# Acts

A letter to TheoPhilus, containing the history of Christianity after the death of Jesus, primarily focusing on Paul. It seems to be a follow-up to the previous letter, now known as the Gospel of Luke.

It was probably written by Paul’s traveling companion Luke the Physician about 64 CE, likely in Koine Greek.

Please notice the hyperlinks on the names, places, and events mentioned. These demonstrate the accuracy and authenticity of the account, as history records much of what’s written about.

And although some modern critics claim that he got his dates wrong, it would seem that the person who wrote about the events shortly after they happened should be trusted more than those who dispute his numbers more than two millennia later.

### Acts

## Chapter 1

1O TheoPhilus,

This is the first account I’ve assembled about all the things that Jesus did and taught 2[that begins] from the day he gave his instructions to the Apostles (whom he chose by Holy Breath) after he’d been raised [from the dead], 3[that is,] those he showed himself to after his suffering, and to those whom he provided many proofs during the 40 days that they saw him, while he spoke to them about things regarding the Kingdom of God.

4Well, after they’d all assembled together [with him], he gave them this order:

 ‘Don’t leave JeruSalem. Stay there and wait for the promise that the Father spoke of, and about which you [also] heard from me.

 5‘Indeed, John immersed you with water, but in just a few days you‘ll be immersed in Holy Breath!’

6And when he met with them all again, they asked him this:

 ‘Lord, are you going to restore the Kingdom to IsraEl now?’

7But he said:

 ‘It’s none of your business to know the times and periods that the Father has is in charge!

 8‘However, you’ll receive power when the Holy Breath comes over you... And you’ll be witnesses of me in JeruSalem, throughout all of Judea, in Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth.’

9Well, right after he said these things, while they were looking at him, a cloud hid him from their eyes. 10Then as they were staring into the sky, watching him go, {Look!} two men in white clothes stood beside them and said:

 11‘Men of Galilee,

 ‘Why are you standing there looking up into the sky?

 ‘This Jesus, who was taken from you into the sky, will return in the same way that you saw him going into the sky.’

12And after this, they returned to JeruSalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, which is close to JeruSalem (the [maximum] legal distance for travel on a Sabbath).

13When they entered [the city], they all went to the upper room where [the Apostles] (Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, BarTholomew, Matthew, James [the son] of AlphaEus, Simon the zealous one, and Judas [the son] of James) were staying. 14And they were all in one mind and purpose as they continued praying, along with some women who had come there with Jesus’ mother Mary and his brothers.

15It was at this time that Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers (about 120 people in all) and said:

 16‘Men! Brothers!

 ‘The scripture had to be fulfilled, which [spoken] through [God’s] Holy Breath, was a prophecy that [King] David spoke about Judas. This [Judas] was the man who guided those who arrested Jesus, 17although he used to be one of us in sharing in this service.

 18‘Yes, he was the one whose wicked wages were paid to purchase the field into the middle of which he then fell head first and burst, causing his guts to pour out... 19And which field has become known to everyone living in JeruSalem today as Akel Dama (The Field of Blood).

 20‘For this is what was written about him in the scroll of the Psalms:

 *‘Let his estate just lie empty*
 *And may no one else ever live there;*
 *Then let another take his position.’*
 [Psalm 109:6]

 21‘Therefore, we have this obligation:

 ‘One of the men who’s been with us from when the Lord Jesus entered among us until he left us 22(starting with his immersion by John until the day that he was taken up from us), and someone who witnessed his resurrection, should become one of us.’

23So they asked two men to stand up, JoSeph (who’s called BarSabbas and was surnamed Justus) and MatThias.

24Then they prayed, saying:

 ‘O Jehovah,

 ‘The One who knows the hearts of all men,

 ‘Show us which of these two You’ve chosen 25to receive the position of Apostleship that Judas abandoned so that he could go his own way.’

26And at that, they were both handed lots, and the selected lot fell to MatThias. As a result, he was considered as being among the other 11 Apostles.

### Acts

## Chapter 2

1Now, towards the end of the day known as Pentecost, while they were all observing that celebration, 2a noise suddenly came out of the sky! It sounded like a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire, which were distributed so that one [tongue] sat over each of them... 4And they all became filled with Holy Breath and started speaking different languages, saying whatever the Breath was telling them to say!

5Now at the time, there were reverent Jews from every nation under the sky who were staying in JeruSalem. 6So when this sound occurred, a huge crowd gathered there and everyone was bewildered, because each person heard one of [the disciples] speaking his own language.

7They were astonished and started to wonder and say:

 ‘These people who are talking are all Galileans, aren’t they? 8So how is it that we’re each hearing our own native tongue being spoken?’

9[Well, there were] Parthinians, Medes, Elamites, MesoPotamians, Judeans, CappaDokians, [and people from] Pontus, [the province of] Asia, 10Phrygia, PamPhylia, Egypt, parts of Libya Cyrene, travelers from Rome (Jews and proselytes), 11Cretans, and Arabians.

[They said]:

 ‘We hear them talking about the wonderful things of God in our own language!’

12Yes, they were all astonished and confused, and they were asking each other:

 ‘What’s this all about?’

13However, others joked about them saying:

 ‘They’re full of sweet wine!’

14But Peter then stood up beside the 11, and raising his voice, he said this:

 ‘Men of Judea and all you who live in JeruSalem,

 ‘I want you to know something… Listen to what I’m saying to you!

 15‘These [men] really aren’t drunk as you think, because it’s only the 3rd hour of the day [that is, 9am in the Jewish time system, 12noon in the Roman system].... 16What’s happening is the thing that was said through the Prophet JoEl!

 17‘For through him, God said:

 ‘*In the last days,* says The God,
 *I will pour out My Breath on all flesh,*
 *And your sons and daughters will then prophesy;*
 *Your young men will also have visions,*
 *And the old among you will [see things in] dreams.*

 18*‘Yes, even upon My male servants*
 *And on those who are My handmaidens,*
 *I will pour out My Breath in those days,*
 *And all will then prophesy.*

 19*‘From the skies above, I’ll send omens and signs*
 *With blood, fire, and smoke to the earth down below,*
 20*Before the great, shining day of the Lord.*

 *‘For the sun will be changed into darkness*
 *And the moon will be changed into blood.*
 21*Then, all of those will be saved*
 *That have called on the name of the Lord.’*
 [paraphrase of Joel 2:28-31]

 22‘Men of IsraEl; listen to these words!

 ‘Jesus the Nazarene was a man who was shown to you by The God with power, omens, and signs that He performed through him in your midst, as you already know. 23Yet you handed this man (who had received his advice and his ability to see the future from God) over to men who don’t have the Law, and who then nailed him up!

 24‘But thereafter, God resurrected him, freeing him from the cords of death, because it wasn’t possible for [death] to hold him down.

 25‘So, notice that David said this about him:

 *‘I’ve always put Jehovah before me;*
 *And since He’s at my right hand,*
 *I’ll never be shaken.*

 26*‘Therefore, in my heart, I’m cheerful,*
 *And with my tongue, I’ll rejoice;*
 *For my body finds rest in the hope*
 27*That in the grave, You’ll not leave me,*
 *And Your loyal one won’t see decay.*

 28*‘For the ways of life, You’ve shown me,*
 *And You’ll fill me with joy from Your face.’*
 [older version of Psalm 16:8-11, agreeing with the Dead Sea Scrolls of Psalm 16 in 4Q85]

 29‘Men! Brothers!

 ‘It’s good to speak to you openly about the patriarch David; for he died, was buried, and his tomb is still with us to this day. 30For he was a Prophet, and he knew that The God had sworn an oath to him that He’d put someone on his throne who was the fruit of his loins.

 31‘So [David] looked into the future and spoke about the resurrection of the Anointed One… That he wouldn’t be abandoned in the grave and that his flesh wouldn’t see decay.

 32‘So this [one] Jesus has now been resurrected by The God (we’ve all been witnesses to this fact) 33and he’s been elevated to God’s right hand, where he’s received the Holy Breath that the Father promised.

 ‘Therefore, he’s the one who poured out everything you’ve been seeing and hearing today!

 34‘And although David didn’t go to heaven, he said:

 *‘Jehovah said this to my Lord:*

 *‘Sit here at My right hand,*
 35*‘Til I set your enemies as a stool for your feet.’*
 [Psalm 110:1]

 36‘So let the entire House of IsraEl know for sure that God appointed this Jesus whom you impaled to be the Lord and His Anointed One!’

37Well when they heard this, they were all stabbed to the heart! So they asked Peter and the other Apostles:

 ‘Men, Brothers, what must we do?’

38Then Peter told them:

 ‘Repent!

 ‘And each of you should get immersed in the name of Jesus the Anointed One, so your sins can be forgiven… And then you’ll receive the gift of the Holy Breath.

 39‘That’s a promise to you, to your children, and to all those who are far away… To all those who’ll be called by our God, Jehovah!’

40Well thereafter, he went on and testified to them a lot more, giving them this advice:

 ‘Get saved from this crooked people!’

41Then those who welcomed his words were immersed… And about 3,000 people were added that day! 42These continued to attend, listening to the Apostles as they were teaching, and everyone participated as they were sharing in meals and in prayers. 43For they were all in awe over the many signs and omens that started happening through the Apostles.

44And all who became believers started sharing everything that they had; 45they even sold their belongings and properties and distributed the proceeds to anyone who was in need.

46They also agreed to go to the Temple every day, after which they’d eat their meals in private homes… Eating the food happily and with sincere hearts, 47praising The God and finding favor with everyone.

And all the while, the Lord kept adding more newly-saved ones to them each day.

### Acts

## Chapter 3

1Now, Peter and John had gone to the Temple for the scheduled time of prayer (at the 9th hour [that is, 3pm]), 2and a man was there who had been lame from birth; [he] had to be carried and placed near the Temple gate (the one called Beautiful) every day, to beg from those entering the Temple.
3And when he saw Peter and John about to enter the Temple, he started begging from them. 4But Peter and John stared at him and said:

 ‘Look at us!’

5So he looked at them, expecting to get something.

6Then Peter said:

 ‘I don’t have any silver or gold, but I’ll give you what I do have… In the name of Jesus the Nazarene, the Anointed One, walk!’

7Then he took him by the right hand and lifted him; and instantly, the soles of his feet and his anklebones were made well! 8So he jumped up and stood… And then he started walking!

So he entered the Temple with them, walking, jumping, and praising God.

9Well, everyone noticed him walking around and praising God, 10and they started to realize that this was the man who used to sit and beg at the Temple’s Beautiful Gate. This astonished them and they were all delighted by what had happened to him.

11So, as the man was holding onto Peter and John near what was called The Columns of Solomon, all the people came running to them, shocked out of their wits.

12And when Peter saw this, he said:

 ‘Men of IsraEl,

 ‘Why are you surprised at this? And why are you staring at us as though we made him walk by our own power or by our own devotion?

 13‘It was the God of AbraHam, IsaAc, and Jacob – the God of our ancestors – who glorified His servant Jesus, whom you then betrayed and disowned before the face of Pilate after he’d actually decided to release him.

 14‘Yes, you disowned that holy and righteous man, and you asked [Pilate] to [instead] release a man who was a murderer! 15So you killed the Prince of Life! However, God thereafter raised him from the dead, which we had all witnessed!

 16‘It’s because of [our] faith in his name that this man here –whom you see and know– was made well. Yes, it’s because of faith that everything you see here has happened!

 17‘And now brothers, I know that what you did was done in ignorance… And this was true of your rulers. 18But, just as it was foretold by the mouths of all the Prophets, it was God who caused His Anointed One to endure all these things, so that it could be fulfilled this way.

 19‘So now, repent and turn around to get your sins erased, so that you might come to see a period of refreshment from Jehovah! 20Then He will send this one [who was] proclaimed [or appointed] to you… The Anointed Jesus.

 21‘However, he will remain in the heavens until the time when everything that God told us through the mouths of the holy [ones] in His age of the Prophets is restored.

 22‘In fact, it was Moses who said:

 *‘Jehovah God will raise a Prophet like me from among your brothers, and you must listen to everything that he tells you.* 23*Then if the people don’t listen to that Prophet, they’ll all be destroyed!’* [Deuteronomy 18:18-19]

 24‘Why, all the Prophets from SamuEl onwards – everyone who spoke – clearly talked about these days... 25And you are the sons of the Prophets! And [you’re also sons] of the Sacred Agreement that God made with your ancestors, when he told AbraHam:

 *‘All the families of the earth will be blest by your offspring!’* [Genesis 28:14]

 26‘Therefore, God then raised this servant and sent him to you first as a blessing to you, so that each of you might turn away from the bad things that you’re doing.’

### Acts

## Chapter 4

1Well, as Peter and John were talking to the people, the Chief Priests, the Temple captains, and the SadDucees came up to them, 2and were very annoyed by the fact that [Peter and John] were teaching the people and telling them how Jesus had been resurrected from the dead... 3So they had them arrested and held until the next day (since it was already evening).

4However, many of those who listened to them started believing, and their numbers grew until there were about 5,000 men.

5Then the next day, a meeting was held in JeruSalem that included the rulers, elders, and scribes, 6along with AnNas the Chief Priest, CaiAphas, John, Alexander, and all the rest of the Chief Priest’s relatives.

7They stood [Peter and John] in their midst and asked them:

 ‘Who authorized you? And who told you that you could do these things?’

8Then Peter (who became filled with Holy Breath) spoke to them, saying:

 ‘Rulers of the people and elders,

 9‘If we’re being questioned here today because [we] did a good deed for a handicapped person, and if we’re being asked who made him well... 10Then you and all the people of IsraEl should know that it was done in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the Anointed One… Whom you hung on a pole!

 ‘For God raised him from the dead, and he actually stood next to this man whom you now see here, completely healthy!

 11‘Yes, this is ‘the stone that was rejected’ by you builders, but which has now ‘become the foundation cornerstone’! [reference to Psalm 118:22]

 12‘So, salvation isn’t going to come from anyone else, because there isn’t another name that’s been given to any other man under the sky who can save us!’

13Well, when they saw the confidence of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and common, everyone was amazed… And they started to recognize them, remembering that these men used to be with Jesus.

14However, as they looked at the man who was standing next to them who’d been cured, nobody could come up with anything to say in rebuttal.

15So then they sent them outside of the Jewish High-Court hall as they discussed the matter between themselves.

16And they were saying:

 ‘What will we do with them? For it’s a fact that a sign has come through them!

 ‘And because everyone in JeruSalem saw it, we can’t deny it!

 17‘So, to keep the news about this from being spread among all the people, let’s just threaten them and tell them not to speak to anyone about this name ever again!’

18So then they called them back in and warned them not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus anywhere.

19However, Peter and John replied:

 ‘Whether it’s righteous in God’s eyes to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves... 20But we can’t stop talking about the things that we’ve actually seen and heard!’

21So then, after they threatened them a little more, they let them go, because they couldn’t find any reason to punish them.

[Of course, they also chose not to do anything] on account of the people, since they were all praising God over what had happened… 22For the man who was healed was more than 40 years old.

23Well, after they’d been released, [Peter and John] returned to their [brothers] and reported what the Chief Priests and elders had told them. 24And on hearing this, they all raised their voices to God together and said:

 ‘O our only King… You who made the lands, the skies, the seas, and everything in them... 25Through Your Breath, You had asked through the mouth of our father David (Your servant):

 *‘Why do the nations and all of the peoples*
 *Think about things that are worthless?*
 26*For, the rulers of their lands and their kings*
 *Are against Jehovah and His anointed.’*
 [Psalm 2:1-2]

 27‘Even Herod and Pontius Pilate (these gentiles) have joined with the IsraElites in this city against Your Holy servant Jesus, whom You chose 28to do all the things that Your hands and directions commanded.

 29‘So, O Jehovah,

 ‘Pay attention to their threats, and allow Your slaves to keep on speaking Your Word in full confidence, 30while You stretch out Your hand to do healing and continue to bring signs and omens in the name of Your Holy Servant Jesus.’

31Well, as they were asking God for this, the place where they were meeting started to shake! Then everyone was filled with the Holy Breath and they started speaking the word of God confidently.

32As a result, a huge crowd became believers, and they started sharing everything that they had with a single heart and soul. None of them claimed that anything they owned was their own, for they shared everything… 33And all the while, the Apostles continued to give a powerful testimony about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

So a great manifestation of loving-kindness came over all of them. 34In fact, nobody could be described as being needy among them, because everyone who owned fields or houses sold them and brought back the money from the things that they sold, 35laying it at the feet of the Apostles. Then everything was distributed among them according to each one’s needs.

36For example, JoSeph, whom the Apostles called BarNabas (which translates as *Son of Comfort*), a Levite and a native of Cyprus, 37sold a piece of land that he owned and then he brought in the money, laying it at the feet of the Apostles.

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## Chapter 5

1However, a man named AnaNias (along with his wife SapPhira) also sold some property that they owned, 2but he secretly kept part of the money… And his wife knew about this.

Then he brought in part of it and laid it at the feet of the Apostles.

3But Peter asked:

 ‘AnaNias,

 ‘Why has the Opposer made you so bold as to try to fool the Holy Breath and to secretly hold back some of the money for the field?

 4‘As long you owned it, it was yours. And after you sold it, wasn’t the money still yours? So, why did you plan to do such a thing in your heart?

 ‘You should understand that you weren’t lying to men, but to God!’

5Well, just as he heard those words, AnaNias fell to the ground and died – which really frightened everyone who heard about it! 6Then some of the younger men got up and wrapped him in a cloth, and they carried him outside to be buried.

7It was about three hours later that his wife arrived… And she didn’t know what had happened.

8So Peter asked her:

 ‘Tell me, did you sell the field for such-and-such amount?’

And she answered:

 ‘Yes, for such-and-such.’

9Then Peter said:

 ‘Why did you two agree to test the Spirit of Jehovah?

 ‘Look! The feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they’ll carry you out also.’

10And at that, she instantly dropped dead at his feet!

So when the young men returned, they also found her dead and they carried her out to be buried next to her husband.

11Well, when the whole gathering (and everyone else) heard about this, they were all frightened by the things that were happening.

12Yet thereafter, many signs and omens continued to be performed among the people at the hands of the Apostles, who used to meet among the Columns of Solomon. 13It’s true that nobody else had enough courage to join them there, but the people continued to speak well of them, 14and large numbers of men and women kept on being added to those who believed in the Lord.

15[So after that], people started bringing their sick out into the main streets lying on little beds and cots, so that when Peter passed by, his shadow could fall on some of them.

16Also, throngs from the cities around JeruSalem kept coming, carrying sick people and those who were bothered by unclean spirits… And everyone was cured!

17However, the High Priest and everyone with him (particularly the members of the SadDucees’ sect) became very jealous of this. 18So they attacked the Apostles and arrested them, then they locked them up in a public jail. 19But during the night, But during the night, <a href="https://2001translation.org/notes/yhwh-a-b-e" class="tnote">Jehovah’sBut during the night, <a href="https://2001translation.org/notes/yhwh-a-b-e" class="tnote">Jehovah’s</a> messenger opened the doors of the jail and brought them out, saying:

 20‘Now go! Keep on standing in the Temple and telling the people everything about The Life.’

21So after they were told this, they went back to the Temple at daybreak and started teaching again.

Then when the High Priest and those who were with him finally arrived, they assembled the Jewish High Court, along with all the elders of the sons of IsraEl, and they sent [officers] to the jail to have [the Apostles] brought in.

22But when the officers got there, they couldn’t find them in the lockup! So they reported back, 23saying:

 ‘We found the jail locked and guards posted at the doors. But when we went in, we couldn’t find anyone inside!’

24Well when the Temple captain and the Chief Priests were told this, they were confused and they wondered what had really happened.

25But then someone came and reported:

 ‘Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the Temple teaching the people!’

26So the captain took his officers and brought them back peacefully (because they were afraid of being stoned by the people). 27Then they led them in and stood them in the Jewish High Court hall, where the High Priest questioned them and said:

 28‘Although we ordered you not to teach about this name, {Look!} you’ve filled JeruSalem with your teachings, and you’re determined to bring the blood of this man down upon us!’

29However, Peter and the rest of the Apostles replied:

 ‘We must obey God as ruler rather than men!

 30‘For it was the God of our fathers who raised this Jesus, whom you arrested and had hung on a tree. 31And after that, God raised him to His right hand to serve as the Primary Leader and Savior in order to cause IsraEl to repent so that He could forgive their sins!

 32‘We’re witnesses to these things, as is the Holy Breath which God gave to those who are obeying Him as their ruler.’

33Well, when [the leaders] heard this, they were really cut to heart and they wanted to murder [the Apostles]! 34But then a certain man stood up in the Jewish High Court hall (a Pharisee named GamaliEl, who was a highly-regarded teacher of the Law) and he commanded that the men be taken outside for a little while.

35Then he said:

 ‘Men of IsraEl,

 ‘Be very careful about what you plan to do to these men.

 36‘Do you remember when TheuDas came along saying that he was somebody important, and quite a few people (about 400 of them) followed him? But then he was done away with, and all those who listened to him were scattered and came to nothing.

 37‘And after him, Judas the Galilean arose during the registration, and he drew people after him. But then he died, and all those who listened to him were scattered.

 38‘So in this situation, I tell you not to mess with these men… Leave them alone! Because, if this thing that they’re doing is from men, it’ll be overthrown. 39But if it’s from God, you won’t be able to overthrow them and you’ll actually be fighting against God!’

40Well [after he said that], they all agreed with him.

So then they called the Apostles back in and had them whipped, and they ordered them to stop talking about the name of Jesus… And then they released them.

41But as they were leaving the Jewish High Court, [the Apostles] were actually rejoicing because they’d been found worthy of being dishonored for [Jesus’] name!

42So they didn’t stop after that… They kept on teaching and announcing the good news about Jesus the Anointed One every day, both in the Temple and in [private] homes.

### Acts

## Chapter 6

1Now, back in those days when the disciples were increasing, the Greek-speaking Jews started grumbling about the Hebrew-speaking Jews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution.

2As a result, the 12 called all the disciples to them and said:

 ‘The thought of our having to abandon the word of God to serve tables is displeasing to us.

 3‘So brothers, find seven qualified males among you who are filled with wisdom and the Breath [of God], and we’ll appoint them to handle these needs, 4so we can continue in our prayers and in serving the word.’

5Well, what they suggested sounded good to the whole group, so they selected Stephen (a man who was filled with faith and Holy Breath), as well as Philip, ProChorus, NiCanor, Timon, ParMenas, and NicoLaus (a proselyte from AntiOch). 6Then they took them before the Apostles, who prayed over them and laid their hands on them.

7Thereafter, the word of God kept spreading and the number of disciples in JeruSalem kept on multiplying. For even a large number of Priests started obeying the faith!

8Stephen was especially filled with joy and power, and he was performing great omens and signs among the people. 9But then certain men came from the so-called Synagogue of Freed Men (along with some Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Kilikians, and [people from the province of] Asia) and started arguing with him.

10Well, because their arguments couldn’t stand up against the wisdom and Breath [of God] that he was speaking with, 11they persuaded some men to say that they’d heard him say blasphemous things against Moses and God, 12which riled up the people.

So, some of the elders and scribes came and arrested him, then they dragged him up before the Jewish High Court, 13where they produced some false witnesses who said:

 ‘This man is speaking against this Holy Place and against the Law! 14For we heard him say that Jesus the Nazarene will tear this place down and change the customs that were given to us by Moses!’

15Then as everyone who was sitting in the Jewish High Court was looking at him, they saw his face become like that of a messenger [of God].

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## Chapter 7

1So the High Priest asked him:

 ‘Is all of this true?’

2And [Stephen] said:

 ‘Men… Brothers… Fathers… Listen!

 ‘Our father AbraHam saw the Glorious God while he was in MesoPotamia, before he moved to Haran.

 3‘And [God] said to him:

 *‘Leave your land and your relatives and go to the land that I’m going to show you.’* [Genesis 12:1]

 4‘So he went to the land of the Chaldeans and started living in Haran. Then after his father died, [God] caused him to move to the land where you now live.

 5‘However, He didn’t give him any land as his inheritance… Not a foot’s width! Yet [God] did promise him a land that he could own and pass on to his descendants, even though at the time when he didn’t have any children.

 6‘Moreover, God spoke to him and told him that his descendants would also have to live in a foreign land where they’d be oppressed and serve as slaves for 400 years.

 7‘But God said that thereafter, He would pass judgment on the nation [that makes them] slaves… And then [his descendants] would come here and serve Him. 8So he made a Sacred Agreement with [AbraHam] [that required] circumcision.

 ‘And after that, [AbraHam] went on to father IsaAc, whom he circumcised on the 8th day… As IsaAc did to Jacob, and Jacob did to the 12 family heads.

 9‘However, these family heads soon became jealous of [their brother] JoSeph, and they sold him into Egypt. 10But God was with him and He carried him through all of his problems. Then He made him likeable and wise in the eyes of PharaOh, the king of Egypt. So [PharaOh] appointed [JoSeph] to govern Egypt, as well as [to be over] his entire house.

 11‘Then a famine came upon Egypt and CanaAn, which created such a difficult time that our ancestors couldn’t find any food. 12But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our ancestors down there for the first time. 13And it was on their second visit that JoSeph made himself known to his brothers… Which was when JoSeph’s ethnic background first became known to PharaOh.

 14‘Thereafter, JoSeph sent for his father Jacob and all of his relatives (some 75 people); 15and Jacob went down to Egypt, where he died, as did the rest of our ancestors…

 16~~‘And their bodies were taken to SheChem, where they were laid in the tomb that AbraHam had bought with silver from Hamor’s sons in SheChem.~~ [spurious text]

 17‘Well, by the time that God’s promise to AbraHam had reached its fulfillment, the people had grown and multiplied in Egypt. 18And soon another king had arisen to rule over Egypt that was unfamiliar with JoSeph. 19So he treated our people treacherously and he forced our fathers to give up their young children to be killed… 20And that’s when Moses was born.

 ‘Well, [Moses] was beautiful to God, and he was nursed for three months in [his] father’s home. 21But when he was discovered, the daughter of PharaOh picked him up and raised him as her own son.

 22‘So, this is how Moses came to be trained in the wisdom of the Egyptians… And he grew up to become mighty in everything that he said and did.

 23‘Then when he turned 40 years old, [Moses] decided to pay more attention to his brothers, the sons of IsraEl. 24So when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he came to [the man’s] defense and took vengeance on behalf of the one who was being abused, by beating an Egyptian to death!

 25‘Well, he assumed that his brothers would understand that God was going to use him to save them… However, they didn’t understand. 26So when he came to [his people] the next day and found [two of them] fighting, he tried to bring them together peacefully by saying:

 *‘Men… You are brothers! Why are you treating each other so badly?’* [paraphrase of Exodus 2:13]

 27‘And at that, the one who was mistreating his neighbor just pushed him away and asked:

 *‘Who appointed you as the ruler and judge over us?*
 28*Do you want to kill me the same as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?’*
 [Exodus 2:14]

 29‘And when Moses heard him say this, he ran away and lived in the land of MidiAn, where he fathered two sons.

 30‘Well, after 40 more years, Jehovah’s&nbsp;messenger&nbsp;appeared to him in the flames of a burning thorn bush while he was in the desert near Mount SinAi. 31And when Moses saw it, he was dazzled by the sight!

 ‘But as he came closer to investigate, the voice of the Lord said to him:

 32*‘I am the God of your fathers… The God of AbraHam, IsaAc, and Jacob.’* [paraphrase of Exodus 3:6]

 ‘And at that, Moses started to shake so hard that he didn’t want to investigate any further.

 33‘And the Lord said to him:

 *‘Remove your sandals; for the place where you’re standing is holy ground!’* [Exodus 3:5]

 [‘And:]

 34*‘Now, I’ve seen the bad treatment of my people in Egypt and I’ve heard their groaning; therefore, I’ve come down here to take them... So come on, for I’m going to send you to Egypt!’* [paraphrase of Exodus 3:7-10]

 35‘And although this was the same Moses whom [the IsraElites] had previously disowned, asking, *‘Who appointed you as our ruler and judge?’*… He was the one whom God sent off as both a ruler and savior by the hand of the messenger who had appeared to him in the thorn bush.

 36‘And then, after he’d performed many omens and signs, he’s also the man who led them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the desert for the next 40 years.

 37‘Yes, this was the [man] who told the sons of IsraEl:

 *‘God will raise a Prophet like me from among your brothers.’* [Deuteronomy 18:15]

 38‘And he was the one who was with the congregation [when they lived] in the desert, who talked to [God’s] messenger on Mount SinAi, and who received life-giving signs for our ancestors, so that we might receive them!

 39‘But then our ancestors refused to obey him… They just pushed him aside, and in their hearts they were back in Egypt! 40For then they told Aaron:

 *‘Make gods to lead us, because we don’t know what has happened to this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt!’* [Exodus 32:1]

 41‘As a result, [Aaron] made [an image of] a calf, and then they offered sacrifices to the idol… For they were very happy with this thing that they’d made with their hands!

 42‘So thereafter, God handed them over to bow before the [stars] in the skies, just as it’s written in the Book of the Prophets:

 *‘It wasn’t to Me that you offered victims and sacrifices for 40 years in the desert, was it, O house of IsraEl?*

 43*‘Rather, you took up with the images that you made for worship in the tent of Moloch, and with the star of the god Rephan. This is why I’m going to send you into exile beyond Babylon!’*

 [paraphrase of Amos 5:25-26]

 44‘However, back when our ancestors lived in the desert, they had the Tent of Proofs that [God] had ordered Moses to build using the pattern that he was shown.

 45‘And our ancestors who received it then brought it into this land that was once owned by the nations that God had pushed out ahead of them as they were coming here with JoShua… And it remained here until the time of David!

 46‘Then [David] found God’s favor, and he asked that [he might be allowed] to build a Temple for the God of Jacob… 47Although it was really Solomon who built the House for him. 48However, the Most High doesn’t really live in houses that are made by [human] hands, just as the Prophet foretold.

 49‘For Jehovah said:

 *‘Since the heavens are My throne and the earth is My footstool;*
 *What kind of House can you build for Me...*
 *And in what sort of place should I rest,*
 50*Since all of these things were made by My hands?’*
 [Isaiah 66:1-2a]

 51‘So now – you with the hardened necks and uncircumcised hearts and ears – you’ve become just like your ancestors, for you’re always resisting [God’s] Holy Breath!

 52‘Which of the Prophets weren’t persecuted by your ancestors?

 ‘Yes, they even killed the Prophets who foretold the coming of the Righteous One… And now you’ve become the betrayers and murderers of him also!

 53‘So although you were the ones who received the Law that was brought to us by the messengers [of God], you haven’t kept it!’

54Well when they heard this, they were really cut down and they were grinding their teeth at him! 55But as he was being filled with Holy Breath, he stared into the sky and saw the Glory of God with Jesus standing at His right hand!

56So he said:

 ‘Look! I see the sky opening up!

 ‘And there’s the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’

57Then when he said this, they all started shouting as loudly as they could and putting their hands over their ears. Then they ran up to him and grabbed him, 58and they dragged him outside of the city, where they started stoning him!

(Well at the time, those who came to watch started laying their coats at the feet of a young man called Saul.)

59Then Stephen said this as they were stoning him:

 ‘Lord Jesus,

 ‘Take my breath.’

60And he fell to his knees and shouted loudly:

 ‘Lord, don’t hold this sin against them!’

And with that, he fell asleep [in death].

### Acts

## Chapter 8

1Well at the time, Saul actually approved of murdering him.

On that same day, a tremendous amount of persecution started to be directed towards the congregation in JeruSalem; so everyone (except the Apostles) was scattered throughout the area of Judea and Samaria. 2However, some devoted men [took the time to] carry Stephen’s [body] out to be buried, and they wept bitterly over him.

3[It was then that] Saul started wiping out the congregation [in JeruSalem]. He invaded one house after another, dragging out both the men and the women and sending them to jail.

4Meanwhile, those who’d been scattered around just kept on preaching the good news of the word wherever they went.

5[For example,] Philip had gone to a city in Samaria, where he preached to the people about the Anointed One, 6and large crowds were paying attention to the things that he was saying… They listened to him closely and watched the signs that he performed. 7Many who were present had been bothered by unclean spirits who shouted loudly as they came out, and many others who were paralyzed or lame were cured.

8As a result, there was a lot of joy in that city.

9There was also a man there named Simon, who used to practice magic. He had amazed the people of Samaria and he called himself ‘[Simon] the Great.’ 10Why, everyone from the common people to the most powerful paid attention to him and said:

 ‘This man who calls himself ‘The Great’ has the Power of God!’

11So they followed him for a long time, because they were dazzled by his magic.

12However, when Philip came preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God and about the name of Jesus the Anointed One, they started believing him; and as a result, many men and women got immersed. 13In fact, even Simon became a believer!

Then after he was immersed, he stayed close to Philip and was amazed as he watched the signs and great powers.

14Well, after the Apostles in JeruSalem heard that Samaria was starting to accept the word of God, they sent Peter and John there, 15and they prayed for [the believers] to receive Holy Breath, 16since it hadn’t come to any of them yet – even though they’d been immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17But when [Peter and John] laid their hands on them, they each started receiving Holy Breath. 18And when Simon saw that the Apostles could give the Breath by just touching people, he offered them money, saying:

 19‘Give me the power so that anyone I lay my hands on can receive Holy Breath!’

20But Peter said:

 ‘May your silver be destroyed along with you!

 ‘Since you think that you can buy the gift that God gives freely, 21you aren’t going to have any part in this, nor will you share in it… For God sees that your heart is crooked!

 22‘So now, turn away from your badness and beg the Lord to forgive you for these thoughts that you have in your heart, 23because I see bitterness, hatred, and an unrighteous alliance in you.’

24Then Simon said:

 ‘Please beg the Lord on my behalf, so that none of the things that you said will happen to me!’

25Well, after they’d given everyone who was there a thorough testimony, and spoke to them about the things that the Lord had told them, [the Apostles] returned to JeruSalem. But because of what they’d done, many other Samaritan villages also heard of the good news.

26Then Jehovah’s&nbsp;messenger spoke to Philip and told him:

 ‘Now, get up and go south to the road that runs through the desert from JeruSalem to Gaza.’

27And when he got there, {Look!} he found an Ethiopian man who held the office of Eunuch of the Treasury under the Kandake, the Queen of the Ethiopians [possibly Amanitore], who had gone to JeruSalem to worship.

28While the man was [on his way back home], he was sitting in his chariot reading aloud from the Prophet IsaiAh.

29So the Breath [of God] then told Philip:

 ‘Go and catch up with his chariot.’

30So Philip started running alongside him.

Then when he heard the man reading from the Prophet IsaiAh aloud, he asked him:

 ‘Do you really understand what you’re reading?’

31But [the eunuch] replied:

 ‘How could I, unless I had someone to explain it to me?’

So at that, he begged Philip to climb aboard and sit with him.

32Well, the particular scripture he was reading at the time was this:

 *‘He was brought like a sheep to the slaughter;*
 *And as a lamb that is quiet before shearers,*
 *He didn’t open his mouth…*
 33*Then he was shamed and his justice was denied.*
 *So who’ll tell the details to his generation*
 *After his life is removed from the land?’*
 [a differently translated version of Isaiah 53:7-8a]

34Then the Eunuch asked Philip:

 ‘Just who was the Prophet saying this about? Was he talking about himself or someone else?’

35So Philip proceeded to explain this scripture, telling him the good news about Jesus.

36Now, as they were traveling along the road, they happened to be passing by some water. So the eunuch said to him:

 ‘Look… Here’s some water! What’s to prevent me from getting immersed?’

37~~And Philip said: ‘If you believe it with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said: ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’~~ [spurious text]

38So he commanded the chariot [driver] to stop, and then Philip took the eunuch down to the water and immersed him.

39Well, after they came up out of the water, the Spirit of Jehovah then sent Philip quickly away, so the eunuch didn’t see him anymore… However he continued on his way rejoicing.

40Meanwhile, Philip found that he was in AshDod. So he traveled on throughout that area, preaching the good news in all the cities, until he got to Caesarea.

### Acts

## Chapter 9

1Well at the time, Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the Lord’s disciples.

So he went to the High Priest 2and asked him to write letters that he could carry to the synagogues in Damascus that would empower him to arrest anyone he found who belonged to *The Way* (both men and women) and to bring them back to JeruSalem in chains.

3But as he was getting close to Damascus, a light from the sky suddenly flashed all around him 4and he fell to the ground!

Then he heard a voice say:

 ‘Saul, Saul... Why are you persecuting me?’

5And he asked:

 ‘Who are you Lord?’

Then he heard:

 ‘I’m Jesus, the one you’re persecuting.’

 ~~‘It’s hard for you to kick against the cattle prods.’~~

6~~And he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what would you have me do?’ And the Lord said to him:~~ [spurious, copied from Acts 22:10 and Acts 26:14]

 ‘Now, get up and enter the city, and there you’ll be told what to do.’

7Well, as this was happening, the men who were traveling with him were speechless, because they heard the sound of a voice, but they couldn’t see anyone!

8And when Saul got up off the ground, although his eyes were open, he couldn’t see. So they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus, 9where he remained blind for the next three days… And he wouldn’t eat or drink anything at all.

10Meanwhile, there was a disciple named AnaNias in Damascus; and in a vision, the Lord called out to him saying:

 ‘AnaNias!’

And he replied:

 ‘Here I am Lord!’

11Then the Lord said:

 ‘Get up and go to the house of Judas on Straight Street, and ask for a man called Saul of Tarsus. Look… He’s praying [right now]!

12For in a vision he’s seen a man named AnaNias who will come and lay his hands on him so he can start seeing again.’

13However, AnaNias [objected], saying:

 ‘Lord, I’ve heard about this man from many people, and they’ve told me about all the bad things that he did to your Holy Ones in JeruSalem!

 14‘He’s even been empowered by the Chief Priests to lock up everyone who calls on your name!’

15But the Lord said to him:

 ‘Go on, because this man is the one I’ve chosen to carry my name before nations, kings, and the sons of IsraEl. 16I’ll also make sure that he understands all the things that he’ll have to suffer on account of my name.’

17So AnaNias went over to the house and went inside, and then he laid his hands on him and said:

 ‘Saul, Brother,

 ‘The Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here has sent me to restore your sight and to fill you with Holy Breath.’

18Well at that, what looked like scales immediately fell from [Paul’s] eyes and he started to see!

Then he got up and was immersed [in water], 19after which he started eating again and regaining his strength.

So after that, he spent several days there in Damascus with the disciples. 20And he immediately started preaching in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of The God.

21However, all those who heard him were shocked, and asked:

 ‘Isn’t this the man who once ravaged those calling on this name in JeruSalem? And didn’t he come here for that same reason, to carry them back in chains to the Chief Priests?’

22But Saul’s powers kept on growing and he really confused the Jews who lived in Damascus, because he gave them logical proofs that [Jesus] is the Anointed One. 23So after several days, the Jews finally met to discuss ways to get rid of him.

24However, Saul learned about their plot against him, and because they were watching the city gates closely both day and night in order to arrest him, 25his disciples came to him one night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the city wall.

26Well, when he got back to JeruSalem, he then tried to join with the rest of the disciples. However they were all afraid of him, because they didn’t really believe that he was a disciple!

27But BarNabas finally came to his aid… He took [Saul] to the Apostles and explained to them what had happened to him on the road… Of how he’d seen the Lord and spoken to him, and of how he’d been boldly teaching in the name of Jesus while he was in Damascus.

28So thereafter, [Saul] stayed with [the brothers], as he entered and left JeruSalem, preaching in the name of the Lord.

29He also talked and argued a lot with the Greek-speaking Jews – but then they also attempted to do away with him. 30So when the brothers learned about their [plot], they took Paul to Caesarea and sent him on from there to Tarsus.

31Well for some time thereafter, there was a period of peace for the congregations in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. So [the brothers] kept on walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Breath, as they were growing [in numbers].

32Meanwhile, as Peter was traveling around, he finally reached the Holy Ones who lived in LydDa.

33And there he found a man named AiNean who had spent 8 years lying flat on his back on a cot, paralyzed. 34So Peter said to him:

 ‘AiNean,

 ‘Jesus the Anointed One heals you.

 ‘So now, get up and make your bed!’

And at that he immediately got up!

35Then when those who lived in LydDa and the area of ShaRon saw [what had happened to] this man, many started turning to the Lord.

36Well in JopPa, there happened to be a disciple named Tabitha (which is translated as Dorcas [in Greek]), who was well-known for the good things she was doing and for helping others when they were in need.

37However, one day she got sick and died. So they washed her body and laid her in an upstairs room.

38Now, LydDa was fairly close to JopPa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him to beg him to please hurry up and come to them.

39Therefore, Peter got up and went with them.

Well when he got [to JopPa], they took him upstairs to the room [where she was laid]. And there, all the widows came to him crying and showing him the many pieces of clothing that Dorcas had made for them while she was with them.

40So after sending everyone outside, Peter got down on his knees and prayed.

Then he turned towards the body and said:

 ‘Tabitha,

 ‘Stand again!’

And at that, she opened her eyes… And when she saw Peter, she sat up!

41So he gave her his hand and stood her [on her feet]... Then he called the Holy Ones and widows in and presented her to them alive. 42And before long, this event became so well known throughout JopPa that many started believing in the Lord.

43And thereafter, [Peter] stayed in JopPa for several days, [in the home of] Simon the Tanner.

### Acts

## Chapter 10

1In Caesarea there happened to be a man named Cornelius (he was a centurion of the Italian Division) 2who was a devout man. He and his family feared God, praying to Him often, and they regularly helped those who were in need.

3Well, it was about the 9th hour of the day [9am in the Roman time system, or 3pm in the Jewish] when he clearly saw a messenger from God who came to him in a vision and called out:

 ‘Cornelius!’

4So he stared at [the messenger] in fright and asked:

 ‘What do you want, Lord?’

And he answered:

 ‘Your prayers and kind gifts have arisen and have been remembered before God.

 5‘So now, send some men to JopPa and call for a man named Simon, who’s also known as Peter. 6He’s a guest of Simon the Tanner, who has a house by the sea.’

7Well, as soon as the messenger [from God] who spoke to him left, he called two of his house servants and a devout soldier who was staying with him, 8and he told them everything that had happened, then he sent them to JopPa.

9And the next day (as they were on their way and getting close to the city), Peter had gone up on the roof (at about the 6th hour [6am in the Roman time system, or 12 noon in the Jewish]) to pray. 10He was also very hungry and he wanted to eat… But then he fell into a trance. 11And in [vision] he saw the sky opening and some sort of container (it looked like a huge linen sheet that was being held at its four corners) coming down to the ground. 12Well, inside of it there were all kinds of four-footed animals, things that crawl on the ground, and birds of the sky...

13Then a voice came to him that said:

 ‘Get up, Peter… Slaughter [the animals] and eat them!’

14But Peter said:

 ‘Not me Lord, because I’ve never eaten anything that’s dirty or unclean!’

15And the voice [spoke] to him a second time, saying:

 ‘Stop calling the things that God has made clean, dirty!’

16Then he heard it say this two more times, and the container was then immediately taken back into the sky.

17Now, Peter was confused about the meaning of this vision. However, the men who Cornelius had sent were already at Simon’s house, standing at the gate and asking for him… 18They were calling out and asking whether Simon (who’s also called Peter) was a guest there.

19Now, as Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Breath [of God] said:

 ‘Look! Three men are searching for you… 20So go downstairs and get ready to travel with them.

 ‘Don’t worry, because I sent them.’

21So then Peter went downstairs to the men and said:

 ‘{Look!} I’m the one you’re searching for… Why are you here?’

22And they replied:

 ‘Cornelius, an army officer who’s a righteous and God-fearing man of whom the whole nation of the Jews speak well, was given Divine instructions by a holy messenger to ask you to come to his house, so he can hear what you have to say.’

23Then [Peter] invited them in and offered them some hospitality.

Then, the next day, he got up and went with them (along with some of the brothers from JopPa), 24arriving at Caesarea on the following day.

Of course, Cornelius had been expecting them, and he’d called for all his relatives and closest friends. 25Then as Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet, bowing low.

26But Peter lifted him up, saying:

 ‘Get up! I’m just a man!’

27Well, as they were talking, Paul walked inside... And there he found many people already assembled.

28So he said to them:

 ‘You know very well how illegal it is for a Jew to associate with or to even approach people of another race.

 ‘Yet, God has shown me that I shouldn’t call any man dirty or unclean.

 29‘Therefore, when I was called for, I came without any objections. But now, let me ask: Why have you sent for me?’

30Then Cornelius told him:

 ‘Exactly 4 days ago, I was praying here in my house during the 9th hour [9am in the Roman time system, 3pm in the Jewish], when {Look!} a man in bright clothes came and stood in front of me and said:

 31*‘Cornelius,*

 *‘Your prayers have been heard and your kind gifts have been remembered before God.*

 32*‘So, send to JopPa and ask for Simon, who’s also called Peter. He’s staying by the sea in the house of Simon the Tanner.’*

 33‘Well, I then sent for you right away… And it’s good that you came. For now we’re all assembled here before God to listen to everything that the Lord has commanded you to say.’

34And Peter said:

 ‘I can see for a fact that God is impartial! 35For He accepts any man who fears Him and does righteous things, no matter what nation he’s from!

 36‘So He’s sending word to the Sons of IsraEl that they must announce the good news of peace through Jesus the Anointed One to [the gentiles] also, for he’s really the Lord over all!

 37‘I can also see that you’ve already come to know about this thing that’s being proclaimed throughout all of Judea, which started in Galilee after John came preaching about [the need] to get immersed.

 38‘For after that, God anointed Jesus from Nazareth with Holy Breath and power, and he traveled throughout the land doing good things and healing all those who were oppressed by the Slanderer.

 ‘Yes, God was with him… 39And we’re eye-witnesses to everything that he did in the region of Judea and in JeruSalem!

 ‘But then they murdered him by hanging him on a tree. 40Yet God raised this one on the third day and allowed him to be seen… 41But not by everyone, just to witnesses whom God had selected ahead of time [from among] us. For he appeared to us, and we ate and drank with him after he was resurrected from the dead.

 42‘Then he ordered us to preach to the people and to testify that he’s the one who was chosen by The God to judge the living and the dead, 43and that he’s the one all the Prophets had testified about, [where they foretold] that everyone who put faith in him will have their sins forgiven through this name!’

44Well, as Peter was still talking about this, the Holy Breath came over everyone who was listening to what he said! 45And the faithful ones who were there with Peter (all of whom were circumcised) were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Breath was now being poured out on gentiles… 46For they heard them speaking and glorifying God in different languages!

Then Peter asked:

 47‘Can anyone forbid water to immerse these who have received the Holy Breath the same as we have?’

48So he commanded that they should be immersed in the name of Jesus the Anointed One.

And afterward, they asked him to stay with them for several days.

### Acts

## Chapter 11

1Soon thereafter, the Apostles and other brothers in Judea heard that gentiles were also accepting the word of God. 2So when Peter returned to JeruSalem, the circumcised started arguing with him, 3complaining that he’d gone into the house of uncircumcised men and had eaten with them.

4So Peter explained it this way:

 5‘While I was in the city of JopPa, I was praying. And in a trance, I saw a vision of some sort of container coming down from the sky that looked like a huge linen sheet being held by its four corners… It was very clear to me!

 6‘And as I stared at it, I saw four-footed creatures of the ground, wild animals, things that crawl, and birds of the sky.

 7‘Then I heard a voice say to me:

 *‘Get up Peter; slaughter [the animals] and eat them!’*

 8‘But I said:

 *‘Not me Lord, because I’ve never eaten anything that’s dirty and unclean.’*

 9‘Then the voice came from the sky a second time, and it told me:

 *‘Stop calling things that God has made clean, dirty.’*

 10‘Well, this happened a third time, and thereafter, everything was pulled back up into the sky.

 11‘Then {Look!} at that very moment, there were three men standing outside of the house who had been sent from Caesarea to find me. 12And the Spirit told me to go with them and not to doubt.

 ‘So, these six brothers here also went with me, and we all entered the man’s house together!

 13‘[Well, when we got there, the man] told us how he’d seen a messenger [from God] standing in his house, who told him this:

 *‘Send your men to JopPa and ask for Simon who’s called Peter.* 14*He will tell you what you must do, so that you and your household can get saved*.’

 15‘But after I started speaking to them, the Holy Breath fell upon all of them, the same as it did upon us long ago. 16And then I remembered that the Lord used to say:

 *‘John immersed in water, but you’ll be immersed in Holy Breath.’*

 17‘So if God gave them the same gifts that he gave to those of us who have believed in the Lord Jesus the Anointed; who am I that I should be strong enough to resist God?’

18Well after they heard this, they all quieted down and started glorifying God, saying:

 ‘So then, God has also given gentiles the opportunity for repentance into life!’

19Now, those who had been scattered because of the problems that arose over Stephen had traveled as far away as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and AntiOch; and until then, they’d only been spreading the word among the Jews.

20However, some Cypriots and Cyrenians that went to AntiOch started talking to the Greek-speaking [Gentile] peoples, declaring the good news of the Lord Jesus to them. 21Jehovah’s hand was certainly with them, because many started believing and turned to the Lord.

22So when news about this reached the ears of the congregation in JeruSalem, they sent BarNabas to AntiOch, 23and when he got there and saw the loving-care that God had shown for these people, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to whole-heartedly stick with the Lord!

24([BarNabas] is a good man who’s filled with Holy Spirit and faith).

So, many were thereafter added to the Lord.

25Well from there, [BarNabas] went on to Tarsus to find Saul.

26And when he found him, he brought him back to AntiOch, where they stayed with that congregation for a year and taught many people (it was in AntiOch that the disciples were by Divine providence, first called Christians).

27At the time, [brothers with the gift of] prophesying had traveled to AntiOch from JeruSalem. 28And one of them named Agabus stood up and told them (through the Breath [of God]) that a great famine was about to come upon the whole habitation [of mankind] – which did in fact happen during the time of [the Roman Emperor] Claudius [c. 45 CE].

29So the disciples there decided that each of them would collect relief supplies for the brothers who lived in Judea (as each one could afford to) 30and send them back to the elders there through BarNabas and Saul.

### Acts

## Chapter 12

1This all happened about the same time that King Herod had started persecuting many of those in the congregation [at JeruSalem]; 2for he did away with James (John’s brother) with a sword.

3And when he saw how much this pleased the Jews, during the celebration of No Fermentation, he also arrested Peter 4and threw him in jail, assigning four shifts of four soldiers to guard him, because he planned to put him on [trial] before the people after the Passover.

5Well while Peter was in jail, the congregation prayed to God intensely on his behalf.

6And on the night before Herod planned to produce him, he had Peter bound with two chains, he forced him to sleep between two soldiers, and guards were posted at all the doors.

7But then, {Look!} Jehovah’s&nbsp;messenger appeared and he lit up the whole cell!

Then he tapped Peter on the side and woke him up, saying:

 ‘Get up… Now!’

And at that, the chains just fell off his hands!

8Then the messenger said to him:

 ‘Get dressed and tie on your sandals.’

...which Peter did.

Then [the messenger] told him:

 ‘Now, wrap yourself up in your robe and follow me!’

9So [Peter] left, following [the messenger]...

However, he wasn’t really sure of what was happening, because, although [he knew that] the messenger was real, he also thought that he was just seeing a vision.

10Well, they walked past the first guard, then the second, and when they got to the iron gate that leads into the city, it opened by itself!

Then, after they got out and started down a street, the messenger suddenly left him. 11And at that, Peter finally came to his senses and he said:

 ‘Now I really know that Jehovah sent his messenger and saved me from the hands of Herod and from everything that the Jews had planned to do [to me].’

12Then, after [taking a moment] to collect himself, from there he went to the house of Mary the mother of John (who was called Mark), where several had gathered to pray. 13Now, when he knocked at the gate, a servant girl named Rhoda came. 14Then when she recognized Peter’s voice, she was so excited that she failed to open the gate… She just ran inside and told everyone that Peter was standing outside.

15Well, everyone there said that she had to be crazy, but she kept insisting.

So they said:

 ‘Perhaps it’s [just] his messenger.’

16Meanwhile, Peter was still just standing outside [the gate] and knocking.

Then when they opened [the gate] and saw that it really was [Peter], everyone was astonished! 17But he motioned with his hand for them to be quiet, and he told them exactly how the Lord had freed him from the jail.

Then he said:

 ‘Tell James and the other brothers what has happened.’

And with that, he left and traveled on to another place.

18Needless to say, the next day there was quite a stir among the soldiers over what had become of Peter! 19Herod had them search for him, and when they couldn’t find him, he interrogated the guards and gave orders to have them arrested.

However, [Peter] had left Judea and traveled to Caesarea, where he spent quite a bit of time after that.

20Well, back then, [Herod] had become extremely angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. And as a result, [people from there] went to the Royal Eunuch Blastus to convince him to ask [Herod] for peace, since [Herod] had been supplying their country with food [during the famine, c. 45 CE].

21Then there came a day when Herod dressed himself up in his royal clothes and he sat down on his judgment seat to give a public lecture. 22But at that, the crowd that was assembled started shouting:

 ‘It’s a god’s voice, not a man’s!’

23And instantly, a messenger of Jehovah struck him, because he didn’t give glory to God; so he became eaten up with worms and stopped breathing.

24Meanwhile, during this entire period, the word of the Lord kept on growing and spreading.

25As for BarNabas and Saul, after they’d finished delivering relief supplies to JeruSalem, they returned [to AntiOch]. And this time they took John (the one called Mark) along with them.

### Acts

## Chapter 13

1There were several Prophets and teachers in the congregation at AntiOch. These included BarNabas, SymeOn (who was called Niger), Lucius of Cyrene, Mnaen (who had gone to school with Herod, the district ruler) and Saul.

2And it was while they were serving the Lord and fasting that the Holy Breath said to them:

 ‘You must appoint BarNabas and Saul to do the work I’ve called them for.’

3So thereafter, [the brothers] fasted, prayed, and laid their hands on them and sent them on. 4Well, the Holy Breath first sent these men to Seleucia, then they sailed to Cyprus.

5And when they arrived at the city of Salamis [in Cyprus], they started preaching the word of God in the Jewish synagogues there, along with John (Mark) who had come along to help them.

6Then from there, they traveled across the whole island to Paphos, where they met up with a Jew named BarJesus, who was a sorcerer and a false prophet.

7He happened to be with the Island’s governor at the time (an intelligent man named Sergius Paulus), who had summoned BarNabas and Saul, because he really wanted to hear the word of God. 8But the sorcerer ElyMas (that’s how his name is pronounced [in Aramaic]) opposed them and tried to keep the governor from becoming interested in the faith.

9Then Saul (who’s also called Paul) became filled with Holy Breath, and he looked at the man very hard and said:

 10‘O you unethical and deceitful person!

 ‘You son of the Slanderer and enemy of everything that’s righteous!

 ‘When will you stop twisting the straight ways of the Lord?

 11‘Now look! Jehovah’s hand has touched you so that you’ll be blind and unable to even see the sun for a while!’

And at that, [the man’s eyes] started to cloud over and grow dim, so he had to search for someone to lead him by the hand.

12Well, when the governor saw this, he was shocked and he started believing in the Lord’s teachings.

13From there, Paul and the men who were with him sailed from Paphos to [the mainland city of] Perga in PamPhylia. However, John [Mark] left them at this point and he returned to JeruSalem.

14Then from Perga, they traveled on to AntiOch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath, they entered the synagogue and sat down. 15Then, after a reading of the Law and the Prophets, the presiding officers of the synagogue called them forward saying:

 ‘Men… Brothers… If you have anything encouraging to tell the people, say it!’

16So Paul got up, and with a sweeping gesture, he said:

 ‘Men, IsraElites, and all of you who fear God, listen!

 17‘The God of the people of IsraEl chose our ancestors, and when they were visitors in the land of Egypt, He elevated them… He raised His arm and brought them out of there.

 18‘But after that, He [had to] put up with their bad manners in the desert for 40 years. 19Then, after destroying seven nations in the land of CanaAn, He gave them each an inheritance of land… 20And all of this happened in a period of 450 years.

 ‘Thereafter, He gave them the judges until the time of the Prophet SamuEl… 21For that’s when they asked for a king.

 ‘So then God gave them Saul, son of Kish (a man from the tribe of BenJamin), who ruled over them for the next 40 years.

 22‘Then after He removed him, He promoted David to be their king; for God gave this testimony about him:

 *‘I’ve found David...’* [Psalm 89:20] (son of JesSe),

 *‘A man after My own heart, who’ll do as I wish.’* [paraphrasing 1 Samuel 13:14]

 23‘And it was from [this man’s] offspring, according to the promise, that God brought a Savior to IsraEl named Jesus.

 24‘Now, John [the Immerser] preached publicly about an immersion of repentance to all the people of IsraEl before [Jesus] arrived. 25And as John was finishing the ‘race’ that he was to run, he asked [the people]:

 *‘Whom do you think that I am? I’m not really the one!*

 *‘Rather, {Look!} someone is coming behind me whose shoelaces I’m unworthy to untie!’*

 26‘So, men… Brothers… You sons of the race of AbraHam and all among you who fear God: These words of salvation were sent to us! 27However, the people who lived in JeruSalem and their rulers didn’t recognize this man [about whom John spoke].

 ‘And when they were acting as his judges, they fulfilled the things that the Prophets said… The things that are read aloud [here] on each Sabbath! 28For although Pilate couldn’t find any reason for putting this man to death, the people demanded that he should have him executed!

 29‘Well, after they’d finished doing everything that was written would happen to [this man], they took his body down from the tree and laid it in a tomb.

 30‘However, God then raised him from the dead!

 31‘And for several days thereafter, those [of us] who’d traveled with him from Galilee to JeruSalem, saw him again!

 ‘So we’re now his witnesses to the people. 32And here we are, announcing the good news to you about the promise that God made to our forefathers, 33and which He’s now completely fulfilled upon their children… Upon us!

 ‘For He resurrected this Jesus, just as it was written in the second Psalm:

 *‘You are My son,*
 *And today I am your Father!’*
 [Psalm 2:7]

 34‘Yes, He resurrected him from the dead so that [his body] wouldn’t see corruption.

 ‘For He had said to him:

 *‘I’ll give you the sacred, trusted things of [King] David*.’ [last line of Isaiah 55:3]

 35‘And He said in another place:

 *‘You won’t allow your Holy one to see corruption.’* [paraphrase or different translation of Psalm 49:9]

 36‘Yet when David, who served his people well and followed God’s instructions, fell asleep [in death], he was buried with his ancestors, and [his body] did see corruption.

 37‘However, this one who was raised by God didn’t see corruption!

 38‘Understand this, men and brothers:

 ‘We’re declaring to you that your sins can now be forgiven through him. 39Yes, all the wrong things that the Law of Moses couldn’t excuse you from, can now be excused for you by this one – if you’ll believe [in him]!

 40‘Just make sure that [this thing] which was said by the Prophet doesn’t happen to you, when he said:

 41*‘Behold, O you who show scorn;*
 *Yes, be amazed, and then perish!*
 *For there’s a work that I’ll do in your days,*
 *Which you could never believe*
 *Should someone declare it to you!’*
 [slightly paraphrased Habakkuk 1:5]

42Well, while ~~the Jews~~ everyone was leaving ~~the Synagogue,~~ ~~the Gentiles~~ [spurious words], many of the people begged them to explain more about this on the next Sabbath.

43And after the meeting at the synagogue was concluded, several of the Jews and proselytes started following Paul and BarNabas, who urged them to stick closely to God’s favor.

44Then on the next Sabbath, most of the city had assembled there to hear the word of God. 45And when the Judeans saw all these people, they became extremely jealous and started contradicting the things that Paul was saying in blasphemous ways.

46However, Paul and BarNabas just kept on speaking out boldly. And they told them:

 ‘We were told that we had to speak the word of God to you first. But since you’re just pushing it away and you don’t judge yourselves to be worthy of age-long life, {Look!} we’ll now be turning to the gentiles!

 47‘In fact, Jehovah commanded us to do this when He said:

 *‘I’ll make you a light to the nations…*
 *To bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’*
 [last two lines of Isaiah 49:6]

48Well, when the gentiles in the crowd heard this, they started rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord!

And at that, everyone who was inclined to accept age-long life became believers, 49and the word of the Lord was thereafter spread throughout that whole country.

50However, the Judeans who were there incited many of the city’s elite (the devout women and the leading men), and they sent people against Paul and BarNabas who threw them out of the city.

51So they just shook the dust off their feet against them, and traveled on to Iconium.

52However, the disciples [back in AntiOch] continued to be filled with joy and Holy Breath.

### Acts

## Chapter 14

1Then the same thing happened in Iconium.

[Paul and BarNabas] went into the Jewish synagogue together to speak, and a large number of both Jews and Greeks became believers.

2However, the Jews who wouldn’t accept what they said riled up the gentiles and influenced them to act badly towards the brothers. 3Nevertheless, [Paul, and BarNabas] spent a lot of time boldly telling them about the Lord. And [the Lord] himself testified to the fact that his favor was being shown by allowing these men to perform many signs and omens.

4Well, the whole city was thereafter split… Some were for the Jews and others for the Apostles. 5Then some of the Jews and gentiles met with the local rulers, who arranged to finish them off by having them stoned!

6And when [Paul and BarNabas] learned about this plot, they got out of there and traveled to the cities and countryside around Lystra and Derbe in LycaOnias, 7where they continued to preach the good news.

8Well in Lystra, they noticed a man who was sitting there because he had something wrong with his feet. In fact, he hadn’t walked at all since he was born.

9This man was listening to Paul at the time; and when [Paul] looked at him and realized that he had enough faith to be healed, 10he shouted:

 ‘Stand up on your feet!’

And at this, [the man] jumped up and started walking around!

11Well when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted (in the LycaOnian language):

 ‘The gods have turned themselves into men and come down to us!’

12Then they started calling BarNabas, ‘Zeus,’ and Paul, ‘Hermes’ (since he was the one who took the lead in speaking), 13and the city’s Priest of Zeus brought bulls and garlands up to the gates so that he and the crowd could offer sacrifices [to them].

14However, when the Apostles BarNabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and jumped into the crowd, shouting and asking:

 15‘Why are you doing this?

 ‘We’re just humans who have the same problems as you; and the reason why we’re here preaching the good news to you is to turn you away from this foolishness and towards the living God who made the skies, the lands, the seas, and everything in them!

 16‘For although He’s allowed the gentiles to go their own way for generations, 17He didn’t leave Himself without witnesses.

 ‘And He did good things for you by giving you rain from the sky and good harvests, and He filled your hearts with food and happiness!’

18Yet despite everything they said, they had a hard time keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

19But then some Jews arrived from AntiOch and Iconium, and they convinced the crowd that they should stone Paul. So after they did that, they dragged him outside of the city and left him for dead.

20However, after the disciples gathered around him, he got up and walked back into the city.

Then the next day, he and BarNabas left for Derbe, 21where they preached the good news in that city, making quite a few disciples.

After that, they returned to Lystra in Iconium and to AntiOch 22so as to strengthen the disciples there.

They encouraged them to remain strong in the faith, saying:

 ‘We’ll all have to endure many trials if we wish to enter the Kingdom of God.’

23They also appointed elders in each of the congregations. Then, with prayer and fasting, they entrusted them into the hands of [the God in whom] they’d come to believe.

24Well from there, they traveled through Pisidia to PamPhylia. 25And after teaching the word in Perga, they went on to AtTalia.

26Thereafter, they sailed back to AntiOch, where by God’s kindness they’d first been entrusted with the work that they were performing so well.

27And when they arrived, they gathered the congregation and told them everything that God had done through them, and of how He’d opened the door of faith to the gentiles. 28Then they spent quite some time there in AntiOch with the disciples.

### Acts

## Chapter 15

1However, some men then came down from Judea and started teaching the brothers that if they didn’t get circumcised following the custom of Moses, they couldn’t be saved. 2However, Paul and BarNabas opposed them and argued with them.

So they arranged for Paul, BarNabas, and some others who were there to go to the Apostles and elders in JeruSalem to ask [their opinion] on the matter. 3And at that, the congregation sent them off.

Well, as they were traveling through Phoenicia and Samaria, they stopped and spoke [to the congregations] along the way about the conversion of gentiles, which brought great joy among all the brothers.

4Then when they got to JeruSalem, they were welcomed by the congregation (which included the Apostles and the elders), and they told them about all the things that God had been accomplishing through them.

5However, some of those who were believers from the sect of the Pharisees then stood up and said:

 ‘We must circumcise those people and order them to obey the Laws of Moses!’

6So thereafter, the Apostles and the elders held a meeting to discuss this matter.

7And after a lot of wrangling, Peter then stood up and said:

 ‘Men… Brothers… You know how long it’s been since God chose to have gentiles hear the word of the Good News and believe through my mouth, 8and of how God (who knows the heart) testified about them by giving them the Holy Breath – just as He did to us.

 9‘So as you can see, He didn’t create a difference between us. And since He’s also purified their hearts in the faith... 10Why are you testing God by putting this yoke on the neck of the disciples? [The same one] that we and our fathers couldn’t carry?

 11‘For we believe that they’ve been saved just the same as we have – through the loving care of our Lord Jesus!’

12Well at that, the group became silent, and they listened to BarNabas and Paul tell about the many signs and omens that God had used them to perform among the gentiles.

13Then after they’d finished speaking, James said:

 ‘Men… Brothers… Hear me!

 14‘It was Simon who explained to us how for the first time, God has [chosen] to take a people for His Name from among the gentiles.

 15‘And the words of the Prophet [Amos] agree with this, for it is written:

 16*‘In that day,*
 *I’ll rebuild the tent of David that has fallen…*
 *I’ll rebuild it and make it stand once again.*

 17*‘Then those who remain of the gentiles*
 *May inquire of those who have called on My Name.’*
 [Amos 9:11-12]

 ‘Jehovah, the one doing all these things, said this 18because He’s known about these things throughout the ages!

 19‘Therefore, I’ve decided not to create problems for the gentiles who are turning to God. 20Rather, I’ll send word to them to stay free from things polluted by idols, from immorality, from whatever is strangled, and from blood... 21Because [these Laws of] Moses are preached in every city, and read in the synagogues on every Sabbath, and have been for generations!’

22Well after that, the Apostles, elders, and the whole congregation was unanimously in favor of sending men whom they’d selected from among themselves back to AntiOch.

So among those who traveled there with Paul and BarNabas were Judas (who was called BarSabbas) and Silas… Leading men from among the brothers.

23And this is what was written by their hands:

 ‘[From] the Apostles and the older brothers, to those gentile brothers in AntiOch, Syria, and Kilikia:

 ‘Rejoice!

 24‘We’ve heard that there were some, who came from us, who’ve been stirring things up there with speeches... And they’ve urged you to make changes in your lives (although we really didn’t tell them to do this).

 25‘Therefore, we’ve unanimously decided to choose men to send to you along with our beloved BarNabas and Paul… 26These men who’ve been willing to give their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus the Anointed One. 27And now Judas and Silas can further explain these things to you.

 28‘For through the Holy Breath, it’s become clear to us that we shouldn’t put any burdens on you other than these necessary things:

 29‘Stay away from:

 • Things that are sacrificed to idols,
 • From blood,
 • From the strangled,
 • And from sexual immorality.

 ‘If you stay away from these things, you’ll do well. Good health to you!’

30So when these men whom they’d sent arrived in AntiOch, they assembled the congregation and presented them with the letter. 31And after reading it, [the brothers in AntiOch] were very happy over the encouragement that the letter conveyed.

32Then Judas and Silas (since they were also Prophets) gave instructions to the brothers with many speeches to strengthen them.

33And after some time had passed, [the congregation] allowed them to return to those who’d sent them with that message of peace. 34~~However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there.~~ [spurious text] 35However, Paul and BarNabas stayed on in AntiOch for a while (along with many others), teaching and preaching the good news of the word of the Lord.

36Then after many days, Paul said to BarNabas:

 ‘Now that these matters have been settled, let’s go back and visit the brothers in all those cities where we’ve preached the word, to see how they’re doing.’

37However, BarNabas wanted to bring John (who was called Mark) along with them. 38But because Paul didn’t think he was worthy, he didn’t want to take him, since he’d departed from them at PamPhylia and he hadn’t continued in the work.

39So there was quite an argument over this, which resulted in each man going his own way. Therefore, BarNabas took Mark and they sailed off to Cyprus, 40while Paul chose Silas.

Then after sharing the joy of the Lord with the brothers there, [Paul] traveled on, 41going through Syria and Kilikia, strengthening the congregations in those places.

### Acts

## Chapter 16

1Well, [Paul] got as far as Derbe, and then he continued on to Lystra.

{Look!} There he found a disciple named Timothy, who was the son of a believing Jewish woman and a Greek father.

2The brothers in Lystra and Iconium had many good things to say about him, 3and Paul wanted to take this man along with him. So he went and circumcised him… He did this because of the many Jews who were in those places, since they all knew that his father was Greek.

4Well, as they traveled through the cities, they taught the decisions of the Apostles and elders in JeruSalem, and urged the brothers to obey them. 5So the congregations kept getting stronger in the faith and growing day after day.

6From there they traveled through Phrygia and the country of Galatia.

However, the Holy Breath [of God] wouldn’t allow them to teach the word in [the province of] Asia. 7And when they got down to Mysia, they tried to go on to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus wouldn’t allow them to do so. 8As a result, they passed Mysia and went on to Troas.

9And there, during the night, Paul had a vision of a Macedonian man who was standing and begging him:

 ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us!’

10Well, as soon as he saw this vision, we started out for Macedonia, assuming that God had called us to preach the good news to them.

11So having been led from Troas, we set a straight course for Samothrace. Then the next day we traveled to NeaPolis, 12and from there on to Philippi (a [Roman] colony that’s one of the main cities in that part of Macedonia), where we spent several days.

13And on the Sabbath we went to the riverbank outside of the city gate where we thought that we would find a place to pray, then we sat down and started talking to the women who’d assembled there.

14Well, a woman named Lydia from ThyaTira (an importer of purple [cloth]) who was a worshiper of The God, was listening... And the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to the things that Paul was saying.

15Then as she and her household were being immersed, she begged:

 ‘If you men have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my house!’

And she kept urging us to come.

16Then sometime later, as we were going somewhere to pray, a servant girl with a divining spirit came and met us. Her masters used her to make predictions, which earned a tidy profit for them.

17She kept following Paul and the rest of us, shouting:

 ‘These men are slaves of the Most High God and they’re preaching to you about the way of salvation!’

18Well, after she’d done this for several days, Paul finally got tired of it... So he turned and said to the spirit:

 ‘I order you to come out of her in the name of Jesus the Anointed One!’

...And it came right out.

19But when her masters saw that they’d just lost their hope of any income [from her], they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the rulers in the marketplace.

20They brought them before the judges and said:

 ‘These men are Jews who are creating a disturbance in our city; 21and they’re preaching customs that are illegal for us as Romans to either accept or to practice!’

22Well, the entire crowd arose against them.

So the judges, having [ordered that] their clothes be stripped off, commanded that they should be beaten with rods.

23Then after they’d received many blows, they threw them in jail, ordering the jailer to keep them safe. 24And since [the jailer] had received such an order, he took them into the innermost dungeon and put their feet in stocks.

25However, during the middle of the night, while Paul and Silas were praying and singing sacred hymns (within earshot of the rest of the prisoners there), 26a great earthquake occurred that shook the jail to its foundation… And this immediately opened all the doors and loosened all the chains!

27Then when the jailer woke up and saw the cell doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, because he thought the prisoners had escaped.

28But Paul called out loudly:

 ‘Don’t harm yourself… We’re all still here!’

29So [the jailer] asked for lamps to be brought in... And shaking in fear, he jumped in and fell down before Paul and Silas.

30Then he brought them outside and asked:

 ‘Lords,

 ‘What must I do so that I might get saved?’

31And they replied:

 ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you and all in your house will be saved.’

32Then they spoke to him and all those in his house about the word of the Lord.

33So at that hour of the night, he went and washed their whip wounds; then he and his family were immediately immersed. 34And thereafter, he brought them into his home, sat them at the table, and he and his entire household started rejoicing over their coming to believe in The God.

35Well the next morning, the magistrates sent officers who told him to release them.

36And the jailer said to Paul:

 ‘The magistrates have sent men to release you.

 ‘So now that you’re free, you may go your own way in peace.’

37But Paul said to him:

 ‘Although we weren’t found guilty [of doing anything wrong], they had us publicly flogged and thrown in jail… And we are Romans!

 ‘Are they now going to try to throw us out secretly?

 ‘No, let them come down here and bring us out themselves!’

38Well at that, the officers went back and reported what he had said to the judges, and they were frightened when they heard that the men were Romans! 39So they called for them and released them, then they asked them to leave their city.

40So after they were released, they went to Lydia’s house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them before traveling on.

### Acts

## Chapter 17

1From there they traveled through AmphiPolis and Apollonia to ThesSalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2And as it was Paul’s custom, he went inside and reasoned with [the Jews] from the Scriptures for three Sabbaths.

3He opened [the scriptures] and proved that the Anointed One had to suffer and be resurrected from the dead.

Then he said:

 ‘This Jesus whom I’m preaching to you is that Anointed One!’

4And as a result, some of them became believers and associated themselves with Paul and Silas, as did a large number of devout Greeks, many women, and quite a few of the [city’s] leaders.

5However, this made some of the Judeans very jealous, so they formed a mob… They assembled a group of wicked men who’d been hanging around in the market, and these created quite an uproar in the city. So they all went to Jason’s house and demanded to have [Paul and Silas] brought out. 6But when they didn’t find them there, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city council, shouting:

 ‘Those men who are creating confusion throughout the whole world are here also… 7And Jason has even welcomed them into his home!

 ‘Yet these people oppose the decrees of Caesar by saying that there’s another king… Someone called Jesus!’

8Well when the councilmen heard the crowd saying this, they became quite agitated 9and they demanded a large bail from Jason and the others, before they’d release them.

10Then that night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas off to Berea.

Well [upon arriving in Berea], they went into the Jewish synagogue. 11And there they found the people to be more noble-minded than those in ThesSalonica, because they eagerly welcomed the word and studied the Scriptures each day to make sure that the things [they were being told] were true.

12So, many of them became believers, as did a number of the prominent Greek women and quite a few of the men.

13However, when the Jews in ThesSalonica learned that Paul was also preaching the word of God in Berea, they traveled there to incite and agitate the crowds. 14As a result, the brothers immediately sent Paul off all the way to the sea…

However, Silas and Timothy stayed behind. 15Then those who were taking Paul, brought him to Athens. And before they returned, he instructed them to send Silas and Timothy to him as soon as possible.

16Well, while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he became disgusted to the core when he saw that the city was filled with idols. 17So he started reasoning with the Jews and other worshipers in the synagogue, as well as with anyone that happened to be in the markets each day.

18Then some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers came to hear him, and they started asking each other:

 ‘What’s this seed-picker trying to say?’

And someone told them:

 ‘He seems to be preaching a foreign demon.’

[This was] because he was telling them the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

19So they grabbed him and took him up to the AeroPagus, where they asked him:

 ‘Tell us; what’s this new thing that you’re preaching? 20For we’ve heard that you’ve brought some strange new ideas, and we want to know what they are!’

21(It’s a fact that all Athenians and even foreigners that traveled there had nothing to do other than spend their leisure time telling something new or listening to something new).

22So Paul stood up in the middle of the AeroPagus and said:

 ‘Men of Athens,

 ‘I see that you have a greater fear of the demons than do others.

 23‘And as I was going along and noticing all the things that you worship, I found an altar with the inscription: *To an unknown God*.

 ‘So I’m here to preach to you about something that you don’t know, but already worship!

 24‘For this is the [same] God who made the cosmos and everything in it; and this Lord of the sky and the earth doesn’t live in handmade Temples, 25nor does He need human hands to take care of Him – or anything at all [for that matter] – because He gives life, breath, and everything else to each of us.

 26‘He’s the One who made all the nations of mankind that dwell on the face of the earth from just one man, and He’s the One who determines the times and the boundaries of [when and] where they’d live, 27so that we would each search for God and grope around to find Him… Although He really isn’t very far from any of us.

 28‘For it’s through Him that we have life, and move, and exist… Even as some of your own poets have said:

 *‘We’re His offspring!’*

 29‘Therefore, since we’re the offspring of God, we shouldn’t think of this Divine One as being like gold, silver, stone… Or like anything else that some man may have artistically sculpted!

 30‘Yet, God has overlooked such periods of ignorance, and now He’s telling all men everywhere to repent, 31because He’s set a day when He’s going to judge the entire habitation of mankind righteously by a man whom He’s appointed. And He’s also given each of us a reason to believe in this man by resurrecting him from the dead!’

32Well when they heard [him mention] a resurrection of the dead, some started joking about it.

But others said:

 ‘We’ll listen to more about this at some other time!’

33So at that, Paul left them.

34However, some of the men started following him and became believers. This included Dionysius (a judge of the AeroPagus Supreme Court), a woman named Damaris, and several others.

### Acts

## Chapter 18

1After that, he left Athens and traveled on to Corinth.

2There he found a Judean from Pontus named Aquila who’d recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Emperor Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. So he went to see them, 3and because they shared the same trade (they all worked as tent makers), he stayed at their house.

4He also spoke in the synagogue on every Sabbath and he kept reasoning with both the Jews and the Greeks.

5Then after Silas and Timothy finally arrived from Macedonia, Paul really intensified his work of witnessing to the Jews and proving to them that Jesus is the Anointed One.

6However, they just kept on opposing him and blaspheming... So he shook out his clothes and said:

 ‘Your blood is now on your own heads… I’m clean of it!

 ‘From now on, I’ll just be going to the gentiles.’

7Then he left them and entered the home of a man named Titius Justus (a worshiper of God), whose house adjoined the synagogue. 8And later, Crispus (the synagogue’s presiding officer) became a believer in the Lord, as did his whole household… And many Corinthians that heard about it also became believers and were immersed.

9Then one night, the Lord said this to Paul in a vision:

 ‘Don’t be afraid; keep on preaching here and don’t stop, 10because I’m with you!

 ‘Nobody will attack you or try to hurt you, since I have many people in this city.’

11And as a result, Paul stayed there for a year and a half, teaching the word of God among them.

12Well, it was while Gallio was governor of Achaea that the Jews got together and came against Paul. They took him to court and charged him, 13saying:

 ‘This man is violating the Law by trying to convert people of other faiths to worshiping [his] God.’

14But just as Paul was about to answer, Gallio said to them:

 ‘O Jews,

 ‘I’d be patient and put up with this if you were talking about [his doing] something wrong or committing some foul act...

 15‘But if all you want to do is complain about words, names, and your Law – take care of it yourselves! I don’t wish to be the judge of such matters!’

16And with that, he threw them out of his court.

17So then they dragged [Paul] before Sosthenes, the presiding officer of the synagogue. And right there in front of the Judgment Seat, they started beating him up!

However, Gallio didn’t pay any attention to this.

18Well, after staying there for several more days, Paul said goodbye to the brothers and sailed off for Syria, along with Priscilla and Aquila.

Then [Paul] had his hair sheared while he was at Kenchrea, because of a vow that he’d made.

19And when they arrived at Ephesus, he left [Priscilla and Aquila] and went into the synagogue to reason with the Jews. 20But despite asking him to stay there for a while, he wouldn’t do it. 21He just said goodbye and told them:

 ‘If it’s God’s will, I’ll be back.’

So then he traveled from Ephesus 22to Caesarea, where he went up and greeted the congregation, and from there he traveled on to AntiOch.

23And after staying [in AntiOch] for some time, he left and traveled throughout the areas of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples in those places.

24Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos (a native of Alexandria) who was an excellent speaker and who knew the Scriptures very well, arrived at Ephesus.

25He’d been taught the ways of the Lord, and he was aglow with the Breath [of God], so what he said and taught about Jesus was correct. However, he only knew about the immersion [practiced by] John.

26Well, Priscilla and Aquila had been listening to him as he was boldly speaking in the synagogue, and then they took him under their wing and explained the ways of God to him more completely.

27Then, since he was planning to travel to Achaea, the brothers wrote to the disciples there, telling them to welcome him. And when he got there, he provided assistance to all those who (through [God’s] loving care) became believers, 28as he publicly and very enthusiastically showed that the Jews were absolutely wrong by using the Scriptures to prove that Jesus was the Anointed One.

### Acts

## Chapter 19

1From there, Paul traveled inland while Apollos stayed in Corinth. And when he got to Ephesus, he found some disciples 2and he asked them:

 ‘Did you receive Holy Breath when you became believers?’

And they answered:

 ‘We’ve never even heard that there is Holy Breath.’

3So he asked:

 ‘Then, into what were you immersed?’

And they replied:

 ‘Into John’s [form of] immersion.’

4So Paul told them this:

 ‘When John immersed [people], it was an immersion [in symbol] of repentance. However, he told the people to believe in the one who was coming behind him… In Jesus.’

5And after they heard this, they were all immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6Then after Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Breath came over them and they each started speaking in different languages and prophesying 7(there were about 12 men).

8So after that, [Paul] went into the synagogue, where he spoke boldly… For the next three months he reasoned and talked persuasively about the Kingdom of God.

9But when [he noted] that some were just becoming more difficult, refusing to believe and saying bad things about The Way in front of the crowds, he left them… He separated the [true] disciples from among them and started giving lectures in the School of Tyrannus each day, 10which went on for the next two years.

So, everyone who lived in [the province of] Asia (both the Jews and the Greeks) eventually heard the word of the Lord Jesus. 11And [all the while], God kept demonstrating unusual powers through the hands of Paul.

12For even the bandanas and aprons that he wore were carried to sick people, which caused their diseases to leave and wicked spirits to come out!

13However, there were some traveling Judean exorcists that also started using the name of the Lord Jesus against wicked spirits, saying:

 ‘I order you in the name of Jesus, the one whom Paul preaches …’

14Well, Sceva (a Judean Chief Priest) had 7 sons that were doing this. 15However, one of the wicked spirits said to them:

 ‘I know Jesus, and I’m familiar with Paul, but just who are you?’

16And with that, the man who was possessed by a wicked spirit jumped on them, overpowered each one, and beat them up – so they had to run from the house naked and injured!

17Well before long, everyone in Ephesus (both the Jews and the Greeks) came to know about this, and it frightened them. As a result, the name of the Lord Jesus kept growing in praise, 18and many who became believers would come and openly confess, telling of [the bad] things that they’d done.

19In fact, several that used to practice magic brought their books together and burned them up in front of everyone! And when they calculated how much they’d paid for them, they found that they [were worth] some 50,000 silver coins.

20So the power of the word of the Lord kept growing and getting stronger there.

21Then after all these things had happened, Paul resolved that he would travel to Macedonia and Achaea, and from there on to JeruSalem.

And he told them:

 ‘After I get there, I want to see Rome!’

22So he sent two of those who served him (Timothy and Erastus) on to Macedonia, as he spent more time in [the province of] Asia.

23However, a big disturbance thereafter arose [in Asia] because of The Way. 24For there was a man named DeMetrius who was a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis (it was a very profitable business for him and his employees).

25So he gathered them all, along with others in his trade, and he said:

 ‘Men,

 ‘You know that we all make a very good living from this business.

 26‘But now you’re seeing and hearing how this Paul is persuading large numbers of people and making converts of them, not only in Ephesus but in almost all [the province of] Asia, saying that our hand-made gods really aren’t gods!

 27‘[Such teachings] not only endanger our business by damaging its reputation, but [soon] it’ll make the temple of the great goddess Artemis unimportant, and her magnificence (which the whole [province of] Asia and the entire land worships) is about to be brought to nothing!’

28Well when they heard this, they all became very angry and started shouting:

 ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’

29...And the whole city became filled with confusion.

So at that, they rushed into the theater and grabbed GaiUs and AristArchus (the Macedonians who traveled with Paul). 30And although Paul wanted to go to visit them in public, the disciples wouldn’t allow it. 31For even some of the public game commissioners (who were friends of Paul) sent word to him, begging him not to enter the theater.

32In the meantime, some [in the theater] were shouting one thing, and others were shouting something else... For the whole group was confused and most of them didn’t even know why they were there!

33So they located Alexander in the midst of the crowd, and the Judeans pushed him up to the front. Then Alexander started waving his hands to defend himself before the people. 34But when they recognized that he was a Jew, they started a shout that lasted for two hours:

 ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’

35Well when the City Recorder finally quieted the crowd, he said:

 ‘Men! Ephesians! Who in the world doesn’t know that the City of Ephesus is the place where the temple of the Great Artemis and the image that fell from the sky is kept?

 36‘So, since these things are undeniable, it would be better if you’d just calm down and not act so foolishly!

 37‘Now, you’ve grabbed hold of these men, who aren’t guilty of robbing Temples or blaspheming our goddess. 38But if DeMetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a case against them… [remember that] there are court days and there are governors! So let them bring charges there!

 39‘If you’re looking for anything beyond that, it has to be decided in a legal hearing!

 40‘Recognize that you’re really in danger of being charged with rioting today – and you don’t have a good reason for doing this!

 ‘Who can explain this disorderly mob?’

41And after he said that, he sent them all home.

### Acts

## Chapter 20

1Well, after all the rioting was over, Paul sent for the disciples and encouraged them before he said goodbye and left for Macedonia.

2Then, after traveling around there encouraging the people with many speeches, he went on to Greece, 3where he spent the next three months… But then the Jews [in Greece] started plotting against him.

And although he’d first decided to leave for Syria, he later changed his mind and returned through Macedonia.

4Those who were with him at the time were:

 • Sopater (son of PyrRhus of Berea),
 • AristArchus,
 • Secundus (of the Thessalonians),
 • GaiUs (of Derbe),
 • Timothy,
 • Tychicus, and
 • Trophimus (from [the province of] Asia).

5These traveled ahead of us and waited for us in Troas.

6Then, after the period of No Fermentation, we sailed from Philippi to Troas where they were, which took five days, and we spent seven more days there.

7Then on Sunday, when we met to have a meal, Paul gave a public speech (because he was going to leave the next day). This went on until midnight, 8so many lamps were lit in the upstairs room where we met.

9However, there was a young man named EuTychus who had been sitting in a window and fell fast asleep while Paul was talking… Then he slumped over and fell out of the 3rd-story window!

And when they went to pick him up, they found that he was dead.

10But then Paul then went downstairs and threw himself on top of the man and hugged him… And finally he announced:

 ‘Don’t worry! He’s still alive!’

11So after that, he went back upstairs and started the meal, and they all ate and talked until daybreak, before [Paul] had to leave.

12Meanwhile, they took the boy [home] alive, and everyone was extremely encouraged.

13From there, we went on ahead of Paul by boat and sailed to Assos, where we waited for him, because that’s what he told us to do, since he was going to travel there on foot.

14So when he caught up with us in Assos, we took him aboard and we went on to Mitylene.

15Then we sailed from there the next day, coming ashore across from Chios, and on the following day we stopped at Samos, then we finally got to Miletus the day after that.

16Now, Paul had planned to sail past Ephesus so he wouldn’t have to spend any time in [the province of] Asia, because he was in a hurry to get to JeruSalem before Pentecost, if he could.

17However, [while he was] in Miletus, he sent word to Ephesus to call the elders of the congregation to him. 18And when they arrived, he told them:

 ‘You know very well that from the first day I stepped foot into [the province of] Asia, I was with you all the time, 19humbly slaving for the Lord, and [you know] of all the tears and trials that I endured because of the plots of the Jews...

 20‘Yet I didn’t fail to remind you and teach you both in public and in [your] homes! 21For I thoroughly testified to both Jews and Greeks about [their need to] repent before God and to put faith in our Lord Jesus.

 22‘But now {Look!} I’ll be traveling to JeruSalem as though I were already in chains, for I don’t know what’s going to happen to me there... 23[All I know is that] in city after city, the Holy Breath keeps testifying to me, telling me that chains and difficulties are awaiting me there.

 24‘However, I refuse to say anything that would make my life more valuable to me, so I can faithfully finish my course and fulfill the service assignment that I received from the Lord Jesus… To give a complete testimony about the good news of God’s loving care.

 25‘Now, {Look!} because I know that all of you whom I preached the Kingdom [message] to won’t see my face any more;

 26‘I’m testifying to you today that I’m clean from the blood of all men, 27for I haven’t held back from telling any of you what God has purposed to do!

 28‘Therefore, you need to pay close attention to yourselves and to the whole flock over which the Holy Breath has appointed you overseers… Feed the Lord’s congregation, which he purchased with his own blood.

 29‘For I know that after I leave, oppressive wolves will enter among you who won’t spare the flock, 30and that men from among you will arise and speak twisted things to attract some of the disciples to following them!

 31‘So you must stay awake… And keep those three years in mind during which I didn’t stop counseling each of you tearfully, both night and day.

 32‘Now, I’m leaving you the loving care of our Lord who can build you up and give you an inheritance among all the Holy Ones.

 33‘[You know that] I haven’t longed for anyone’s silver, gold, or clothing. 34For you’re aware of how I’ve used my own hands to take care of my own needs and [for the needs] of those who were with me.

 35‘I’ve demonstrated to you how important it is for us to work like this, so we can help those who are weak. Therefore, remember the words that were said by our Lord Jesus:

 *‘There’s more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.’*

36And after he said this, he kneeled down with them all and prayed.

37Well, many tears flowed as they hugged Paul’s neck and tenderly kissed him. 38For when he said that they wouldn’t see his face again, they were deeply saddened. And from there, they all accompanied him out to the ship.

### Acts

## Chapter 21

1Well, when we finally tore ourselves away from them and put out to sea, we ran straight over to Cos, then to Rhodes the next day, and from there to Patara.

2And when we found a boat that was going to Phoenicia, we went aboard and sailed off.

3From there we came in sight of the Island of Cyprus, passing it on our left, and we sailed on to Syria, landing at Tyre (because that’s where the boat was to unload its cargo). 4And while we were there, we searched for and found the disciples, and we stayed with them for seven days.

However, by the Breath [of God], they repeatedly warned Paul not to set foot in JeruSalem.

5[Then a week later], we got ready to continue our journey, and everyone (including the women and children) followed us outside of the city. And after kneeling down on the beach, we had a prayer 6before saying goodbye to each other. Then we boarded the ship, as they returned to their homes.

7Well, after we left Tyre, we finally arrived at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and spent the day with them.

8Then on the next day, we traveled to Caesarea, where we went to the house of Philip the Evangelizer (one of the seven men), and stayed with him. 9This man had four virgin daughters who all prophesied.

10But after we’d stayed there for several days, a Prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11He walked right up to us and removed Paul’s sash, then he used it to tie up his own hands and feet, and said:

 ‘This is what the Holy Breath has declared:

 *‘The Judeans will bind the man who owns this sash and then hand him over to the gentiles.’*

12Well when we heard this, we all (everyone there) started begging [Paul] not to go to JeruSalem.

13But Paul replied:

 ‘Why are you crying and crushing my heart? I’m not only ready to be bound, but also to die in JeruSalem for the name of our Lord Jesus!’

14And when we couldn’t change his mind, we gave in, saying:

 ‘May [God’s] Will be done.’

15So after several days, we prepared for the journey and headed towards JeruSalem.

16Meanwhile, some of the disciples from Caesarea traveled with us and led us to the home of a man who showed us some hospitality… Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple.

17Well, when we arrived in JeruSalem, the brothers were all happy to see us. 18And the next [day], we went with Paul to see James and the rest of the elders.

19So [Paul] greeted them and started giving a detailed account of the things that God had done among the nations through his ministry. 20And after hearing about it, they glorified God.

Then they said to him:

 ‘Our brother,

 ‘You know how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and they all zealously obey the Law. 21But they’ve heard the rumor that you’re teaching Jews who live among the nations an apostasy from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or to follow our traditions.

 22‘So, what do you suppose we can do about this?

 ‘Since they’re going to hear that you’ve arrived, 23this is what we’re telling you to do:

 ‘We have four men who’ve taken a sacred vow… 24Take them with you, and all of you should cleanse yourselves ceremonially, then pay to have your heads shaved. That way, everyone will know that there’s no truth to the rumors we’ve heard about you, and that you’re personally following the rules and obeying the Law.

 25‘As for the gentiles who’ve become believers... We’ve already sent them our decision to stay free from things that are sacrificed to idols, from blood, from whatever is strangled, and from sexual immorality.’

26So the next day, Paul took the [four] men along and they cleansed themselves ceremonially. Then they entered the Temple to give their notice of their ceremonial cleansing (to start counting the days until an offering should be made for each of them).

27But when the seven days were about up, some Judeans from [the province of] Asia saw him in the Temple and started a riot among the crowd… They grabbed him, 28shouting:

 ‘Men of IsraEl! Help!

 ‘This is the man who’s teaching against our people, against the Law, and this place... To everyone, everywhere!

 ‘He’s even defiled this Holy Place by bringing Greeks into the Temple!’

29([They said this], because they’d seen him in the city earlier with Trophimus the Ephesian, and they [mistakenly] thought that Paul had also brought him into the Temple).

30Well, the whole city was in an uproar, and many people started running there.

So they grabbed Paul and dragged him out of the Temple, then they closed the [Temple] doors 31and tried to kill him! But when the commander of the [Roman] garrison heard the uproar there in JeruSalem, 32he immediately took a contingent of officers and soldiers, and ran down to them.

So when [the mob] saw the commander coming with his soldiers, they stopped beating up Paul. 33However, the commander then arrested [Paul] and ordered him to be bound with two chains.

Thereafter, he asked [the mob] who he was and what he’d done.

34However, some in the crowd started shouting one thing, and others were shouting something else. So because he couldn’t be sure of anything (due to all the confusion), he commanded [that Paul] should be taken back to their garrison.

35Well, when they reached the [garrison] stairs, the situation got even worse. For the mob became so violent that the soldiers had to literally carry [Paul] along 36while the people followed them shouting:

 ‘Take him away!’

37Then, as he was being carried into the garrison, Paul asked the commander:

 ‘Am I allowed to say something to you?’

And he replied:

 ‘Can you speak Greek?

 38‘Aren’t you the Egyptian who started a rebellion and led 4,000 dagger men into the desert some time ago?’

39But Paul said:

 ‘No... I’m really a Jew from Tarsus in Kilikia – I’m a citizen of a well-known city. So I beg you, allow me to speak to the people!’

40Well at that, he gave Paul permission.

So [Paul] stood on the stairs and waved his arms [to quiet] the crowd. And when everything quieted down, he spoke to them in Hebrew, saying:

### Acts

## Chapter 22

 1‘Men, brothers, and fathers!

 ‘Allow me to say something in my own defense now.’

2Well when they heard him addressing them in Hebrew [possibly meaning the common the language of the Hebrews, which was Aramaic], things did get quieter.

And he said:

 3‘I’m a Jew who was born in Tarsus of Kilikia. I went to school right here in this city, and I received my instruction at the feet of GamaliEl, who taught me to obey the Law of our fathers strictly and to show the same zeal for God that you’re showing today.

 4‘I personally persecuted this ‘*Way*,’ by arresting and delivering their men and women to prisons for execution.

 5‘The High Priest and the entire assembly of elders can corroborate this, because I obtained letters from them to our brothers in Damascus, where I went to bring everybody they had in prison back to JeruSalem for punishment.

 6‘But as I was on my way and getting close to Damascus, at about noon, a bright light in the sky flashed all around me!

 7‘Then I fell to the ground and I heard a voice say to me:

 *‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’*

 8‘So I asked:

 *‘Who are you, Lord?’*

 ‘And he replied:

 *‘I’m Jesus the Nazarene, the one you’re persecuting!’*

 9‘Well, the men who were with me also saw the light, but they didn’t hear the voice of the person speaking to me.

 10‘Then I asked:

 *‘What must I do, Lord?’*

 ‘And the Lord said to me:

 *‘Get up and go to Damascus. There you’ll be told all about what you’ve been assigned to do.’*

 11‘However, since I couldn’t see anymore because of the brilliance of that light, those who were [traveling] with me had to lead me into Damascus by the hand.

 12‘Now, AnaNias (a man who devoutly obeyed the Law and that was well spoken of by all the Judeans that live there) 13came and stood next to me.

 ‘Then he said:

 *‘Saul… Brother… See again!’*

 ‘And I could immediately see him!

 14‘Then he said:

 *‘The God of our fathers has selected you to learn about His Will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear the voice from his mouth,* 15*because you are to be his witness to everything that you’ve seen and heard.*

 16*‘So now, why are you wasting time? Get up, get immersed [in water], and ‘wash your sins away’ by calling on his name!’*

 17‘Then after I got back to JeruSalem... And while I was praying in the Temple, I fell into a trance where I saw [Jesus]!

 18‘And he said to me:

 *‘Hurry! You must leave JeruSalem right away, because the [people here] don’t want to listen to your testimony about me!’*

 19‘But I said:

 *‘Lord, they all know very well that in one synagogue after another I once had everyone who believes in you arrested and whipped!*

 20*‘And when the blood of your witness Stephen was being spilled, I stood there and approved of it… In fact, I guarded the robes of those who killed him!’*

 21‘Well at that, he just told me:

 *‘Leave, because I’m sending you to far-away nations.’*

22Now, they had been listening to him until he said that, but then they started shouting:

 ‘Kill this man, for he isn’t fit to live!’

23And because they were shouting, throwing their clothes around and tossing dirt in the air, 24the commander ordered that Paul should be taken inside their garrison. There he gave orders to scourge him with a whip so as to force him to explain why everyone was shouting about him that way.

25But when they stretched him out to be whipped, Paul asked the centurion who was standing there:

 ‘Is it legal for you to whip a man who’s a Roman and hasn’t been charged with a crime?’

26Well when the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and said:

 ‘Just look at what you were about to do! This man is a Roman!’

27So the commander came to [Paul] and asked:

 ‘Tell me, are you a Roman?’

And he answered:

 ‘Yes.’

28Then the commander said:

 ‘I paid a lot to obtain my citizenship.’

And Paul said:

 ‘Well, I was born [a citizen]!’

29Well at that, the men who were about to torture him left immediately. And on learning that he’d arrested a Roman [citizen], the military commander was frightened.

30So the next day, because he wanted to know for sure just what the Jews were accusing him of, he [unshackled] him and commanded the Chief Priests and the entire Jewish Court to assemble.

Then he brought Paul down and stood him before them.

### Acts

## Chapter 23

1Well, Paul just glared at the [judges of the] Jewish Court, and said:

 ‘Men… Brothers… I have a perfectly clear conscience about the way I behave before God down to this day.’

2And at that, the High Priest AnaNias ordered those who were standing by him to hit him in the mouth.

3So Paul said:

 ‘God is going to hit you – you whitewashed wall!

 ‘Do you sit there judging me by the Law, and at the same time break the Law by telling them to hit me?’

4Then those who were standing by him asked:

 ‘Are you speaking against the High Priest of God?’

5And Paul answered:

 ‘Brothers, I didn’t know he was the High Priest. For it’s written:

 *‘You must not speak badly of the one who rules your people*.’

6Then when Paul noticed that part of the group were SadDucees and the rest were Pharisees, he called out in the High Court:

 ‘Men… Brothers… It’s because I’m a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, that I’m being judged over my hope in the resurrection of the dead!’

7And after he said this, quite an argument broke out between the Pharisees and SadDucees, which divided the crowd, 8since the SadDucees say that there’s no such thing as a resurrection, or [divine] messengers, or the Breath [of God] – yet the Pharisees publicly preach all such things.

9So there was lots of shouting, and some of the Pharisees’ scribes stood up and started heatedly arguing, saying:

 ‘We don’t find anything wrong with this man!

 ‘For if the Breath [of God] or [one of His] messengers spoke to him, [what of it?]’ ~~Let us not fight against God.~~ [spurious words, copied from Acts 5:39]

10Well, the argument became so heated that the commander feared that they’d pull Paul to pieces!

So he ordered the soldiers to go down and take him from their midst and bring him back to their garrison.

11Then on the following night, the Lord stood next to [Paul] and said:

 ‘Be strong!

 ‘So far, you’ve thoroughly testified to things about me in JeruSalem… But now you must also testify about me in Rome!’

12Well the next morning, the Judeans formed an alliance – they all swore with a curse that they wouldn’t eat or drink until after they’d killed Paul 13(there were more than 40 men who formed this oath-bound conspiracy).

14So they went to the Chief Priests and elders and said:

 ‘We’ve taken a solemn oath with a curse not to take a bite of food until after we’ve killed Paul!

 15‘Therefore, we want you and the High Court to explain to the military commander that he should bring [Paul] to you so you can learn more about the charges against him… And we’ll be ready to kill him before he gets there!’

16However, Paul’s nephew heard that they’d be waiting for him, so he went to the garrison and reported it to Paul.

17Then Paul called one of the centurions and said:

 ‘Take this young man to the commander, because he’s got something to report.’

18So [the soldier] took [Paul’s nephew] to the commander and told him:

 ‘The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, because he has something to tell you.’

19Well, the commander took him by the hand and led him in, then he asked him privately:

 ‘What do you want to report to me?’

20And he answered:

 ‘The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the Jewish Court tomorrow, pretending to want to learn more about the charges against him.

 21‘But whatever you do, don’t let them convince you to do this, because they have more than 40 men waiting to ambush him. These men have sworn an oath with a curse not to eat or drink anything until after they’ve killed him. And now they’re ready, expecting you to promise [to do this for them].’

22So at that, the commander sent the young man away, giving him the order:

 ‘Don’t tell anyone that you’ve explained this to me.’

23Then he called in two of his centurions and said:

 ‘I want you to get 200 soldiers ready, plus 70 cavalrymen and 200 spearmen… Have them prepared to march all the way to Caesarea at the third hour of the night [3am in the Roman system, 9pm in the Jewish]. 24Also, provide an animal for Paul to ride, for I want you to carry him safely to Governor Felix.’

25Then he wrote a letter [to Felix] that read like this:

 26‘Claudius Lysias to the mighty Governor Felix:

 ‘Rejoice!

 27‘This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him. However, I came there quickly with a contingent of soldiers and rescued him, because I learned that he was a Roman.

 28‘And because I wanted to know their accusation against him, I had him taken down to their High Court. 29There I found that they were just accusing him over questions that have to do with their Law… But he hadn’t been charged with anything that deserves death or being sent to jail.

 30‘However, because I learned of a plot against this man, I’m sending him to you right away, and I’m ordering his accusers to speak against him before you.’

31So these soldiers followed their orders and they took Paul to AntiPatris that night.

32Then the next day, they sent him on with the cavalry (which later returned to the garrison).

33And when they got to Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor along with Paul.

34Well, after he read the letter, [Felix] asked [Paul] which province he was from. And when he heard that he was from Kilikia, he said:

 35‘I’ll give you a thorough hearing after your accusers get here.’

So thereafter, he gave orders that [Paul] should be kept under guard in the Praetorian Palace of Herod.

### Acts

## Chapter 24

1Well five days later, High Priest AnaNias arrived with some elders and an orator named Tertullus, and they explained their accusations against Paul to the governor.

2Then when he was called forward, Tertullus said this:

 ‘You’ve brought about so much peace, and we welcome the well-thought-out reforms that you’ve brought to our nation 3in every way and everywhere with the greatest thankfulness, O mighty Felix.

 4‘But, so that I don’t waste any of your time, I beg you to hear us briefly, in your kindness...

 5‘We found this man –this plague– stirring up rebellions among the Judeans throughout the whole inhabited earth, for he’s the leader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6And when he tried to profane our Temple, we arrested him. ~~and would have judged according to our law.~~ 7~~But the chief captain, Lysias, came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,~~ 8~~commanding his accusers to come to you,~~ [spurious words] You can examine him yourself to learn more about all these things that we’re saying against him.’

9And at that, the Judeans also joined in the attack, affirming that the things [Tertullus] was saying were true.

10Thereafter, the governor nodded for Paul to speak.

And Paul said:

 ‘I know very well that you’ve been the judge of our nation for many years.

 ‘So I’m happy to speak in my own defense about these things that I’ve been accused of, 11since you’re in a good position to understand them.

 ‘It hasn’t been more than 12 days since I went to worship in JeruSalem, 12and they didn’t find me in the Temple arguing with anyone, nor did they find me inciting a riot in the synagogues… Or anywhere else in the city for that matter!

 13‘So right now, they can’t prove any of the things they’re accusing me of before you.

 14‘But I do admit to this:

 ‘That which they’re calling *a sect,* is nothing more than the way that I’ve always worshipped the God of my fathers.

 ‘For I believe everything that’s written in the Law and in the Prophets, 15and I have this hope in God – which they also accept – that there’s going to be a resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous.

 16‘This is why I’m constantly on the alert so that I don’t offend my conscience by doing anything against God or men. 17And this is also why, after [being gone for] several years, I returned [to JeruSalem]… To bring gifts to the poor in my nation and to present my offerings [before God].

 18‘But it was while I was doing this that they found me in the Temple
– ceremonially cleansed, by the way – and I wasn’t there with a mob, nor did I start a riot!

 ‘Actually, some Jews from the [province of] Asia 19should be here before you to accuse me… That is, if they could actually find anything against me.

 20‘Just ask these who are here to tell you what bad things they found me doing as I stood before their High Court… 21There was only what I shouted while I was standing among them, when I said:

 *‘I’m being judged before you today over the resurrection of the dead!’*

22Well, although Felix knew a lot about things that have to do with the ‘Way,’ he just put them all off, saying:

 ‘When Commander Lysias gets here, I’ll make a decision on this matter that you’re so concerned about.’

23And thereafter, [Felix] ordered the centurion not to kill [Paul], but to allow him some liberty, and not to prevent his people from serving his needs.

24It was several days later that Felix arrived with his woman Drousille. And since she was a Jew, he sent for Paul and they listened to him talk about his belief in the Anointed Jesus.

25However, Felix became frightened when Paul started talking about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment! So he said:

 ‘That’s enough for now!

 ‘Go on back, and when I have more time, I’ll send for you again.’

26However, he was actually hoping that Paul would try to bribe him... So, he sent for him and talked to him frequently!

27Well after two years, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And because Felix wanted to be liked by the Jews, he also kept Paul locked up.

### Acts

## Chapter 25

1It was just three days after Festus had been appointed the provincial governor that he traveled from Caesarea to JeruSalem – 2and there the Chief Priests and Judean leaders talked to him about Paul.

3They begged him (asking it as a favor) to send [Paul] to JeruSalem… Since they planned to ambush and kill him along the road.

4However, Festus replied that he would just keep Paul in Caesarea. But, because he would be leaving [JeruSalem] shortly, he said to them:

 5‘Those of you who have been empowered to do so should come back with me, and if he’s committed some crime, you can make your accusations against him there.’

6Well, after he’d spent about 8 to 10 days [in JeruSalem], Festus returned to Caesarea. And the next day, he sat on the Judgment Seat and ordered to have Paul brought in.

7And when [Paul] arrived, the Jews that had come from JeruSalem stood all around him and charged him with several serious offenses… However, they couldn’t prove anything.

8Then Paul stood up and spoke in his own defense, saying:

 ‘I haven’t committed any sins against the Law of the Jews, against the Temple, or against Caesar!’

9However, Festus (in an attempt to gain favor with the Jews) asked Paul:

 ‘Do you want to go back to JeruSalem and be judged over these things before me there?’

10But Paul said:

 ‘I’m standing before the Judgment Seat of Caesar, and this is where I ought to be judged!

 ‘I’ve done nothing wrong to the Judeans, as you’re finding out for yourself.

 11‘However, if I’m really a criminal and have done something that I should die for, I’m not begging off from dying.

 ‘On the other hand, if nothing they’re accusing me of is true, then nobody can just hand me over to them as a favor!

 ‘Therefore, I appeal to Caesar!’

12Well after discussing it with his counselors, Festus replied:

 ‘You have appealed to Caesar, so to Caesar you’ll go!’

13Then after several days had passed, Agrippa (the king) and Bernice [the king’s sister] arrived in Caesarea to pay a courtesy visit on Festus.

14So, since they were to spend several days there, Festus laid the matter of Paul before the king, saying:

 ‘There’s a man here who was left as a prisoner by Felix.

 15‘When I was in JeruSalem, the Chief Priests and Judean elders brought me some information about him and asked me to condemn him to death.

 16‘But I told them that it isn’t the Roman way to just hand a man over as a favor before he meets his accusers face-to-face and gets a chance to speak in his own defense.

 17‘So when they got here, I didn’t delay the matter… The next day I sat down on the Judgment Seat and ordered the man to be brought in. 18And when they came [before me], his accusers didn’t really produce any serious charges as I thought they would... 19They simply complained about some dispute that they had with him over questions about their religion and about some ‘Jesus’ who was dead, but whom Paul kept claiming was alive!

 20‘Well, I became so confused over the matter that I finally asked if he’d like to go to JeruSalem to be judged there over these matters. 21But then Paul appealed to be bound over for a decision by the August One, so I ordered him to be held until I can send him to Caesar.’

22So Agrippa told Festus:

 ‘I’d also like to hear from this man.’

And he said:

 ‘You’ll hear him tomorrow!’

23Then the next day, Agrippa and Bernice arrived with a lot of pomp and ceremony and went into the hearing room along with some military commanders and prominent men from the city.

And when Festus gave the command, Paul was brought in.

24So Festus said:

 ‘O King Agrippa, and all who are here with us,

 ‘Now you can see this man about whom all the Judeans both here and in JeruSalem are shouting that he shouldn’t be allowed to live any longer.

 25‘However, I haven’t found anything that he’s done to deserve death; so when he appealed to the August One, I decided to send him there… 26But I really don’t have anything to write to [my] lord about.

 ‘Therefore, I brought him here before you… And especially before you, King Agrippa, so that you can examine him and judge something that I can write to him about.

 27‘For it seems unreasonable to send a prisoner [to Rome] and not be able to specify the charges against him.’

### Acts

## Chapter 26

1So at that, Agrippa said to Paul:

 ‘You may now speak on your own behalf.’

Well, Paul stretched his hands out and said this in his defense:

 2‘King Agrippa,

 ‘I’m happy to be here so as to defend myself before you today over all these things that I’ve been accused of by the Jews, 3because you’re an expert on all Judean customs and controversies.

 ‘Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

 4‘This is the way that I’ve lived since I was a boy:

 ‘From long ago, everyone in my nation –all in JeruSalem and all the Jews 5who used to know me– can testify to the fact that I was raised in the strictest sect of our type of worship… I was a Pharisee.

 6‘And now, it’s over the hope of a promise that was made by The God to our ancestors that I’m standing here being judged, 7since it’s concerning the hope of attaining this, that our twelve tribes have been so earnestly serving [God] night and day.

 ‘And it’s over this same hope that I’m being accused by these Judeans, O king... 8For, why is it that they all find it so unbelievable that God can raise the dead?

 9‘For a fact, I once thought that it was right to do whatever I could to oppose the name of Jesus the Nazarene… 10And I did this in JeruSalem.

 ‘Back then, I locked up many of the Holy Ones and threw them in jail, because I was authorized to do this by the Chief Priests. And as they were being brought up for execution, I voted against them!

 11‘I often punished them in synagogues and tried to make them commit blasphemy... And since I was so crazy [in my hatred] against them, I even traveled to other cities to persecute them.

 12‘Well, it was while I was doing this that I traveled to Damascus with an authorization and a commission from the Chief Priests...

 13‘Then at noon, as I was [walking along] the road, O king, I saw a light that was brighter than the sun, which flashed from the sky around me and those who were traveling with me! 14Then we all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice say to me in Hebrew [possibly meaning Aramaic]:

 *‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?*

 *‘And why are you trying so hard to keep kicking against the cattle prod?’*

 15‘Then I asked:

 *‘Who are you, Lord?’*

 ‘And the Lord replied:

 *‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.*

 16*‘Now, get up and stand on your feet. I’ve made myself visible to you so as to take you ahead of time to be my servant, and you can testify to the fact that you saw me and all the things that I’m going to make you see.*

 17*‘For I’m selecting you out of the people and out of the nations where I’m going to send you,* 18*to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and to lead them from the power of the Opposer towards God.*

 *‘I’m doing this so that their sins can be forgiven and they can receive an inheritance among those who’ve been made holy by [their] faith in me.’*

 19‘As a result, O King Agrippa, I didn’t disobey this vision from the heavens.

 20‘First I went to those in Damascus, then to those in JeruSalem and the entire countryside around Judea… And finally to the gentiles, to whom I carried the message that they should repent and turn to God by doing things that prove their repentance.

 21‘And this is why the Judeans grabbed me in the Temple and tried to beat me to death!

 22‘However, through the help of God, I’ve kept witnessing to both the least and the greatest down to this day. I haven’t been saying anything other that what the Prophets and Moses told us would happen… 23That the Anointed One was to going to suffer... And then, as the first to be resurrected from the dead, he was going to proclaim light to these gentiles.’

24Now, while he was saying these things in his defense, Festus shouted:

 ‘You’re crazy, Paul!

 ‘All of the writings are driving you mad!’

25But Paul said:

 ‘I’m not going crazy, O mighty Festus... I’m telling you things that are true and make good sense!

 26‘For a fact; the king whom I’m speaking to openly already knows a lot about these things!

 ‘I believe that none of this has escaped his notice, because none of it was done off in some corner!

 27‘King Agrippa,

 ‘Do you believe the Prophets?

 ‘I know that you believe!’

28But Agrippa said to Paul:

 ‘It wouldn’t take long for you to convince me to become a Christian also!’

29And at this, Paul said:

 ‘I wish to God – whether it takes a short time or a long time – that not only you, but also everyone who hears me today would become men just like me… Except for these chains.’

30Then the king got up, as did the governor, Bernice, and the rest of the men who were sitting with them. 31And as they were walking out, they were talking to each other, saying:

 ‘This man hasn’t done anything deserving of death, or even for which he should be locked up!’

32Then Agrippa said to Festus:

 ‘This man could have been released if he hadn’t appealed to Caesar.’

### Acts

## Chapter 27

1Well, since it had been decided that we had to sail away to Italy, they handed Paul (along with some other prisoners) over to a centurion named Julius, who was [a soldier] of the Augustus Division.

2So we boarded a ship along with AristArchus (a Macedonian from ThesSalonica).

Now, the ship had come from AdraMyttium, and it was sailing to places along the coast of the [province of] Asia. 3So the next day, when we landed at Sidon, Julius treated Paul very kindly by allowing him to visit friends that cared for his needs.

4From there we sailed around Cyprus, because the winds were against us.

5Then we got into the open sea [south of] Kilikia and PamPhylia, and we put into port at Myra in Lukias. 6There the centurion found a ship that was coming from Alexandria and sailing for Italy, which he made us board.

7Then, after sailing slowly (and with a lot of difficulty) for several days, we stopped at Knidos. And because the winds wouldn’t let us go on, we sailed [south of] Salmone, Crete.

8Then following the coastline carefully, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

9Well, since we’d lost so much time (it was already past [Yom Kippur]) and the sea was hazardous to navigate, Paul made a recommendation.

10He said:

 ‘Men, I see that any further navigation is going to result in damage and huge losses not only to the cargo and ship, but to our lives!’

11However, the army officer preferred to listened to the pilot and the ship’s owner, rather than to what Paul was saying.

12Now, since this harbor was a poor place to winter, the majority recommended that they set sail and go on, in an attempt to make it to Phoenix, where they could spend the winter (a harbor in Crete that has openings to the northeast and southeast).

13Well, when the south wind started blowing gently, they thought that this would meet their needs... So they weighed anchor and coasted along the shore next to Crete. 14But after a little while, a typhoon wind they call the Euro Clydon bore down on us!

15And because the ship was being tossed so violently that it couldn’t maintain its heading, we just gave up and [allowed ourselves to be] carried along by the wind.

16Then when we passed south of a small island called Cauda, we used all our strength to get hold of the rowboat that was tied at the rear of the ship.

17And after we hoisted it aboard, they started wrapping the ship with [ropes and chains]. Also, since they were afraid of running aground on the shoals, they lowered the masts and we were just carried along.

18Then on the next day (because we were still being violently tossed by the storm), they started to lighten the ship. 19And by the third [day], they’d tossed all of the boat’s furnishings overboard with their own hands!

20Now, since we hadn’t seen the sun or stars for several days and a storm was still over us, we’d lost any hope of being saved… 21And considerable time had elapsed since anyone had been able to eat.

But then Paul stood up in the midst of them and said:

 ‘Men, you certainly should have taken my advice and not put out to sea from Crete, just to suffer this kind of damage and loss. 22But now I’m telling you to be happy, because not a single life will be lost… Although the ship will [be lost]... 23Because a messenger from the God whom I serve and belong to, came to me this evening and said:

 24*‘Don’t be afraid, Paul. You’ll stand before Caesar.*

 *‘And {Look!} God has favored you by also giving you [the lives of] those who are sailing with you.’*

 25‘So be happy, men! Because, I believe that God will do exactly as He told me! 26However, we’ll be cast ashore on an island.’

27Well thereafter (on the evening starting the 14th day), as we were being carried along in the Adriatic Sea (at about midnight), the sailors thought that we might be getting close to land...

28So they did a depth sounding and found it at 120 feet (37m).

Then after we’d traveled on a little farther, they took another depth sounding, and this time it was 91 feet (27.8m).

29So, because they were afraid that we might soon run aground on the rocks, they threw out four anchors at the stern and we waited for daylight.

30Meanwhile, the crew tried to escape from the ship by lowering the rowboat into the sea as they were pretending to drop the anchors from the prow. 31But Paul then told the centurion and his soldiers:

 ‘Unless those men stay on this ship, you can’t be saved.’

32So the soldiers cut away the ropes that held the rowboat and let it drop.

33Well, very close to dawn, Paul encouraged everyone to eat something, saying:

 ‘Today makes the 14th day that you’ve been on watch, and during all that time you’ve gone without food or taking anything else into you.

 34‘So I encourage you to eat something, since that will help you to survive. Then, not so much as a hair on any of your heads will be destroyed!’

35And after he said this, he took a loaf [of bread], gave thanks to God before them all, broke it, and started eating. 36So they all became more cheerful and started eating some food.

37At the time, there were 276 people on the ship. 38And after they’d eaten enough food, they lightened the boat some more by throwing all of the wheat into the sea.

39However, when it finally became light, they didn’t recognize where they were… There was just a bay with a beach, and they decided to try to get to the beach in the ship.

40So they cut away the anchors, letting them drop into the sea; then they untied the ropes that held the rudder, hoisted the foresail to the wind, and headed for the beach… 41But then they hit a shoal out in the water, where the ship ran aground (the prow was stuck and it couldn’t be moved), and the stern started falling apart in the crashing waves.

42Well at that, the soldiers decided to kill the prisoners to keep them from swimming away and escaping. 43But because the centurion wanted Paul to make it, he prevented them from doing that.

He just told everyone who could swim to dive into the sea and get to the shore first, 44then the rest could [float in] on planks and other things from the ship… And that’s how everyone got to land safely.

### Acts

## Chapter 28

1Well, after we made it to safety, we recognized that this was the island of Malta! 2There the native people found us and showed us uncommon hospitality, building a fire and welcoming all of us, there in the cold and the rain.

3Then when Paul went and collected a bundle of sticks and laid it on the fire, a viper was driven out by the heat, which bit into his hand! 4And when the native people saw this dangerous animal hanging from his hand, they said to each other:

 ‘This man must be a murderer! Because even though he made it safely from the sea, justice isn’t going to let him live!’

5But [Paul] just shook the animal off into the fire, and he didn’t suffer any ill effects… 6Even though they thought that he was going to swell up and suddenly drop dead.

However, after they’d waited a long time and saw that nothing bad had happened to him, they started saying that he was [a] god!

7Fortunately, there was some property located nearby that belonged to the island’s leader ([a man] named Publius). He also welcomed us and treated us kindly and hospitably for the next three days.

8Then, when Publius’ father became very sick with a fever and dysentery, Paul went into his room and prayed, then he laid his hands on him and healed him.

9Well after that, the rest of the sick people on the island also started coming to him to be cured, 10honoring us with many gifts, and several brought us provisions that we’d need.

11It was three months later that a boat from Alexandria called *The Sons of Zeus* (which had been wintering on the island) finally took us aboard 12and carried us to Syracuse, where we stayed for three days.

13Then from there, we traveled around [Sicily] and arrived at Rheggium. And a day after that, we caught a south wind and made it to Puteoli in just two days, 14where we found some of our brothers who begged us to stay with them for the next seven days.

Then from there, we traveled on to Rome.

15Well, when the brothers [in Rome] got the news about us, they came as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Shops to meet us.

And when Paul saw them, he thanked God, because he was very encouraged!

16Then when we finally entered Rome, they allowed Paul to live on his own, with just a soldier to guard him.

17Then three days later, he called a meeting of the local Jewish leaders. And after they’d assembled, he said this to them:

 ‘Men… Brothers… Although I haven’t done anything against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was taken prisoner in JeruSalem and handed over to the Romans.

 18‘But after [the Romans] examined me, they wanted to release me, because they couldn’t find any reason to put me to death.

 19‘However, when the Judeans kept opposing [my release], I was forced to appeal to Caesar… Although I didn’t do this to accuse my nation.

 20‘Well, this is why I begged to see you and to talk to you… For it’s because of the hopes of IsraEl that I have this chain around me!’

21Then they told [Paul]:

 ‘We haven’t received any letters about you from Judea, nor have any of the brothers who’ve arrived from there reported or said anything bad against you. 22So we think it’s worthwhile for us to listen to what you’ve got to say, because we know for a fact that this sect is being spoken against everywhere.’

23Well after that, they arranged for a day when many more could come to hear him at the place where he was staying. And there he laid things out for them by completely testifying about the Kingdom of God.

Paul also reasoned with them about Jesus from morning until evening, citing both the Law of Moses and the Prophets. 24But although some started to believe what he was saying, the rest didn’t. 25And since they couldn’t reach a consensus, they all got ready to leave.

So Paul said this:

 ‘The Holy Breath [of God] spoke very accurately to your ancestors through IsaiAh the Prophet, when he said:

 26*‘You must go to these people and say:*

 *‘When you listen, you’ll hear,*
 *But not understand.*
 *And when you look, you’ll look,*
 *But not see.’*

 27*‘For these peoples’ hearts are all closed.*
 *So, although they can hear with their ears,*
 *They just won’t respond,*
 *And they’ll have eyes that are closed.*

 *‘Thus, although they have eyes, they can’t see,*
 *Nor can they hear with their ears*
 *Or understand with their hearts and return,*
 *So I can bring healing to them.’*

 [paraphrase or different version of Isaiah 6:9-10]

 28‘Therefore, I’m warning you that God is now giving this hope of salvation to the gentiles… And they’ll listen to it!’ 29~~And when he’d said these words, the Jews left, and greatly arguing among themselves.~~ [spurious text]

30Well, he stayed in that rented house for two whole years, welcoming everyone who came to visit him, 31telling them about the Kingdom of God and teaching them things about the Lord Jesus the Anointed One openly and without any interference.