [succeeded] in running them out of the region. 51) But they shook the dust off of their feet against them [i.e., as an expression of contempt for the people's attitude] and went on to Iconium. 52) But the [newly won] disciples [of the Lord] were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1) It happened in Iconium that Paul and Barnabas [again]

entered the Jewish synagogue and presented the message [so powerfully] that a large number of both Jews and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] became believers. 2) But the Jews who did not obey [the Gospel message] incited the spirits of the [unconverted] Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3) Paul and Barnabas remained there a long time and spoke [the message] boldly for [or, in the power of] the Lord who gave His approval to the message of unearned favor by allowing [miraculous] signs and wonders to be performed by them. 4) But the large crowd in the city [who heard them] became divided [over how to respond to it]; some sided with the [unbelieving] Jews and some with the apostles. 5) And when the Jews, along with their rulers and [unconverted] Gentiles, all mounted an attack, intending to stone them, 6) Paul and Barnabas found out about it and escaped to the towns of Lystra and Derbe, in the province of Lycaonia, and elsewhere in the vicinity. 7) There they continued preaching the good news [about Jesus].

8) At Lystra they met a certain man sitting [on the street] who had a crippling handicap in his feet which he had suffered since birth. [It was so severe] he was never able to walk. 9) As he listened to Paul, [the apostle] looked at him intently, perceiving that he had [enough] faith to be fully healed [of his lame condition], 10) so he said loudly, "Stand straight up on your feet." And the man jumped up and began walking.

11) And when the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the dialect of Lycaonia, "The gods have come down to us in human form." 12) So, they called Barnabas, "Zeus," and Paul "Hermes," because Paul was the principal speaker. 13) Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance of the city, brought bulls and wreaths of flowers to the gates [of the heathen temple], wanting to offer [animal] sacrifices on behalf of the crowds. 14) But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard about what they were trying to do [to them], they tore their clothes [i.e., as an expression of frustration] and rushed over to the crowd and shouted, 15) "Gentlemen, why are you doing these things? [Do you not know that] we are also human beings with the same kind of feelings that you have? And we are just bringing you the good news that you should turn away from these useless things [i.e., idol worship] and [turn] to the living God, who created the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them. 16) God allowed all nations to go their own way in past generations, 17) and yet He did not leave them without

evidence about Himself. He gave you good [things], brought rain from the sky, [provided] fruitful harvests and filled [your bodies] with food and your hearts with joy." 18) And [even though] they said these things, it was difficult to restrain the crowds from offering [animal] sacrifices to them.

19) But Jews came to [Lystra] from Antioch [in Pisidia] and Iconium. When they persuaded the crowds [to reject Paul's message] they stoned him and dragged him out of town, assuming he was dead. 20) But as the disciples stood around [Paul's apparently lifeless body], he [surprisingly] stood up [fully restored to health] and entered the town. On the following day he went with Barnabas to Derbe.

21) When they had preached the good news to that town, and had led many to become disciples, they returned to Lystra, [then] to Derbe, and [then on] to Antioch [in Pisidia]. 22) [Along the way] they strengthened the hearts of the disciples, urging them to continue [to believe and practice] the faith and [explaining] that entering God's [heavenly] kingdom [See II Tim. 4:18] requires enduring many trials. 23) And when Paul and Barnabas had appointed elders [for the churches] in every congregation and had prayed and fasted [over these elders], they committed them to [the care of] the Lord, in whom they had come to trust. 24) Then they traveled through [the rest of] Pisidia until they came to [the province of] Pamphylia. 25) After they had proclaimed the message in [the town of] Perga [in the province of Pamphylia], they went down to Attalia [a seaport of Pamphylia].

26) And from there they sailed to Antioch [in Syria], from where they had [originally] been committed to God's favor for [carrying out] the work which they had just completed. 27) And when they arrived [in Antioch of Syria], they gathered the church together and reported everything that God had done through them and how He had opened a door [of opportunity] for the [unconverted] Gentiles to [enter] the faith. 28) And they stayed with the disciples [there at Antioch] for quite some time.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) Certain men [i.e., believers, see verse 5] came down from Judea [to Antioch of Syria] and began teaching the brothers this: You cannot be saved unless you are circumcised according to the

custom [required] by Moses. 2) After Paul and Barnabas had a heated debate and argued with these men [over this issue], the brothers [of the Antioch church] decided that Paul and Barnabas, along with certain others, should go up to Jerusalem and discuss the question with the apostles and elders there. 3) So, they were sent on their way with the backing of the [Antioch] church and traveled through both Phoenicia and Samaria, telling them about the conversion of the Gentiles. This brought great rejoicing to all the brothers [who heard about it]. 4) When they arrived in Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church, together with the apostles and elders, and then reported everything that God had done through their ministry.

5) But certain believers, [who had been] members of the sect called Pharisees [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion], began saying, "It is necessary to circumcise people [see verse 1] and require them to keep [the ordinances of] the Law of Moses."

6) So, the apostles and elders [of the Jerusalem church] met together to discuss this problem. 7) And after many questions were asked [about it] Peter stood up and addressed the assembly [including the former Pharisees who were now brothers]:

"Brothers, you are aware that some time ago God decided that, from among your number, it would be through my ministry that the Gentiles would hear and believe the Gospel message. 8) And God, who knows [all people's] hearts, gave His testimony [to their acceptance] by giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us [See 11:15-17]. 9) And He did not discriminate between us [i.e., Jews] and them [i.e., Gentiles], cleansing their hearts [also] by faith [in Jesus]. 10) Why are you putting God on trial by trying to harness the disciples with a burden [i.e., compliance with the Law of Moses], which neither our forefathers nor we could possibly bear? 11) For we believe that [both] we [Jews] and they [Gentiles] will be saved in the same way, through the unearned favor of the Lord Jesus."

12) The whole crowd remained quiet as they listened to Barnabas and Paul reporting on the [miraculous] signs and wonders God had performed among the Gentiles through them. 13) Then, after they finished speaking, James [the Lord's half-brother, See 12:17] spoke up and said,

"Brothers, listen to me. 14) Symeon [i.e., Peter] reported how God first sent [someone to preach] to the Gentiles in order to reach a group of them [with the Gospel message] for His name. 15)

And this was predicted by the message of the prophets when they wrote [Amos 9:11ff], 16) 'After these things [have transpired], I will return [to my people] and will rebuild the Tabernacle [i.e., the Temple] of David, which has been destroyed. I will rebuild it from its ruins and reestablish it, 17) so that the rest of mankind, including all the Gentiles [or nations], may seek after the Lord and be called by my name. 18) This is what the Lord said when He predicted these things long ago.' 19) So, my advice is not to make it difficult for those who turn to God from among the Gentiles, 20) but to write [urging] them to avoid [eating] what is contaminated by [its association with] idol worship, from sexual immorality, from [eating] strangled animals and from [drinking] blood. 21) [For] every city has had for many generations people who proclaim [the teaching of] Moses, reading [his writings] in the synagogues every Sabbath day."

22) Then it seemed wise to the apostles and the elders, [along] with the entire church, to select men from their number and send them with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. So, they chose Judas, who was [also] called Barsabbas, and Silas, [who were] principal men among the brothers.

23) This is what they wrote [in the letter]: "[This is] from your brothers, the apostles and elders [of the Jerusalem church]: Greetings to [our] Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. 24) We have heard that certain [men] who left here have been upsetting you people and [even] undermining [some people's] spiritual lives by what they have been teaching. This was done without our authorization [or approval]. 25) So, after we came to full agreement, it seemed wise to us to choose [two] men [See verse 22] to accompany our dear Barnabas and Paul, 26) who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27) Therefore, we are sending Judas and Silas [with them] to tell you [these same] things in person. 28) For it was the judgment of the Holy Spirit, and we agreed, that no greater burden be placed on you people than the following necessary things: 29) Avoid [eating] things sacrificed to idols; avoid [drinking] blood; avoid [eating] things [that were] strangled [to death] and avoid sexual immorality. If you avoid [all] these things, you will be doing well. Goodbye."

30) So, when Paul, Barnabas, Judas and Silas left [the meeting] they went down to Antioch and, after gathering a large group [of the church] together, they presented the letter to them. 31)

And when they had read it, the people [of the Antioch church] rejoiced over the encouragement it gave them. 32) And Judas and Silas, who also were prophets, exhorted and strengthened the brothers with many [other] words. 33) After they [Judas and Silas] had spent some time [there at Antioch], the brothers [in Antioch] sent them away [back to Jerusalem]. A peaceful spirit prevailed [among all of them]. {{Some manuscripts add verse 34) But Silas decided to stay on [at Antioch]}}. 35) But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch and, along with a number of other [brothers], taught and proclaimed the message of the Lord [there].

36) Then after some days Paul suggested to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we proclaimed the message of the Lord, to see how they are doing." 37) Barnabas [agreed, and] wanted to take John Mark [his cousin, See Col. 4:10] with them. 38) But Paul was not at all in favor of taking someone who had left them and refused to continue on in the work [of preaching the Gospel] when they were in Pamphylia. [See 13:13]. 39) A heated discussion developed [over this matter] so that Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways [over it], with Barnabas sailing for Cyprus and taking [John] Mark with him. 40) But Paul chose Silas and, after being commended to the [care and] favor of the Lord by the brothers, he left, 41) traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches [along the way].

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) When Paul came to Derbe and [then] to Lystra, he met a certain disciple named Timothy, whose mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek [i.e., Gentile]. 2) This young man had a very good reputation among the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. 3) Paul wanted him to travel with him [on a preaching mission] so he had him circumcised in order to avoid prejudice by the Jews in that area, for everyone knew that his father was a Greek. 4) And as they traveled through the towns [of Asia Minor] they presented [to each church] the requirements they were to observe that had been decided on by the apostles and elders of the Jerusalem church. 5) So, the churches [of the region] were being [spiritually] strengthened in the faith and grew in number daily.

6) And then Paul, Silas, Timothy [and perhaps others by

now] **traveled through the districts of Phrygia and Galatia** [i.e., provinces of central Asia Minor] **because** [an inspired message from] **the Holy Spirit would not permit them to proclaim the message in Asia** [i.e., the westernmost province of Asia Minor]. 7) **When they came near Mysia** [i.e., a northwestern province of Asia Minor] **they attempted to travel into Bythia** [i.e., a northern province of Asia Minor] **but** [an inspired message from] **the Holy Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to,** 8) **so they went on through Mysia and came down to Troas,** [i.e., a seaport on the Aegean Sea, from which they sailed over to Europe]. 9) **Then one night** [while asleep] **Paul had a vision** [i.e., an inspired dream] **in which a man from Macedonia** [i.e., northern Greece] **stood in front of him begging, "Come over to Macedonia to help us."** 10) **After seeing** [the man in] **the vision, we immediately made every effort to go to Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the good news** [about Jesus] **to the people there.** [Note: This is first use of "we" and "us" in the book of Acts and indicates that Luke, the writer of Acts, joined the party at this point. See 1:1 with Luke 1:1-3].

11) **After setting sail from Troas we headed straight for Samothrace** [i.e., an island in the Aegean Sea] **and the next day we went on to Neapolis** [i.e., a seaport in Macedonia], 12) **and from there to Philippi, a city of the principal district of Macedonia,** [which was] **a Roman colony. We stayed in this city for a number of days.**

13) **On a** [particular] **Sabbath day we went outside the city gate to a place beside a river where we thought people gathered for prayer. We sat down and began speaking** [about the Lord] **to some women who had gathered there.** 14) **A certain woman named Lydia, from the town of Thyatira, who sold purple cloth** [for a living], **was there. She was a worshiper of God and when she heard us** [telling about salvation through Christ], **the Lord opened her heart to respond to the message being spoken by Paul.** 15) **And when she was immersed** [into Christ], **along with her household** [i.e., possibly relatives and/or employees] **she urged us, saying, "If you consider me to be a faithful disciple of the Lord, come and stay at my house." And she insisted that we go** [to her house].

16) **At a later time, when we were going to that** [same] **place of prayer, we met a certain young woman who was dominated by an** [evil] **spirit, [claiming to be] able to tell people's fortunes. This** [claimed] **power was the source of considerable income for the girl's slave-owner.** 17) **She followed Paul and us, shouting, "These men**

are servants of the Supreme God and they are proclaiming to you the way to be saved." 18) And she kept this up for a number of days. But Paul was very disturbed [over what she was doing] and [finally] turned [to her] and said to the spirit [in the girl], "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And the evil spirit did come out [of her] immediately.

19) But when the girl's slave-owners saw that their prospects for income [from her activities] were [now] gone, they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the open shopping market, in front of the authorities. 20) And when they brought them before the city officials, they made this charge [against them]: "These Jewish men are causing too much trouble in our city, 21) and they are teaching people to observe customs which we Romans are not permitted to accept or practice." 22) Then the large crowd began attacking them and the city officials had their clothes ripped off and ordered them to be beaten. 23) After beating them severely, they threw them in jail and ordered the jailor to have them securely guarded. 24) After receiving these orders, the jailor threw them into the maximum security cell and had their feet securely fastened in wooden restraints.

25) But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God while the [other] prisoners listened. 26) Suddenly there was a terrible earthquake which violently shook the foundation of the jail. Immediately all the [cell] doors swung open and everyone's chains fell off. 27) The jailor, who was awakened from sleep [by the commotion] saw the jail doors open so drew his [short] sword and prepared to kill himself, assuming that all the prisoners had escaped. [Note: He would have faced a humiliating execution himself if he had allowed capital offense criminals to escape. With that prospect in view, it was considered honorable by the Romans for a person to commit suicide]. 28) But Paul shouted out, "Do not hurt yourself, for everyone is [still] here." 29) The jailor called for torches [to be brought], then rushed in [to the cell block], shaking with fear, and fell down [on his knees] before Paul and Silas. 30) After bringing them out [of the jail area] he said, "Sirs, what do I have to do to be saved?" 31) Paul and Silas said, "You and your family can be saved if you [all] believe in the Lord Jesus." 32) Then they [continued to] speak the message of the Lord to him and everyone [else] in his household. 33) The jailor immediately took Paul and Silas, and cleansed [and soothed] their wounded [backs] and

then he and his [believing] household were immersed [into Christ]. 34) Then he brought them up into his house and prepared a meal for them. So, he and everyone in his household, who had believed in God [and were immersed], rejoiced greatly.

35) The next morning the city officials sent their officers [to the jailor] with the message "Release those men." 36) The jailor then informed Paul [of the officials' decision], saying, "The city officials have decided to release you so you may leave the jail [if] you go peacefully." 37) But Paul responded to the officials, "These city officials had us innocent Roman citizens publicly beaten and thrown in jail. Are they now trying to release us privately? No indeed! Let the officials themselves come and [publicly] release us."

38) So, the officers reported what Paul had said and the city officials became fearful when they learned that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. 39) So, they came and appealed to them [to leave peacefully]. Then the authorities themselves accompanied them out [of the jail] and asked them to leave the city. 40) When Paul and Silas left the jail they went to Lydia's house and, after seeing the brothers [and sisters gathered there] and encouraging them, they went on their way.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1) Now when they [Note: A change from the use of "we" to "they" suggests that the writer Luke remained behind in Philippi at this point] had traveled through the [Macedonian] towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to [the city of] Thessalonica where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2) As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, [and] for three Sabbath days [in a row] he taught them from the Scriptures, 3) explaining and declaring that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and [then] rise again from the dead. Paul was saying, "This Jesus, whom I am proclaiming to you, is the Christ." 4) Some of the Jews were convinced [that Jesus was the Messiah] and so joined with Paul and Silas. Also, a large number of devoted Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] and leading women [joined their group].

5) But [other] Jews became jealous and, recruiting certain ungodly riffraff, they gathered a mob and brought the city to near-riot conditions. They [even] attacked Jason's house and attempted

to bring Paul and Silas before the [assembly of] people. 6) When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials and shouted, "These men have turned the world upside down [i.e., disrupted society by their preaching] and have [now] come here also [i.e., to do the same thing in our community]. 7) Jason has welcomed them and [now] all of them [i.e., Paul, Silas, Jason and the others] are going against the [Roman] laws of Caesar by saying that someone else is [our] king; that Jesus is [king]!" 8) When they heard [these charges], the crowds and [even] the city officials became very disturbed [by the situation stirred up by the Jews]. 9) They made Jason and the others post bail, and then released them.

10) The brothers [then] immediately sent Paul and Silas away at night to Berea [i.e., a town in Macedonia]. When they got there they went into the Jewish synagogue. 11) Now these people [in Berea] had more character than those in Thessalonica because they [not only] received the message with an open mind but [also] examined the [Old Testament] Scriptures every day to see if what they had heard was really true. 12) Many people therefore became believers [in Christ], including a number of leading Greek women and also a number of men.

13) But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that Paul was proclaiming the message of God at Berea also, they went there too, and incited and upset the crowds. 14) So, immediately the brothers sent Paul clear over to the coast, while Silas and Timothy remained there [at Berea]. 15) But those who escorted Paul took him to Athens [i.e., in Greece] and, after being directed to have Silas and Timothy join him there as soon as possible, they left.

16) Now while Paul was waiting for them [to arrive] in Athens, he was deeply stirred in his spirit when he saw the city so full of idols. 17) So, he debated in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing people [i.e., Gentile proselytes], as well as in the open shopping market with others who met with him there. 18) Also certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers approached him for discussion. Some asked, "What will this know-it-all have to say?" Others said, "He seems to be advocating [a belief in] some different gods." [They said this] because he was proclaiming Jesus and the resurrection [of the dead]. 19) So, they led him to the Areopagus [i.e., an elevated assembly place called "the Hill of Mars"] and asked him, "Could we learn [more] about this new teaching you are

speaking of? 20) You are telling us some very unusual things and we would like to know what they mean." 21) (Now the local people of Athens, along with foreigners who lived there, spent [about] all their time telling about or listening to some new idea.)

22) Then Paul stood up in the Areopagus and said, "You men of Athens, I noticed that you are an extremely religious people in all your ways. [See verse 16] 23) For as I traveled along [your streets] and observed what you are worshiping, I saw an altar with the inscription: [DEDICATED] TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So, what you are worshiping ignorantly is what I am telling you about. 24) The God who made the world and everything in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in hand-made temples. 25) Neither is He waited on by men's hands as though He needed anything, since it is He who gives to all people their life and breath and everything [they need]. 26) He made every race of people living throughout the earth from one [family] and determined when [they would rise in history] and where they would live. 27) He wanted these people to search for God in hope that, by groping for Him, they might [eventually] find Him, even though He is not [really] very far from [any of] us. 28) For in [the strength of] God we [all] live, move around and have our [personal] identity, just as a certain one of your [Athenian] poets [once] said, 'For we too are His children.' 29) Since therefore we are God's children, we should not think that the Deity is like gold, silver or stone, to be carved [into an idol] by the design and skill of men. 30) Now God made allowance for the times when people were still uninformed [about His complete will], but now [in the Gospel age] He requires all people everywhere to repent [i.e., change their hearts and lives]. 31) For He has appointed a [certain] day when He will judge the people of the world according to [a standard of] true justice by the man [i.e., Jesus] whom He has appointed [as Judge, See II Tim. 4:8]. [And] He has given assurance to all people [that He will do this] by raising Jesus from the dead."

32) Now when the people heard about the resurrection from the dead, some of them made fun of it, but others said, "We would like to hear [more] from you about this again." 33) So, Paul left [the Areopagus]. 34) But certain men continued to listen to him and became believers [in Jesus]. Among them was Dionysius, [an official] of the Areopagus, a woman named Damaris and others with them.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1) After this happened Paul left Athens and went to Corinth [i.e., a principal city of Greece]. **2) There he met a certain Jewish man named Aquila, a native of Pontus,** [in northern Asia Minor] **who, with his wife Priscilla, had recently come from Rome, because Claudius** [the Roman Emperor] **had ordered all Jews out of that city. Paul met this couple 3) and, because they followed the same trade of tent making, he stayed with them and went to work** [for them]. **4) Every Sabbath day Paul held discussions in the synagogues, trying to convince** [both] **Jews and Greeks** [i.e., Gentiles, that Jesus was the Messiah].

5) But when Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia [i.e., from the town of Berea], **Paul began devoting his full time to declaring the message to Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6) When the Jews resisted** [Paul's efforts] **and spoke against him and his message, he shook out his clothing** [i.e., an expression of rejection and contempt] **and said to them "Let your blood be on your own heads** [i.e., you are responsible for whatever harm comes from your action]; **I am not responsible. From now on I will go** [and preach] **to the Gentiles** [only]."

7) So, he left [this assembly of Jews] **and went to the house of a certain man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was right next door to the synagogue. 8) Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, and all of his family became believers in the Lord. [And] many of the Corinthians who heard** [Paul's message] **believed** [in the Lord] **and were immersed** [into Christ].

9) Then the Lord spoke to Paul in a night vision [i.e., a divinely given dream]: **"Do not be afraid, but speak up and do not hold** [anything] **back, 10) for I will be with you** [See Matt. 28:20] **and no one will attack you or hurt you, for I have many people in this city** [i.e., who will be converted]." **11) So, Paul lived there** [in Corinth] **for eighteen months, teaching God's message among the inhabitants** [of the city].

12) But when Gallio was magistrate of Achaia [i.e., the southern province of Greece] **the Jews joined forces to attack Paul and brought him before the court of justice, 13) and said** [about him], **"This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the Law** [of Moses]." **14) When Paul was about to respond** [to this

charge], Gallio said to the Jews, "[My] Jewish [constituents], if it were a simple case of wrongdoing or some serious crime, there would be good reason for me to consider your charge [against this man]. 15) But if it is only a dispute over words, titles and your [religious] law, tend to it yourselves; I refuse to pass judgment on such [trivial] matters." 16) And he had them thrown out of the courtroom. 17) Then, all of them [Note: This "all" could refer to the Greeks, the Jews or the Roman officers. Since the text does not specify, it seems most reasonable to suggest it was the Romans] grabbed Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the court of justice. But Gallio showed no interest in the whole affair.

18) After this [incident] Paul remained [in Corinth] for some time before leaving the brothers and sailing for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila. Paul shaved his head while in Cenchrea as part of a vow he had taken. 19) When they arrived at Ephesus, Paul left Priscilla and Aquila there. He then went into the [Jewish] synagogue and held discussions with the Jews. 20) When they asked him to stay [and continue the discussions] longer, he declined. 21) So, he left them, saying, "I will come back to you if it is God's will." Then He sailed from Ephesus.

22) And when he landed at Ceasarea, he went up [Note: This would mean either up to Ceasarea or up to Jerusalem] and greeted the church [there], then went down to Antioch [in Syria]. 23) After spending some time there, he left and traveled through the district of Galatia, [and] then through Phrygia, strengthening [spiritually] all the disciples [along the way].

24) Now a certain Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria [Egypt] and an effective speaker, who was well-grounded in the [Old Testament] Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25) He was a man who had learned the way of the Lord, and with spiritual fervor, taught accurately [what he knew] about Jesus, although he knew [and had received] only the immersion [taught and practiced] by John. 26) He began speaking boldly in the synagogue and when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and proceeded to explain to him God's way more accurately [than he had known]. 27) And when he desired to travel over into Achaia, he was encouraged [to do so] by the brothers, who wrote to the disciples [in Achaia and urged them] to welcome him. When he arrived [in Achaia] he was a great help to those who had become believers through the unearned favor of God. [Note: An alternate

meaning is, "he was a great help, through God's unearned favor upon him, to those who had become believers". **28) For Apollos effectively refuted** [the position of] **the Jews, publicly proving, by using the** [Old Testament] **Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ.**

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1) Then, while Apollos was [still] **at Corinth, Paul traveled through the** [western] **districts and came to Ephesus where he found some disciples. 2) He asked them, "Did** [any of] **you receive the** [indwelling] **Holy Spirit when you became believers** [in Jesus]?" **They answered him, "No, we have never** [even] **heard that there was a Holy Spirit."** **3) Paul** [again] **asked, "Into what were you immersed then?" They answered him, "Into John's immersion."** **4) Paul** [then] **said, "John immersed people who** [demonstrated their] **repentance, telling them they must believe in Jesus, the One who would come after him."** **5) When they heard this they were immersed into the name of the Lord Jesus. 6) Then Paul placed his hands on them and** [the supernatural power of] **the Holy Spirit came on them and they** [began to] **speak in** [other] **languages and prophesy** [i.e., speak God's message]. **7) The total number** [of those immersed] **was twelve men.**

8) Paul went into the Jewish synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, discussing and convincing people about matters regarding the kingdom of God. 9) But some became stubborn and refused to obey [the message], **saying false things about "the Way"** [Note: This was a term used to designate the early church] **in front of the large crowds. So, Paul left** [the synagogue] **and took the disciples and began holding discussions every day at Tyrannus' school** [house]. **10) This continued for two years so that all the Jews and Greeks** [i.e., Gentiles] **who lived in** [the province of] **Asia heard the message of the Lord.**

11) And God performed special miracles through the hands of Paul, 12) such as sick people, who were given hand towels or [leather] **aprons that had touched Paul's body, being healed from diseases and delivered from evil spirits.**

13) But certain traveling Jews, who practiced exorcism, decided that they too would attempt to speak the name of the Lord over people dominated of evil spirits while saying, "I command you

[evil spirits to come out] **by [the authority of] Jesus whom Paul preaches."** 14) [Now] **the seven sons of a Jewish leading priest named Sceva were doing this.** 15) [On one occasion] **the evil spirit replied, "I know Jesus and I know Paul, but who are you?"** 16) **The man with the evil spirit then jumped on all of them, took control, then overpowered them so that they ran out of the house with their clothes torn off and badly beaten.**

17) **When this incident became known to all of the Jews and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] who lived in Ephesus, they became fearful and the name of the Lord Jesus was regarded with honor.** 18) **Many of the believers also came confessing their sins and describing what they had [previously] done.** 19) **And a large number of them, who had been involved in occultic practices, brought their books [on the occult] and began burning them publicly. When they calculated the cost [of the books] it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.** [Note: The actual amount was approximately 150 years of a farm laborer's pay, or more than 3 million dollars in 1994]. 20) **So, the message of the Lord spread widely and had a great influence [over people].**

21) **After these things happened Paul decided to travel through Macedonia and Achaia on his way to Jerusalem. He said, "Then, after I have been there I want to visit Rome also."** 22) **After sending his two associates Timothy and Erastus on to Macedonia [Note: These were men who cared for various needs of his ministry], Paul remained in [the province of] Asia for a while.**

23) **About that time a large disturbance arose [in Ephesus] concerning "the Way."** 24) [Here is what happened]: **A certain manufacturer of silver objects named Demetrius, who made silver replicas of the temple of Artemis [i.e., a Greek goddess], brought much business to his workmen.** 25) **He called a meeting of his men and others involved in the same work and said to them, "Fellows, you know that we have made a good living from this work [of making temple replicas].** 26) **And now you have seen and heard, not only here in Ephesus, but throughout almost the entire [province of] Asia, that this Paul has been convincing people, [even] to the point of turning many away [from idol worship]. [He is] saying that hand-made gods [like we make] are not real [gods at all].** 27) **And not only is there a [real] danger that our trade will be discredited but also that the temple of our great goddess Artemis will be considered worthless and that even she [herself] will be dethroned from her**

magnificent place of being adored by all [in the province of] Asia and the world." 28) When they heard this they became extremely angry and shouted out, "Great is [the goddess] Artemis, of the Ephesians." 29) The city became full of confusion; they grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's Macedonian traveling companions, and everyone together rushed into the amphitheater. 30) And when Paul decided to go before the crowd [to talk with them], the disciples would not allow him. 31) Some of his friends, who were officers in the province of Asia, sent word urging him not to take a chance by entering the amphitheater. 32) Some [in the crowd] were shouting one thing and some another; there was mass confusion, with most of the people not [even] knowing why they had assembled. 33) [It appears that] Alexander was appointed out of the crowd by the Jews [i.e., to be their spokesman in defending them from the charges being made against Paul]. He motioned with his hand [to get attention] and attempted to speak to the assembly in defense [of the Jewish viewpoint]. 34) But when the crowd realized that he was a Jew, they all joined together for about two hours shouting, "Great is [the goddess] Artemis, of the Ephesians." 35) When the town clerk had quieted down the crowd, he said, "You people of Ephesus, who among you does not know that the city of Ephesus is caretaker of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell down from the sky? 36) Since no one can [really] say anything against these things, just calm down and do not do anything foolish. 37) For you have brought these men here --- [men] who have neither desecrated our temple nor defamed our goddess. 38) If therefore Demetrius, and the workmen associated with him, have a charge against anyone, the courts are open and there are magistrates [to judge such cases]; let them file their charges against each other. 39) But if you want to address other matters, they can be settled in the regular, scheduled assembly. 40) For we are truly in danger of being accused of inciting a riot here today when there is [really] no reason for it to happen. Then concerning this problem, we will not be able to explain how it all came about." 41) And after the town clerk had said all this, he dismissed the assembly.

CHAPTER TWENTY

- 1) After the commotion died down, Paul sent for the

[Ephesian] **disciples and encouraged them before he left**, [heading west] **for Macedonia**. **2) And when he had traveled through those districts and had delivered many messages of encouragement, he went on [south] into Greece**, **3) where he spent three months**. Then, **just as he was about to set sail for Syria, Paul discovered that a plot was being laid against him by the Jews, so he decided to return through Macedonia**. **4) The following men accompanied Paul as far as [the province of] Asia [where Troas was located]: Sopater, the son of Pyrrhus, of Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus, of Thessalonica; Gaius, of Derbe; Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from [the province of] Asia; [seven in all]**. **5) These [men] had gone ahead and were waiting for us [when we arrived] in Troas [i.e., a seaport town across the Aegean Sea from Philippi]**. [Note: The use of "us" begins here again, suggesting that the writer Luke rejoins the party at Philippi. See next verse]. **6) And we [ourselves] sailed away from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread [Note: This was the Jewish feast commemorating deliverance from Egyptian bondage], and five days later [we] joined them at Troas [i.e., the seven men mentioned in verses 4 and 5], where we remained for seven days.**

7) And on the first day of the week [i.e., Sunday], when we [disciples] had gathered together to break bread [i.e., the Lord's Supper. See I Cor. 11:20-24], Paul delivered a message that lasted until midnight, [since] he was planning to leave [Troas] the next day. **8) Now there were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting**. **9) A certain young man, named Eutychus, fell sound asleep while sitting on an [open] window ledge [during the message]. Since Paul's message continued [until nearly midnight] Eutychus was overcome by sleep and fell from the third floor to his death**. **10) Paul hurried downstairs and placed himself on the young man and held him closely, saying [to the people gathered around], "Do not be upset, he is alive."** **11) After that Paul went upstairs, broke bread and ate [a common meal]. [Following the meal] Paul talked with them for a long time, even until it got daylight, and then he left**. **12) [In the meantime] they brought the young fellow [back upstairs] alive, and were greatly comforted.**

13) But we went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos [i.e., a seaport town near Troas], where we expected to take Paul on board. This is how Paul had planned it, intending to go there himself by land. **14) When he met us at Assos, we took him on board, then [together] we went to Mitylene [i.e., a town on a nearby**

island]. 15) **And after leaving there, the next day we sailed past Chios** [i.e., another small island on the way], **and the next day past Samos** [i.e., another small island], **until** [finally] **on the following day we arrived at Miletus** [i.e., another seaport town near Ephesus]. 16) **For Paul had decided to sail on past Ephesus so he would not have to spend any time in** [the province of] **Asia, because he was hurrying to get to Jerusalem in time for the Day of Pentecost, if at all possible.**

17) **And from Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus, requesting that the elders of the church** [there] **come to him.** 18) **And when they arrived, he said to them, "You** [men] **know the kind of life I lived when I was with you, from the** [very] **first day I set foot in** [the province of] **Asia.** 19) [You know that] **I served the Lord with humility, with tears and with trials that I experienced as the result of plots by the Jews.** 20) [You know] **how I held back nothing in declaring to you whatever was profitable, and taught you in public** [meetings] **and in your homes.** 21) [You know how] **I testified to both Jews and Greeks** [i.e., Gentiles], **that they must repent** [i.e., change their attitudes and behavior] **toward God, and have faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**

22) **"And now, look, I am going to Jerusalem, impelled by the Holy Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me** [when I get] **there,** 23) **except that the Holy Spirit reveals to me in every city** [I visit] **that chains and persecutions await me there.** 24) **But I do not consider my life to be of value, as precious to me,** [when compared to the importance of] **accomplishing my task and the mission I received from the Lord Jesus to declare the good news of God's unearned favor** [through Christ]. 25) **Now look, I know that none of you, among whom I traveled on preaching missions, will ever see my face again.** 26) **Therefore, I** [must] **declare to you today that I am not responsible for what happens to any of you.** 27) **For I held nothing back in declaring to you the entire message of God.** 28) **So, pay close attention to your** [own] **lives, and to all** [members] **of the flock** [i.e., the congregation] **of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers** [i.e., elders, shepherds or pastors]. **Provide** [spiritual] **food for the church of the Lord which He purchased by** [shedding] **His own blood.** 29) [Because] **I know that after I am gone** [from here] **there will be vicious wolves** [i.e., ravaging false teachers] **who will come in among you, and they will not spare the flock** [i.e., the congregation]. 30) [Indeed, even] **from among your own selves** [i.e.,

the body of elders there in Ephesus] **some men will arise and, by speaking false things, they will lead away the disciples,** [influencing them] **to follow them.** 31) **So, be very watchful, and remember that for three years I never stopped warning every one of you** [about such matters] **both night and day with tears** [in my eyes].

32) **"Now I commit you** [elders] **to God and to the message of His unearned favor which can build you up** [spiritually] **and provide you with the inheritance** [of never ending life], **along with others who are** [specially] **set apart** [for God]. 33) [You know that] **I had no greedy desire for anyone's silver, gold or clothing.** 34) You [also] **know that I worked with my own hands to provide not only my own needs, but the needs of those who were with me.** 35) **I have demonstrated before you a** [good] **example in all** [these] **things, so that you** [too] **will work hard to help those who are** [physically] **weak.** [Also] **remember the words of the Lord Jesus who Himself said, 'It is a greater blessing** [for you] **to give** [to people's needs] **than to receive** [help yourselves].'"

36) **After speaking these things Paul knelt down and prayed with all of the elders.** 37) **And when they all had a good cry, they embraced Paul and kissed him.** 38) **What saddened them most of all was when Paul said that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to his ship.**

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1) **After we had** [reluctantly] **left** [the Ephesian elders] **and set sail, we traveled straight** [south] **to Cos** [i.e., a small island] **and the next day to Rhodes** [i.e., another island], **and from there on to Patara** [i.e., a seaport town on the southern coast of the province of Asia Minor]. 2) **Here we found a ship heading across** [the open sea] **for Phoenicia, boarded it and sailed away.** 3) **When we sighted Cyprus** [i.e., a large island], **we sailed past it on our port side and arrived at Tyre** [i.e., a major seaport] **in Syria** [i.e., on the west coast of Palestine], **where the ship was to unload its cargo.** 4) **When we located the disciples** [there] **we stayed** [with them] **for seven days.** **They advised Paul, through** [inspired revelations from] **the Holy Spirit, not** [even] **to set foot in Jerusalem.** 5) **When we had completed preparations for the next day's voyage we left, and headed out** [to sea] **on our journey. All the disciples, together with**

their wives and children, escorted us out of the city and knelt down and prayed with us as we said goodbye to each other. 6) Then we went aboard the ship while the disciples returned home again.

7) When we completed our voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais and greeted the brothers there, then stayed with them for a day. 8) The next day we left and came to Caesarea, where we went to the house of Philip, the evangelist, who had been one of the seven ["deacons" chosen by the Jerusalem church to minister to widows, See Acts 6]. We stayed with him [while there]. 9) This man had four virgin [i.e., unmarried] daughters, who were female prophets [i.e., they spoke by inspiration].

10) As we waited there for a number of days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11) When he met with us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet [with it], and said, "The Holy Spirit has revealed [to me] that the man who owns this belt will be tied up like this by the Jews in Jerusalem and will be turned over to the Gentiles." 12) When we heard these things, both we and those who lived there [i.e., Philip, his daughters and local disciples] urged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. 13) [But] Paul answered, "What are you trying to do [by your] crying and breaking my heart [like this]? [Do you not know that] I am ready, not only to be chained up, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus?" 14) And when he could not be dissuaded [from going to Jerusalem] we stopped [trying to convince him], saying, "Let the Lord's will be done in the matter."

15) After these days we packed up our belongings and went up to Jerusalem. 16) Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us also, bringing with them Mnason from Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to live [while in Jerusalem].

17) And when we came to Jerusalem, the brothers [there] welcomed us gladly. 18) The next day Paul went with us to visit James [the Lord's half-brother and a leader in the Jerusalem church], with all of the elders [of the Jerusalem church] being present. 19) And after greeting them Paul reported one by one the things that God had brought about among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20) And when they heard [all] this, they gave honor to God, then said to Paul, "Brother, you can see how many thousands of Jewish believers [in Christ] there are [everywhere] and all of them are eager to observe the [requirements of the] Law of Moses. 21) Now these [Jewish Christians] have been informed that you are teaching all the

Jews living among the Gentiles to give up [following the teaching of] **Moses, [even] telling them not to circumcise their children and not to practice the [other] customs [of the Jewish religion]. 22) What do you think will happen when they hear that you have come [here to Jerusalem]? 23) So, here is what we would like you to do: We have four men who have made a vow [i.e., a special promise to God]. 24) Take these men and observe the ceremony of purification with them, pay their expenses so they can shave their heads [i.e., to signify that they are making a vow] and [then] everyone will know that there is no truth in what people have been told about you, but that you, too, are living properly and observing the Law of Moses. 25) But concerning Gentile believers, we wrote [to them] our decision, that they should avoid [eating] things sacrificed to idols, from [drinking] blood, from [eating] what is strangled and from sexual immorality."**

26) Then Paul took the men and the next day he observed the ceremony of purification with them. Then he went into the Temple, declaring [to the priest] when he would fulfill the [required] days of the purification [ceremony] and [be ready] for the sacrifices to be offered for each of them.

27) When the seven days [required by the vow] were almost completed, the Jews from Asia saw Paul in the Temple. They incited the whole crowd and took hold of him, 28) shouting, "[You] Israelites, help [us]! This man is teaching people everywhere [to be] against our people [i.e., the Jews], the Law of Moses and this place [i.e., the Temple]; and in addition to that he has also brought Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] into the Temple and has [thereby] contaminated this holy place." 29) (For the Jews had previously seen him on a city street with Trophimus, the Ephesian, whom they assumed Paul had taken into the Temple [with him]).

30) [So], the entire city was stirred up, and the mob rushed together and attacked Paul, dragging him out of the Temple. Immediately the [Temple] doors were closed [i.e., to secure it from further intrusion]. 31) And as they were attempting to kill Paul, the commander of the military unit was informed that the entire city of Jerusalem was rioting. 32) So, immediately he rushed down on the people with his soldiers and officers, and when the mob saw the commander and his soldiers [coming], they stopped beating Paul. 33) Then the commanding officer approached Paul, took hold of him and ordered him to be secured with two chains. He then

questioned him as to who he was and what he had done. 34) From the crowd, some shouted one thing and some another. When the commander could not hear what was being said because of the noise, he ordered Paul to be taken into the battalion headquarters. 35) When they got to the stairway [of the headquarters building] the soldiers had to carry Paul because of the [unrestrained] violence of the mob, 36) for the crowds that followed were [pressing in on them] shouting, "Kill him."

37) As Paul was being brought into the headquarters building, he said to the commander, "Can I speak with you?" The commander replied [with surprise], "You know the Greek language? 38) Are you not the Egyptian who, awhile back, stirred up a revolt and led four thousand of the 'Dagger Men' out into the wilderness?" 39) Paul answered, "[No], I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city, and I beg you to allow me to speak to these people."

40) And when the commander gave him permission, Paul stood on the stairway and motioned to the people with his hand [for attention]. When they completely quieted down, he spoke to them in the Hebrew [i.e., Aramaic] language, saying,

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1) "Brothers and fathers, listen to the defense I want to make to you."

2) And when they heard him speaking in the Hebrew language, they listened all the more quietly. So, he continued, 3) "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, in Cilicia, but raised [here] in this city [i.e., Jerusalem]. [I was] instructed by Gamaliel [i.e., a renowned Jewish rabbi of the time] according to the strictest methods of observing the law of our forefathers. [I was very] eager to serve God, just as all of you are here today. 4) And I persecuted this 'Way' [even to the point of] putting people to death. [I had] both men and women bound [in chains] and locked up in prisons. 5) The head priest can also verify all this, and so can the body of [Jewish] elders. They furnished me with letters to our fellow-Jews in Damascus, to which I also traveled to bring people back here to Jerusalem, bound in chains to be punished.

6) "And then it suddenly happened, about noon, as I was

traveling and got close to Damascus, that this brilliant light from the sky flashed all around me. 7) I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' 8) I answered, 'Who are you, sir?' And the voice answered me, 'I am Jesus from Nazareth, the One you are persecuting.' 9) Those who accompanied me saw the light clearly, but did not hear [i.e., understand] the voice of the one speaking to me. 10) Then I asked, 'What am I to do, Lord?' And the Lord replied to me, 'Get up, go into Damascus and there you will be told everything [I have] appointed for you to do.' 11) And since I could not see [anything] because of the brilliance of the light, I had to be led by the hand of those with me into Damascus.

12) "[Then] Ananias, a man who was devoted to [observing] the Law of Moses and who had a good reputation among all the Jews who lived there, 13) came and stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, regain your sight.' And at that very moment I looked at him [fully able to see again]. 14) And he said [to me], 'The God of our forefathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One [i.e., Jesus], and to hear His voice [speaking to you]. 15) For you will be His witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. 16) So now, what are you waiting for? Get up and be immersed [into Christ], and have your sins washed away as you appeal to His name [i.e., to Christ's authority].'

17) "And it happened that when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the Temple, I fell into a trance [i.e., a semi-conscious vision-like state]. 18) And I saw [and heard] the Lord saying to me, 'Hurry up, get out of Jerusalem quickly, because the people [here] will reject your testimony about me.' 19) And I replied, 'Lord, they know very well that I am [the one] who imprisoned and beat the believers [who assembled] in every synagogue, 20) and when your witness Stephen was killed, I stood there, approving [of it] and [even] guarding the clothing of those who stoned him to death.' 21) Then the Lord said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away from here to the Gentiles.'"

22) The people had listened to Paul speaking up to this point [i.e., until he said the word "Gentiles"], then they raised their voices and shouted, "Do away with such a person from the earth; it is not right for him to live."

23) And while the people shouted, waved around [torn] clothing and threw dust into the air, 24) the commander ordered

Paul to be brought to headquarters and requested that he be interrogated by means of a flogging, in order to learn the reason why people were shouting against him. 25) Just as they were tying him up [in preparation] for the flogging, Paul said to the officer nearby, "Is it lawful for you to whip a Roman [citizen] before he has been [legally] condemned?"

26) When the officer heard this, he [immediately] went and told the commander, saying, "What are you going to do? For this man is a Roman citizen." 27) Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you [really] a Roman citizen?" Paul said, "Yes." 28) The commander answered, "It cost me a large sum of money to obtain this [right of] citizenship." Paul replied, "But I am a Roman citizen by birth." 29) Then those who were ready to interrogate Paul [with whips] immediately left him, and the commander also became fearful when he realized that he had chained a Roman citizen [illegally].

30) But the next day the commander released Paul [from the chains] because he wanted to know what specific charges the Jews had against him. So, he ordered the leading priests and the entire [Jewish] Council to assemble, then brought Paul down and placed him in front of them.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

1) Paul [then] looked intently at the Council [i.e., the Jewish Supreme Court called the "Sanhedrin"] and spoke [in his defense]: "Brothers, I have lived before God with a good conscience all my life." 2) [Upon hearing this], the head priest Ananias ordered that those standing closest to Paul hit him on the mouth. 3) Then Paul said to the head priest, "God will hit you, you white-washed wall [i.e., you hypocrite]. Are you sitting in judgment over me according to the Law of Moses and [yet] do you order me to be hit contrary to that law?" 4) Those who stood nearby replied, "Are you insulting God's head priest?" 5) Paul said, "Brothers, I did not know that he was the head priest, for it is written [Ex. 22:28], 'You shall not speak evil about a leader of your people.'"

6) When Paul realized that part [of the Sanhedrin] were Sadducees and the other part were Pharisees, he lifted up his voice before the Council and said, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee and the son

of a Pharisee. And it is concerning our hope that the dead will be raised that I have been brought to trial." 7) When he said this it stirred up a dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees and the assembly became divided. 8) For the Sadducees believe there is no resurrection, angels or spirits, but the Pharisees accept all of them [to be true].

9) A loud commotion developed [in the Council meeting]. Some of the teachers of the Law of Moses who belonged to the Pharisee party stood up and argued, saying, "We can find nothing wrong with this man. What if an angel or spirit did speak to him?"

10) And when a serious debate broke out, the commander was afraid that Paul might [virtually] be torn apart by the mob, so he ordered his soldiers to go down [to the Council meeting] and forcibly remove Paul and take him to the battalion headquarters.

11) The next night the Lord stood beside Paul [in a supernatural dream] and said, "Take courage, for just as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also be my witness in Rome."

12) When daylight came, [a group of] Jews conspired together, agreeing under oath that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. 13) There were more than forty men who made this pact. 14) They went to the leading priests and [Jewish] elders and told them, "We have bound ourselves under an oath [with serious consequences] to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15) Therefore, [all of] you, together with the Jewish Council, should notify the commander so that he will bring Paul [back] down to you, as though you wanted to consider his case further. Then we will be ready to kill him, [even] before he comes near [you]."

16) But Paul's nephew learned of their plot and went to the headquarters and told Paul [all about it]. 17) So, Paul called for one of the officers and said [to him], "Take this young man to the commander; he has something [important] to tell him." 18) So, the officer took Paul's nephew to the commander and said, "Paul, the prisoner, called for me and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to tell you." 19) The commander took him by the hand, and walking along together, asked him privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?" 20) And the lad said, "The Jews have plotted to ask you to take Paul down to the Council [meeting] tomorrow, as though you were going to question him further. 21) But, do not listen to them, because over forty men have

laid a plot and bound themselves under an oath [with serious consequences] neither to eat nor drink [anything] until they have killed him. They are now ready [to carry out the plot] and are just waiting for you to agree [to their arrangement]." 22) So, the commander let the young man go, urging him, "Do not tell anyone that you have reported this to me." 23) Then he called two of his officers and said, "Get two hundred soldiers ready to go to Caesarea, along with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, by nine o'clock tonight." [Note: This was calculated according to Jewish time]. 24) And he [also] requested that they furnish animals for Paul to ride so he could be brought safely to Felix, the governor.

25) The commander then wrote a letter like this: 26) "Claudius Lysias, [commander of the battalion, is writing] to His Excellency, Governor Felix. Greetings: 27) This man [i.e., Paul] was grabbed by the Jews and almost killed by them when I discovered what they were doing and rescued him, after learning that he was a Roman citizen. 28) So, I brought him before the Council because I wanted to know the reasons for the charges [they were] bringing against him. 29) I found out that he was being accused over questions regarding their law, but that they had no charges against him deserving of the death penalty, or [even] of being kept in prison. 30) And when I was told that there was a plot against the man, I sent him to you immediately, also ordering his accusers to present their case against him in front of you."

31) So, the soldiers took charge of Paul and took him at night to Antipatris [Note: This was a town on the road between Jerusalem and Caesarea] as they were ordered. 32) The next day the soldiers allowed the horsemen to go on with Paul, while they [themselves] returned to headquarters. 33) When they came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul before him. 34) And when the governor read the letter, he asked what province Paul was from. When he learned that he was from Cilicia, 35) he said, "I will hear your case fully when your accusers also get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept [under guard] in Herod's palace.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

1) Five days later the head priest, Ananias, came down [to Caesarea] with certain [Jewish] elders and an attorney [named] Tertullus, who brought their case against Paul before the governor. 2) When Paul was called [to appear before the court] Tertullus began the prosecution by saying, "Your Excellency Felix: Since through you we are able to enjoy peace [in this province] and under your jurisdiction the problems in our society are being [properly] dealt with, 3) we welcome all such efforts in each district with full gratitude. 4) But, not wanting to prolong matters for you, I urge you to give consideration to this brief account [of the problem we face]. 5) We have found this man [i.e., Paul] to be extremely bothersome, and an instigator of strife among the Jews throughout the world and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6) We arrested him, for he attempted to desecrate [even] the Temple {{Some ancient manuscripts add verse 7) and we would have judged him according to our law but commander Lysias came and forcibly took him out of our hands}} 8) [and] you will be able to determine the nature of our accusations against him by questioning him yourself." 9) Then the Jews also joined in [making] the charge, and confirmed all the facts that were being presented.

10) And when the governor had motioned for him to speak, Paul answered [the charges, by saying],

"I know [Your Excellency] that you have administered justice for this nation for many years, so I am glad to make my defense [before you]. 11) [I know] you can verify that it has not been over twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12) [While there] I was not observed arguing with anyone or trying to stir up a crowd [to riot] in the Temple or in the synagogues or [anywhere else] in the city. 13) Neither can anyone prove to you the charges they are now bringing against me. 14) But, I declare to you, I am serving the God of our forefathers according to the 'Way,' called [by my detractors] a sect, and I believe everything that is in harmony with the Law of Moses and what is written in [the writings of] the prophets. 15) I have a hope in God that there will be a resurrection both for those who have done right and those who have done wrong, just as the Jews themselves also expect. 16) So, for this reason I make every effort to have a clear conscience before God and men at all times.

17) "Now after several years I came [to Jerusalem] to bring relief for the poor people of my nation and to present my offerings.

18) While doing this, they [i.e., the Jews] found out that I had undergone the rites of purification in the Temple. There was no crowd and no commotion. But certain Jews from [the province of] Asia 19) should have been here before you, [Your Excellency] to make their accusations, if they [really] had a valid charge against me. 20) Or let these men themselves [i.e., members of the Sanhedrin] testify what they found wrong with me when I stood before their Council [meeting]. 21) However, this one point, which I made when I stood among them [could have been objectionable]: I shouted, 'The reason I am being charged before you today is [my preaching of] the resurrection of the dead.'

22) But because Felix [felt he] had more accurate knowledge of the "Way" [than was being presented by Paul's accusers], he dismissed them, saying, "When commander Lysias comes down [to Caesarea] I will make a decision on your case." 23) So, he ordered his officer to keep Paul in custody, yet with some freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from ministering to his needs.

24) After a number of days, Felix and Drusilla, his wife, who was a Jewess, came [back to the palace] and sent for Paul to [come and] tell them about [the] faith in Christ Jesus. 25) And as he discussed the matters of doing right, and [maintaining] self control and the coming judgment, Felix became terrified and answered, "Go on away for now; I will call you back when it is convenient for me." 26) He had hoped, along with everything else, that he would receive money from Paul, so he sent for him more frequently and had discussions with him.

27) So, Felix allowed Paul to remain in chains, because he wanted to gain favor with the Jews [during that period of time]. Two years passed and Felix was succeeded by Portius Festus.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

1) Three days after Festus came to the province he went from Caesarea up to Jerusalem. 2) The leading priests and the leading Jewish men [there] informed Festus of the charges against Paul. Then they begged him 3) to do them a favor by having Paul

brought [from Caesarea] to Jerusalem, for they were plotting to kill him on the way. 4) Festus answered that [since] Paul was being held in custody in Caesarea, and [since] he himself was soon going there [i.e., he could see Paul at Caesarea at that time]. 5) So, he said, "Let your leaders go down with me and if there is anything [found] wrong with the man, let them bring their charges against him [at that time]."

6) After staying not more than eight or ten [more] days [there in Jerusalem], Festus went down to Caesarea and the following day he ordered Paul to appear before him as he sat in his court of justice. 7) When Paul appeared, the [Jewish] leaders who had accompanied Festus down from Jerusalem gathered around him and brought many serious charges against him, which they were not able to prove. 8) Paul replied in his defense, "I have not committed any sin against the law of the Jews, nor against the Temple, nor against Caesar."

9) But Festus, wanting to gain favor with the Jews [See 24:27], answered Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there?" 10) Paul replied, "I am [already] standing before a court of Caesar's authority, where I deserve to be tried. I have done nothing wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. 11) If then I am a criminal and have committed any crime that deserves the death penalty, I will not try to avoid being put to death. But if none of the charges I have been accused of are true, [then] no one has the right to turn me over [to the authorities]. I make my appeal to Caesar." 12) After conferring with his advisors, Festus answered Paul, "[Since] you have appealed to Caesar, then you will go to Caesar."

13) After a number of days King Agrippa [Note: This man was the great grandson of Herod the Great. See Matt. 2:1] and [his wife] Bernice arrived at Caesarea and came to greet Festus. 14) While they stayed there [with him] for many days, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king, saying, "There is this man [named Paul] who was left in custody by Felix. 15) When I was at Jerusalem, the leading priests and the Jewish elders presented his case before me to make a judgment against him. 16) I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to turn over any person [for sentencing] before he is faced by his accusers and has had the opportunity to defend himself against the charges made against him. 17) When therefore his accusers had assembled here I did not delay [in dealing

with the matter; in fact] **the very next day I sat in court and summoned the man to be brought** [before me]. **18) When his accusers stood up, they brought no charge of wrongdoing as I had expected** [they would]. **19) All they had was a controversy with him over their own religion and about someone named Jesus, who had died** [but] **whom Paul alleges is** [now] **alive.** **20) And I was perplexed as to how to proceed with the investigation, so I** [finally] **asked him if he would go to Jerusalem to have his case judged there.** **21) But when Paul requested that his case be reviewed for a decision by Caesar, I ordered him to remain in custody until I could send him to Caesar."**

22) Agrippa said to Festus, "I had been wanting to hear this man's testimony myself." [Festus replied], **"Tomorrow you will** [have the opportunity to] **hear him."**

23) So, the next day, when Agrippa and [his wife] **Bernice, arrived in an elaborate procession, they entered the hearing chamber, along with the commanders and leading men of the city.** **24) Then Festus spoke, "King Agrippa, and all you gentlemen assembled with us, you see this man whose case a large number of Jews, [first] at Jerusalem and [then] here [in Caesarea] have petitioned me** [to resolve]. **They have been clamoring for him to be put to death,** **25) but I found that he had committed nothing which deserved the death** [penalty]. **And since he himself appealed** [his case] **to the Emperor, I decided to send him** [to Rome]. **26) But I do not have anything specific to write to His Majesty. This is the reason I have brought him before this assembly, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after you have questioned him, I would** [then] **have something** [substantial] **to write.** **27) For it does not seem reasonable for me to send a prisoner** [to Rome] **without indicating what the** [formal] **charges are against him."**

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

1) Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."

So, Paul motioned [to the assembly] **with his hand** [for attention] **and began speaking in his defense:** **2) "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that I am able to defend myself before you concerning all the charges being brought against me by the Jews,** **3) especially since you are an expert on all the customs and issues**

discussed among the Jews. So, for this reason I request that you hear [my response to them] patiently. 4) All the Jews know how I lived during my youth and my early days among [the people of] my nation, and [especially here] in Jerusalem. 5) They know of my early background; if they were willing to, they could testify that I lived as a [faithful] Pharisee, [which is] the strictest sect of our religion. 6) And now I am standing [here], being judged because [I believe that] God will fulfill the hope He promised to our forefathers. 7) This is the promise our twelve tribes [i.e., family groups], who earnestly serve God night and day, hope to see fulfilled. It is because [I advocate] this hope, O King, that I am being charged [with wrongdoing] by the Jews. 8) So, why should you [Jews] consider it incredible for God to raise the dead? 9) I truly thought within myself [that it was right] to do many things which were opposed to the name of Jesus from Nazareth. 10) So, I was doing this in Jerusalem, having received [my] authority from the leading priests. I both imprisoned many of the saints [i.e., God's holy people] and [even] voiced my approval when they were put to death [See 8:1]. 11) I often persecuted them in the synagogues, [even] trying to get them to blaspheme [i.e., speak against God]. I had extreme anger toward them and [even] traveled to foreign cities [in my effort] to persecute them.

12) "While on a journey to Damascus for this purpose, I was acting under the authority and directive of the leading priests. 13) [Then] along the road, about noon, O King, I saw a light from the sky, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those traveling with me. 14) When we all fell to the ground I heard a voice speaking in the Hebrew [i.e., Aramaic] language. [It said], 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? You are only hurting yourself by kicking against the spurs [i.e., opposing the work of God].' 15) I answered, 'Who are you, sir?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting. 16) But, get up onto your feet, for the reason I have appeared to you is to appoint you a minister and witness of both the things you have [already] seen of me and the things I will [reveal when] appearing to you. 17) I will rescue you from the [Jewish] people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them, 18) to open their eyes [to the truth] so they will turn from darkness to light and from the power [i.e., the influence] of Satan to God. [Then] they can receive the forgiveness of sins and the inheritance [of never ending life], along with [all] those who are set

apart [for God] by trusting in Me.'

19) "As a result of this, O King, I did not disobey [the mandate of] this vision from heaven 20) but, [instead] declared to the people of Damascus first, [then] to the people of Jerusalem, and [finally to those] throughout all of the district of Judea, as well as to the Gentiles [everywhere] that they should repent [i.e., change their hearts and lives] and turn to God, doing deeds which demonstrate their repentance. 21) For this reason the Jews grabbed me in the Temple and attempted to kill me. 22) But I obtained help from God and so [I am able to] stand here to this day, testifying to both the common people and to those in prominence. [I am] saying only what the prophets and Moses said would happen, 23) namely, that the Christ must suffer and be the first to rise from the dead [i.e., never to die again] and then proclaim the light [of the Gospel] to the [Jewish] people and to the Gentiles."

24) As Paul made his defense in this way, Festus said to him loudly, "Paul, you are crazy. All your education is driving you insane." 25) But Paul replied, "I am not crazy, Your Excellency Festus; I am [just] speaking a message of truth and sound reason. 26) I can speak boldly of these things because the King knows [they are true]. And I am convinced that none of these things are hidden from you, for none of them have been done in a corner [i.e., secretly]. 27) King Agrippa, do you believe [the message of] the prophets? [Yes] I know you do."

28) Agrippa said to Paul, "You expect to persuade me to be a Christian with such little effort [or, in such a short time]?" 29) Paul replied, "I wish to God that, whether it would take a little or a lot, not only you, but all those who hear me today, might become [Christians] like me, except [not] with these chains."

30) Then King Agrippa, [his wife] Bernice, Governor [Festus] and [the commanders and leading men of the city, 25:23] all rose up, 31) and when they left [the room] they conferred with one another, saying, "This man is not doing anything deserving of the death penalty or [even] imprisonment." 32) Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been released if he had not appealed [his case] to Caesar."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

1) And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they transferred Paul and certain other prisoners to the custody of a military officer named Julius, of the Augustan battalion. 2) We boarded a ship [originating] from Adramyttium which was ready to sail [from here in Caesarea], heading out to sea for parts of the coast of [the province of] Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, went with us.

3) The next day we stopped at Sidon [i.e., a seaport on the northwest coast of Palestine]. Julius treated Paul with kindness, [even] giving him the opportunity to meet his friends [there] and receive help [from them]. 4) We headed out to sea from there and sailed along the sheltered side of Cyprus because the wind was against us. 5) When we had sailed across the sea, off [the coast of] Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, [a town] of Lycia. 6) There Julius, the military officer, arranged [passage] for us on a ship, [originating] from Alexandria, [and] bound for Italy, and put us on board. 7) When we had sailed slowly for many days [and] had trouble passing Cnidus because of an unfavorable wind, we sailed on the sheltered side of Crete and on past Salmone. 8) After making our way along the coast [of Crete] with difficulty, we arrived at a place called Fair Harbors [i.e., the principal seaport of the island], which was near the town of Lasea.

9) After much time had passed, the voyage became more dangerous because it was [now] past the Day of Atonement [Note: This would have been around September or October, when a sea voyage involved rough sailing]. So, Paul began warning the people [aboard ship], 10) saying, "Sirs, I can see that this voyage will result in suffering and much loss, not only to the ship and its cargo, but also to our [very] lives." 11) But the military officer paid more attention to the captain and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul was saying. 12) And, because the harbor was not suitable for staying in all winter, most of those on board were in favor of putting out to sea from there. They were hoping to reach Phoenix, [another] harbor on [the island of] Crete, which faced northwest and southwest, and [then] to spend the winter there.

13) When the south wind began to blow gently, they raised anchor, thinking this was the opportunity they had hoped for, [then] sailed close to the coastline of [southern] Crete. 14) But a short time later, a violent northeasterly wind they called "*Euraquilo*" swept down, 15) and when the ship was caught [by it], we were not able

to face the wind, so had to give in and allow the ship to drift. 16) Then, sailing on the sheltered side of a small island named Cauda, we experienced difficulty in trying to secure the ship's life-boat. 17) And when they [finally] got the boat hoisted up, they slung [rope] cables underneath [and around] the hull [of the ship to reinforce it]. Then, fearing the ship would run aground on the [shifting], shallow sandbar [called] Syrtis, they lowered their [navigation] gear [Note: This may have been sails, rigging, etc.] and so were driven [as a derelict by the wind]. 18) As we were being severely battered by the storm, they began the next day to throw the cargo overboard [i.e., to lighten the ship]. 19) On the third day, they handed [the rest of] the ship's gear to each other, and threw it overboard [Note: This was perhaps furniture, rigging, sails, baggage, etc.]. 20) When they could see neither the sun nor the stars for many days [due to the storm], and with the wind blowing furiously on them, they gave up all hope of [ever] being saved.

21) When they had gone without food for a long time, Paul stood in the middle of the crew and spoke, "Men, you should have listened to me and not sailed from Crete and thereby have to experience such suffering and loss. 22) But, now I want to encourage you to cheer up, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only the ship [will be lost]. 23) For an angel from God, to whom I belong and whom I serve, appeared to me last night, 24) saying, 'Do not be afraid Paul, for you must appear before Caesar, and look, God will grant you [the safety of] all these men aboard ship [along] with yourself.' 25) So men, cheer up, for I believe God, that everything will turn out just as I was told it would. 26) But we must be washed onto the shore of a certain island."

27) When the fourteenth night came, and while we were being tossed around [helplessly] in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the crew suspected they were nearing land. 28) So, they tested for depth and found [they were in] 120 feet [of water]. Then a little later they tested again and found it to be 90 feet. 29) So, fearing the possibility of being run aground on a rocky shore, they dropped four anchors from the stern and longed for daylight [to come]. 30) The crew had [by now] lowered the life-boat into the water, pretending to be dropping anchors from the bow, [but were in reality] attempting to abandon ship. 31) Paul said to the military officer [Julius] and to his soldiers, "Unless these men stay aboard the ship, none of you will be saved." 32) So, the soldiers cut the ropes

securing the life-boat and let it drift away.

33) As it was dawning, Paul urged them [i.e., the crew, soldiers and probably the passengers] to eat something, saying, "You have been waiting for fourteen days [for the weather to break] and you have continued to fast [all that time], eating nothing [at all]. 34) I urge you to eat some food; it will be for your own good, for not one hair from anyone's head will be lost." 35) And when he had said this he took bread, gave thanks to God for it in front of everyone, then broke it and began to eat. 36) Then they were all encouraged and they themselves took something to eat also. 37) (The total number of us aboard the ship was 276 persons). 38) And when they had eaten sufficiently, they began lightening the ship [so it would float higher] by throwing their wheat overboard.

39) When it got daylight they saw an island they did not recognize, but noticed [it had] a particular bay with a [suitable] beach. So, they discussed whether it would be possible to run the ship aground on the beach. 40) [Finally] they cut the ropes, dropping the anchors into the water and at the same time they released the oars used for steering. Then they hoisted the bow-sail to the wind and headed [straight] for the beach. 41) Landing where two [strong] currents met, the ship ran aground, its bow lodging [in the sand] while its stern began to break up from the driving surf. 42) [Meanwhile] the soldiers had decided to kill the prisoners so that none of them would swim away and escape. 43) But the military officer, wanting to save Paul [from being killed], prevented them from doing this. [Instead] he ordered those who could swim to jump overboard and be the first to reach land. 44) The rest [he reasoned] could reach shore by floating on planks or other debris from the ship. And so it happened that all of them escaped safely to land.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

1) After we escaped [from the sinking ship] we became aware that the island [on which we had landed] was Melita [i.e., present-day Malta]. 2) The natives [there] showed us uncommon kindness. It had begun to rain and was [getting] cold, so they built a fire and made us feel welcome. 3) But as Paul gathered a bundle of sticks, and was placing them on the fire, a snake crawled out because of the heat and clung to his hand. 4) And when the natives saw the

poisonous creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "This man must be a murderer because, even though he escaped from the sea, [divine] justice is not going to allow him to live." 5) However, Paul shook off the creature into the fire without suffering any harm. 6) But the natives expected him to swell up [from snake bite] or fall dead suddenly, but after expecting this for a long time and not seeing any harm come to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

7) Now in that general vicinity there was property belonging to the chief of the island, a man named Publius, who welcomed us courteously and entertained us for three days. 8) And it happened that Publius' father lay sick with a fever and dysentery. Paul went [to his house] and, after praying and placing hands on him, healed him. 9) When he had done this, the rest of those on the island who had diseases, [also] came and were healed. 10) These people also showered many honors on us and when we sailed [away], they brought the provisions we needed and put them aboard [the ship].

11) After three months we set sail on a ship that had spent the winter on the island [of Melita]. This ship had originated from Alexandria and was designated as "Twin Brothers" [Note: The ship may have been named this because of its prow containing the figures of the mythical twin gods of sailors, Castor and Pollux]. 12) And docking at Syracuse [i.e., a town on the eastern shore of Sicily], we stayed there three days. 13) From there we sailed around [and then north] until we arrived at Rhegium [i.e., a town on the "toe" of Italy]. The next day a south wind began blowing, and on the second day we arrived at Puteoli [i.e., a town about half-way to Rome], 14) where we found [some Christian] brothers. They urged us to stay with them for seven days. So, [that is how] we finally got to Rome. 15) [So], hearing that we were coming, the brothers [from Rome] traveled from there as far [south] as "The Market of Appius" and "The Three Inns" to meet us. When Paul saw them he thanked God and was [very] encouraged.

16) When we entered Rome [itself] Paul was permitted to live alone except for a soldier who guarded him.

17) And it happened after three days that Paul called together those who were the leading Jews, and when they assembled he said to them, "Brothers, although I had done nothing against the [Jewish] people or the customs of our forefathers, yet I

was made a prisoner at Jerusalem, being placed in the custody of the Romans [while there]. 18) After questioning me, they wanted to release me because they could not find any grounds for sentencing me to death. 19) But when the Jews objected to this, I was compelled to appeal [my case] to Caesar, even though I had no [legitimate] charge [to bring] against my country. 20) It was for this reason that I requested to see you and talk with you, for I am wearing this chain because of the hope held by the Israelites." 21) Then they said to him, "We did not receive any letters from Judea about you, nor did any of the brothers come here to report anything bad about you. 22) But we would like to hear what you think, for according to our knowledge, this sect [you belong to] is being spoken against everywhere."

23) And when they had arranged a day, large numbers of people came to Paul's house. He explained [everything to them], testifying from morning until evening concerning the kingdom of God and concerning [the Messiahship of] Jesus, both from the Law of Moses and from [the writings of] the prophets. 24) And some people believed what Paul said and some refused to believe. 25) And when they could not agree among themselves they left, after hearing Paul make this one [important] statement: "The Holy Spirit has spoken truthfully to your forefathers through Isaiah the prophet, 26) saying, [Isa. 6:9-10], 'Go to these people and say, you will hear all right, but you will not understand [what you hear]. You will see all right, but you will not perceive [what you see]. 27) For these people's minds are dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes. For, if this were not the case, they would perceive what they see with their eyes, and understand what they hear with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and would turn [back to God] again and I [God] would heal them [from their sins].' 28) Then let it be known to you that salvation from God is [now] being announced to the Gentiles. They will listen [to it]." {{Some ancient manuscripts insert verse 29) And when he had said these words, the Jews left, disputing about the matter among themselves.}}

30) Then Paul lived for two whole years in his own rented house and welcomed everyone who visited him. 31) He preached to them about the kingdom of God and taught things about the Lord Jesus Christ, with no one preventing him.