

The Acts of the Apostles The Church and the Jews

The Acts of the Apostles Peter and John

¹ The first account which I drew up, Theophilus, dealt with all that Jesus did and taught from the very first, ² down to that day on which he was taken up to heaven, after he had, by the help of the Holy Spirit, given instructions to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ With abundant proofs, he showed himself to them, still living, after his death; appearing to them from time to time during forty days, and speaking of all that related to the kingdom of God. ⁴ And once, when he had gathered them together, he charged them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the fulfilment of the Father's promise - 'that promise,' he said, 'of which you have heard me speak; ⁵ for, while John baptized with water, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit before many days have passed.'

⁶ So, when the apostles had met together, they asked Jesus this question - 'Master, is this the time when you intend to re-establish the kingdom for Israel?' ⁷ His answer was, 'It is not for you to know times or hours, for the Father has reserved these for his own decision; ⁸ but you will receive power, when the Holy Spirit will have descended

on you, and will be witnesses for me not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

⁹ No sooner had Jesus said this than he was caught up before their eyes, and a cloud received him from their sight. ¹⁰ While they were still gazing up into the heavens, as he went, suddenly two men, clothed in white, stood beside them, ¹¹ and said, 'People of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the heavens? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into the heavens, will come in the same way in which you have seen him go into the heavens.'

¹² Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called Olivet, which is about three quarters of a mile from the city. ¹³ When they reached Jerusalem, they went to the upstairs room, where they were staying. There were there Peter, John, James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ They all united in devoting themselves to prayer, and so did some women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹⁵ About this time, at a meeting of the Lord's followers, when there were about a hundred and twenty present, Peter rose to speak. ¹⁶ 'Friends,' he said, 'it was necessary that the prediction of scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit made by the lips of David about Judas, who acted as guide to the men who arrested Jesus, ¹⁷ for he was one of our number and had his part allotted

him in this work of ours.’ ¹⁸ (This man had bought a piece of land with the price of his treachery; and, falling heavily, his body had burst open, and all his bowels protruded. ¹⁹ This became known to everyone living in Jerusalem, so that the field came to be called, in their language, “Akeldama,” which means the “Field of Blood.”)

²⁰ ‘For in the book of Psalms,’ Peter continued, ‘it is said –

“Let his home become desolate,
and let no one live in it”;

and also –

“His office let another take.”

²¹ Therefore, from among the men who have been with us all the time that Jesus, our Master, went in and out among us – ²² from his baptism by John down to that day on which he was taken from us – someone must be found to join us as a witness of his resurrection.’ ²³ So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas, whose other name was Justus, and Matthias; ²⁴ and they offered this prayer –

‘Lord, who reads all hearts, show which of these two men you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this apostolic work, which Judas has abandoned, to go to his proper place.’

²⁶ Then they drew lots between them; and, the lot having fallen to Matthias, he was added to the number of the eleven apostles.

2

¹ In the course of the Festival at the close of the

Harvest the disciples had all met together, ² when suddenly there came from the heavens a noise like a strong wind rushing by; it filled the whole house in which they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared tongues of what seemed to be flame, separating, so that one settled on each of them; ⁴ and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in different languages as the Spirit prompted their utterances.

⁵ Now there were then staying in Jerusalem religious Jews from every country in the world; ⁶ and, when this sound was heard, numbers of people collected, in the greatest excitement, because each of them heard the disciples speaking in his own language. ⁷ They were utterly amazed, and kept asking in astonishment, 'What! Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ Then how is it that we each of us hear them in our own language? ⁹ Some of us are Parthians, some Medes, some Elamites; and some of us live in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Roman Asia, ¹⁰ in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the districts of Libya adjoining Cyrene; some of us are visitors from Rome, ¹¹ either Jews by birth or converts, and some are Cretans and Arabians - yet we all alike hear them speaking in our own languages of the great things that God has done.' ¹² They were all utterly amazed and bewildered.

'What does it mean?' they asked one another. ¹³ But there were some who said with a sneer, 'They have had too much new wine.'

¹⁴ Then Peter, surrounded by the eleven other

apostles, stood up, and, raising his voice, addressed the crowd. ‘People of Judea,’ he began, ‘and all you who are staying in Jerusalem, let me tell you what this means. Mark well my words.

¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose; for it is only now nine in the morning! No! ¹⁶ This is what is spoken of in the prophet Joel –

¹⁷ “It will come about in the last days,” God says,
“That I will pour out my Spirit on all human-
ity;

your sons and your daughters will become
prophets,

your young men will see visions,
and your old men dream dreams;

¹⁸ yes, even on the slaves – for they are mine –
both men and women,

I will in those days pour out my Spirit,
and they will become prophets;

¹⁹ and I will show wonders in the heavens above,
and signs on the earth below –

blood and fire and mist of smoke;

²⁰ the sun will become darkness,
and the moon blood-red,

before the day of the Lord comes – that great
and awful day.

²¹ Then will everyone who invokes the
name of the Lord be saved.”

²² People of Israel, listen to what I am saying. Jesus of Nazareth, a man whose mission from God to you was proved by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God showed among you through him, as you know full well – ²³ he, I say, in accordance with God’s definite plan and with his previous

knowledge, was betrayed, and you, by the hands of lawless men, nailed him to a cross and put him to death. ²⁴ But God released him from the pangs of death and raised him to life, it being impossible for death to retain its hold on him. ²⁵ Indeed he was the one David was referring to when he said

—
“I have had the Lord ever before my eyes,
for he stands at my right hand, so that I should
not be disquieted.

²⁶ Therefore my heart was cheered, and my
tongue told its delight;

yes, even my body, too, will rest in hope;

²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
nor surrender me, your holy one, to undergo
corruption.

²⁸ You have shown me the path to life,
you will fill me with gladness in your pres-
ence.”

²⁹ Friends, I can speak to you the more confidently about the patriarch David, because he is dead and buried, and his tomb is here among us to this very day. ³⁰ David, then, prophet as he was, knowing that God had solemnly sworn to him to set one of his descendants on his throne, looked into the future, ³¹ and referred to the resurrection of the Christ when he said that he had not been abandoned to Hades, nor had his body undergone corruption. ³² It was this Jesus, whom God raised to life; and of that we are ourselves all witnesses. ³³ And now that he has been exalted to the right hand of God, and has received from the Father the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, he has begun to pour out that gift, as you yourselves now see and

hear. ³⁴ It was not David who went up into heaven; for he himself says –

“The Lord said to my master, ‘Sit on my right hand,
³⁵ Until I put your enemies as a footstool under your feet.’ ”

³⁶ So let the whole nation of Israel know beyond all doubt, that God has made him both Lord and Christ – this Jesus whom you crucified.’

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were conscience-smitten, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Friends, what can we do?’

³⁸ ‘Repent,’ answered Peter, ‘and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children, and also for all those now far away, who may be called by the Lord our God.’

⁴⁰ Peter spoke to them for a long time using many other arguments and pleaded with them – ‘Save yourselves from the perverse spirit of this age.’ ⁴¹ So those who accepted his teaching were baptized, and about three thousand people joined the disciples on that day alone. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the Common life of the church, to the breaking of the bread and to the Prayers.

⁴³ A deep impression was made on everyone, and many wonders and signs were done at the hands of the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who became believers in Christ held everything for the common use; ⁴⁵ they sold their property and their goods, and shared the proceeds among them all, according

to their individual needs. ⁴⁶ Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the Temple Courts, and to the breaking of bread at their homes, while they partook of their food in simple-hearted gladness, praising God, and winning the goodwill of all the people. ⁴⁷ And the Lord daily added to their company those who were in the path of salvation.

3

¹ One day, as Peter and John were going up into the Temple Courts for the three o'clock Prayers, ² a man, who had been lame from his birth, was being carried by. This man used to be set down every day at the gate of the Temple called "the Beautiful Gate," to beg of those who went in. ³ Seeing Peter and John on the point of entering, he asked them to give him something. ⁴ Peter fixed his eyes on him, and so did John, and then Peter said, 'Look at us.'

⁵ The man was all attention, expecting to get something from them; ⁶ but Peter added, 'I have no gold or silver, but I give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk.' ⁷ Grasping the lame man by the right hand, Peter lifted him up. Instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong, ⁸ and, leaping up, he stood and began to walk about, and then went with them into the Temple Courts, walking, and leaping, and praising God. ⁹ All the people saw him walking about and praising God; ¹⁰ and, when they recognised him as the man who used to sit begging at

the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, they were utterly astonished and amazed at what had happened to him. ¹¹ While the man still clung to Peter and John, the people all quickly gathered round them in the Colonnade named after Solomon, in the greatest astonishment.

¹² On seeing this, Peter said to the people, 'People of Israel, why are you surprised at this? And why do you stare at us, as though we, by any power or piety of our own, had enabled this man to walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has done honour to his servant Jesus - him whom you gave up and disowned before Pilate, when he had decided to set him free. ¹⁴ You, I say, disowned the holy and righteous one, and asked for the release of a murderer! ¹⁵ The guide to life you put to death! But God raised him from the dead - and of that we are ourselves witnesses. ¹⁶ And it is by faith in the name of Jesus, that this man, whom you all see and know, has - by his name - been made strong. Yes, it is the faith inspired by Jesus that has made this complete cure of the man, before the eyes of you all. ¹⁷ And yet, my friends, I know that you acted as you did from ignorance, and your rulers also. ¹⁸ But it was in this way that God fulfilled all that he had long ago foretold, as to the sufferings of his Christ, by the lips of all the prophets. ¹⁹ Therefore, repent and turn so that your sins may be wiped away; so that happier times may come from the Lord himself, ²⁰ and so that he may send you, in Jesus, your long-appointed Christ. ²¹ But heaven must be his home, until the days of the Universal

Restoration, of which God has spoken by the lips of his holy prophets from the very first. ²² Moses himself said –

“The Lord your God will raise up from among yourselves a prophet, as he raised me. To him you will listen whenever he speaks to you. ²³ And it will be that should anyone among the people not listen to that prophet, he will be utterly destroyed.”

²⁴ Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel onwards, and all their successors who had a message to deliver, told of these days. ²⁵ You yourselves are the heirs of the prophets, and heirs, too, of the covenant which God made with your ancestors, when he said to Abraham –

“In your descendants will all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

²⁶ For you, first, God raised up his servant, and sent him to bless you, by turning each one of you from his wicked ways.’

4

¹ While Peter and John were still speaking to the people, the chief priest, with the officer in charge at the Temple and the Sadducees, came up to them, ² much annoyed because they were teaching the people, and because, through Jesus, they were preaching the resurrection from the dead. ³ They arrested the apostles and, as it was already evening, had them placed in custody until the next day. ⁴ Many, however, of those who had heard the apostles’ message became believers in

Christ, the number of the men alone amounting to about five thousand.

⁵ The next day, a meeting of the leaders of the people, the elders, and the teachers of the Law was held in Jerusalem. ⁶ There were present Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all who were of High-Priestly rank. ⁷ They had Peter and John brought before them, and questioned them.

‘By what power,’ they asked, ‘Or in whose name have men like you done this thing?’

⁸ Then, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said, ‘Leaders of the people and elders, ⁹ since we are on our trial today for a kind act done to a helpless man, and are asked in what way the man here before you has been cured, ¹⁰ let me tell you all and all the people of Israel, that it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead – it is, I say, by his name that this man stands here before you lame no longer. ¹¹ Jesus is “the stone which, scorned by you the builders, has yet become the corner stone.” ¹² And salvation is in him alone; for there is no other name in the whole world, given to people, to which we must look for our salvation.’

¹³ When the Council saw how boldly Peter and John spoke, and found that they were uneducated men of humble station, they were surprised, and realised that they had been companions of Jesus. ¹⁴ But, when they looked at the man who had been healed, standing there with them, they had

nothing to say. ¹⁵ So they ordered them out of court, and then began consulting together.

¹⁶ ‘What are we to do to these men?’ they asked one another. ‘That a remarkable sign has been given through them is obvious to everyone living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But, to prevent this thing from spreading further among the people, let us warn them not to speak in this name any more to anyone whatever.’

¹⁸ So they called the apostles in, and ordered them not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, ‘Whether it is right, in the sight of God, to listen to you rather than to him – judge for yourselves, ²⁰ for we cannot help speaking of what we have seen and heard.’ ²¹ However, after further warnings, the Council set them at liberty, not seeing any safe way of punishing them, because of the people, for they were all praising God for what had occurred; ²² for the man who was the subject of this miraculous cure was more than forty years old.

²³ After they had been set at liberty, the apostles went to their friends and told them what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ All who heard their story, moved by a common impulse, raised their voices to God in prayer:

‘Sovereign Lord, it is you who has made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them, ²⁵ and who, by the lips of our ancestor, your servant David, who spoke under the influence of the Holy Spirit, have said –

“Why did the nations rage,
and the peoples form vain designs?

²⁶ The kings of the earth set their array,
and its rulers gathered together,
against the Lord and against his Christ.”

²⁷ There have indeed gathered together in this city
against your holy servant Jesus, whom you
has consecrated the Christ, not Herod and
Pontius Pilate only, but the nations and the
people of Israel besides – ²⁸ yet only to do
what you, by your power and of your own
will, did long ago destine to be done. ²⁹ Now,
therefore, Lord, mark their threats, and
enable your servants, with all fearlessness,
to tell your message, ³⁰ while you stretch
out your hand to heal, and cause signs and
wonders to take place through the name of
your holy servant Jesus.’

³¹ When their prayer was ended, the place in
which they were assembled was shaken; and they
were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to
tell God’s message fearlessly.

³² The whole body of those who had become
believers in Christ were of one heart and mind.
Not one of them claimed any of his goods as his
own, but everything was held for the common
use. ³³ The apostles continued with great power
to bear their testimony to the resurrection of the
Lord Jesus, and God’s blessing rested on them all
abundantly. ³⁴ Nor was there anyone in need
among them, for all who were owners of land or
houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the

sales ³⁵ and laid them at the apostles' feet; and then everyone received a share in proportion to his wants. ³⁶ A Levite of Cyprian birth, named Joseph, (who had received from the apostles the additional name of "Barnabas" – which means "The Consoler,") ³⁷ Sold a farm that belonged to him, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

5

¹ There was, however, a man named Ananias, who, with his wife Sapphira, sold some property, ² and, with her connivance, kept back some of the proceeds. He brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

³ 'Ananias,' Peter exclaimed, 'how is it that Satan has so taken possession of your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit, and kept back a part of the money paid for the land? ⁴ While it was unsold, was not it your own? And after it was sold, was not the money at your own disposal? How did you come to think of such a thing? You have lied, not to people, but to God!'

⁵ As Ananias heard these words, he fell down and expired; and everyone who heard of it was appalled. ⁶ The young men got up, and, winding the body in a sheet, carried it out and buried it.

⁷ After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ 'Is it true,' Peter asked, addressing her, 'that you sold your land for such a sum?'

‘Yes,’ she answered, ‘we did.’ ⁹ Then Peter said, ‘How did you come to agree to provoke the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The footsteps of those who have buried your husband are at the door; and they will carry you out too.’

¹⁰ Instantly Sapphira fell down at Peter’s feet and expired. On coming in, the young men found her dead; so they carried her out and buried her by her husband’s side. ¹¹ The whole church and all who heard of these events were appalled.

¹² Many signs and wonders continued to occur among the people, through the instrumentality of the apostles, whose custom it was to meet all together in the Colonnade of Solomon; ¹³ but of the rest no one ventured to join them. On the other hand, the people were full of their praise, ¹⁴ and still larger numbers, both of men and women, as they became believers in the Lord, were added to their number. ¹⁵ The consequence was that people would bring out their sick even into the streets, and lay them on mattresses and mats, in the hope that, as Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on someone of them. ¹⁶ Besides this, the inhabitants of the towns round Jerusalem flocked into the city, bringing with them their sick and those who were troubled by foul spirits; and they were cured everyone.

¹⁷ At this the high priest was roused to action, and he and all his supporters (who formed the party of the Sadducees), moved by jealousy, ¹⁸ arrested the apostles, and had them placed

in custody. ¹⁹ An angel of the Lord, however, opened the prison doors at night and led them out. ²⁰ ‘Go,’ he said, ‘and stand in the Temple Courts, and tell the people the whole message of this new life.’ ²¹ When they heard this, they went at daybreak into the Temple Courts, and began to teach. The high priest and his party, on their arrival, summoned the High Council, including all the leaders of the people among the Israelites, and sent to the jail to fetch the apostles. ²² But, when the officers got there, they did not find them in the prison; so they returned and reported that, ²³ while they had found the goal barred securely and the guards posted at the doors, yet, on opening them, they had not found anyone inside. ²⁴ When the officer in charge at the Temple and the chief priests heard their story, they were perplexed about the apostles and as to what all this would lead to. ²⁵ Presently, however, someone came and told them, that the men whom they had put in prison were actually standing in the Temple Courts, teaching the people. ²⁶ Then, the officer went with his men and fetched the apostles – without using violence, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people – ²⁷ and then brought them before the Council. The high priest demanded an explanation from them.

²⁸ ‘We gave you strict orders,’ he said, ‘not to teach in this name. Yet you have actually flooded Jerusalem with your teaching, and you want to make us responsible for the death of this man.’

²⁹ To this Peter and the apostles replied, ‘We must obey God rather than people. ³⁰ The God

of our ancestors raised Jesus, whom you put to death by hanging him on a cross. ³¹ It is this Jesus whom God has exalted to his right hand, to be a guide and a Saviour, to give Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are witness to the truth of this, and so is the Holy Spirit – the gift of God to those who obey him.’

³³ The members of the Council became frantic with rage on hearing this, and were for putting the apostles to death. ³⁴ But Gamaliel, a Pharisee, who was a Doctor of the Law and who was held in universal respect, rose in the Council, and directed that the men should be taken out of court for a little while.

³⁵ He then said, ‘People of Israel, take care as to what you intend to do with these men. ³⁶ For not long ago Theudas appeared, professing to be somebody, and was joined by a body of some four hundred men. But he was killed; and all his followers scattered and dwindled away. ³⁷ After him, Judas the Galilean appeared at the time of the census, and induced people to follow him; yet he, too, perished and all his followers were dispersed. ³⁸ And, in this present case, my advice to you is not to interfere with these men, but to leave them alone, for, if their designs and their work are merely of human origin, they will come to an end; ³⁹ but, if they are of divine origin, you will be powerless to put an end to them – or else you may find yourselves fighting against God!’

⁴⁰ The Council followed his advice, and, calling the apostles in, had them flogged, and then, after cautioning them not to speak in the name of Jesus,

set them free. ⁴¹ But the apostles left the Council, rejoicing that they had been thought worthy to suffer disgrace for that name; ⁴² and never for a single day, either in the Temple Courts or in private houses, did they cease to teach, or to tell the good news of Jesus, the Christ.

6

¹ About this time, when the number of the disciples was constantly increasing, complaints were made by the Greek speaking Jews against the Aramaic speaking Jews, that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. ² The Twelve, therefore, called together the general body of the disciples and said to them, 'It is not well for us to see to the distribution at the tables and neglect God's message. ³ Therefore, friends, look for seven men of reputation among yourselves, wise and spiritually-minded men, and we will appoint them to attend to this matter; ⁴ while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the delivery of the message.'

⁵ This proposal was unanimously agreed to; and the disciples chose Stephen – a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit – and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a former convert to Judaism; ⁶ and they brought these men to the apostles, who, after praying, placed their hands on them.

⁷ So God's message spread, and the number of the disciples continued to increase rapidly in

Jerusalem, and a large body of the priests accepted the faith.

⁸ Meanwhile Stephen, divinely helped and strengthened, was showing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ But some members of the Synagogue of the Freed Slaves (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and Visitors from Cilicia and Roman Asia, were roused to action and began disputing with Stephen; ¹⁰ yet they were quite unable to withstand the wisdom and the inspiration with which he spoke. ¹¹ Then they induced some men to assert that they had heard Stephen saying blasphemous things against Moses, and against God; ¹² and they stirred up the people, as well as the elders and the teachers of the Law, and set on Stephen, and arrested him, and brought him before the High Council. ¹³ There they produced witnesses who gave false evidence.

‘This man,’ they said, ‘is incessantly saying things against this holy place and the Law; ¹⁴ indeed, we have heard him declare that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and change the customs handed down to us by Moses.’ ¹⁵ The eyes of all the members of the Council were riveted on Stephen, and they saw his face looking like the face of an angel.

7

¹ Then the high priest asked, ‘Is this true?’
² Stephen replied, ‘Brothers and fathers, hear what I have to say. God, who manifests himself in the glory, appeared to our ancestor Abraham

when he was in Mesopotamia, and before he settled in Haran, and said to him - ³ “Leave your country and your people, and come into the country that I will show you.” ⁴ And so Abraham left the country of the Chaldaeans and settled in Haran; and from there, after his father’s death, God caused him to migrate into this country, in which you are now living. ⁵ God did not at that time give him any part of it, not even a foot of ground. But he promised to give him possession of it and his descendants after him, though at that time he had no child. ⁶ God’s words were these - “Abraham’s descendants will live in a foreign country, where they will be enslaved and ill-treated for four hundred years. ⁷ But I myself will judge the nation, to which they will be enslaved,” God said, “and after that they will leave the country and worship me in this place.” ⁸ Then God made with Abraham the covenant of circumcision; and under it Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him when he was eight days old; and Isaac became the father of Jacob; and Jacob of the Twelve Patriarchs. ⁹ The Patriarchs, out of jealousy, sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt; but God was with him, ¹⁰ and delivered him out of all his troubles, and enabled him to win favour and show wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him Governor of Egypt and of his whole household. ¹¹ Then a famine spread over the whole of Egypt and Canaan, causing great distress, and our ancestors could find no food. ¹² Hearing, however, that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob sent our ancestors there on their

first visit. ¹³ In the course of their second visit, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, and his family became known to Pharaoh. ¹⁴ Then Joseph sent an urgent invitation to his father Jacob and to his relatives, seventy-five persons in all; ¹⁵ and so Jacob went down into Egypt. There he died, and our ancestors also, ¹⁶ and their bodies were removed to Shechem, and laid in the tomb which Abraham had bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. ¹⁷ As the time drew near for the fulfilment of the promise which God had made to Abraham, the people increased largely in numbers in Egypt, ¹⁸ until a new king, who knew nothing of Joseph, came to the throne. ¹⁹ This king acted deceitfully towards our people and ill-treated our ancestors, making them abandon their own infants, so that they should not be reared. ²⁰ It was just at this time that Moses was born. He was an exceedingly beautiful child, and for three months was brought up in his own father's house; ²¹ and, when he was abandoned, the daughter of Pharaoh found him and brought him up as her own son. ²² So Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and proved his ability both by his words and actions. ²³ When he was in his fortieth year, he resolved to visit his fellow Israelites; ²⁴ and, seeing an Israelite ill-treated, he defended him, and avenged the man, who was being wronged, by striking down the Egyptian. ²⁵ He thought his own people would understand that God was using him to save them; but they failed to do so. ²⁶ The next day he again appeared on the scene, when some of them were

fighting, and tried to make peace between them. “Men,” he said, “you are brothers; how is it that you are ill-treating one another?” ²⁷ But the man who was ill-treating his fellow workman pushed Moses aside saying – “Who made you a ruler and judge over us? ²⁸ Do you mean to make away with me as you did yesterday with that Egyptian?” ²⁹ At these words Moses took to flight, and became an exile in Midian; and there he had two sons born to him. ³⁰ Forty years had passed when there appeared to him, in the desert of Mount Sinai, an angel in a flame of fire in a bush. ³¹ When Moses saw it, he was astonished at the vision; but on his going nearer to look at it more closely, the voice of the Lord was heard to say – ³² “I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” Moses trembled, and did not dare to look. ³³ Then the Lord said to him – “Take your sandals off your feet, for the spot where you are standing is holy ground. ³⁴ I have seen the oppression of my people who are in Egypt, and heard their groans, and I have come down to deliver them. Come now and I will send you into Egypt.” ³⁵ This same Moses, whom they had disowned with the words – “Who made you a ruler and a judge?” was the man whom God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer, under the guidance of the angel that had appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶ He it was who led them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the desert during forty years. ³⁷ This was the Moses who said to the people of Israel – “God will raise up for you, from among yourselves, a prophet, as he raised

up me.” ³⁸ He, too, it was who was present at the assembly in the desert, with the angel who talked to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors, and who received living truths to impart to you.

³⁹ Yet our ancestors refused him obedience; more than that, they rejected him, and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, ⁴⁰ while they said to Aaron – “Make us Gods who will lead the way for us, since, as for this Moses who has brought us out of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

⁴¹ That was the time when they made the calf and offered sacrifice to their idol, and held festivities in honour of their own handiwork! ⁴² So God turned from them and left them to the worship of the Starry Host, as is written in the book of the prophets –

“Did you offer victims and sacrifices to me, house of Israel,
all those forty years in the desert?

⁴³ You took with you the tent where Moloch is worshipped

and the star of the god Rephan –
the images which you had made to worship.

Therefore I will exile you beyond Babylon.”

⁴⁴ Our ancestors had the tent where they worshipped God in the desert, constructed, just as he who spoke to Moses had directed him to make it, after the model which he had seen. ⁴⁵ This tent, which was handed down to them, was brought into this country by our ancestors who accompanied Joshua (at the conquest of the nations that God drove out before their advance), and

remained here until the time of David. ⁴⁶ David found favour with God, and prayed that he might provide the God of Jacob with a place to reside.

⁴⁷ But it was Solomon who built a house for God.

⁴⁸ Yet it is not in buildings made by hands that the Most High dwells. As the prophet says –

⁴⁹ “The heavens are a throne for me,
and the earth a stool for my feet.

What manner of house will you build me, asks the
Lord,

or what place is there where I may rest?

⁵⁰ Was it not my hand that made all these
things?”

⁵¹ Stubborn people, heathen in heart and ears, you are for ever resisting the Holy Spirit; your ancestors did it, and you are doing it still. ⁵² Which of the prophets escaped persecution at their hands? They killed those who foretold the coming of the righteous one; of whom you, in your turn, have now become the betrayers and murderers – ⁵³ you who received the Law as transmitted by angels and yet failed to keep it.’

⁵⁴ As they listened to this, the Council grew frantic with rage, and gnashed their teeth at Stephen.

⁵⁵ He, filled as he was with the Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes intently on the heavens, and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at God’s right hand.

⁵⁶ ‘Look,’ he exclaimed, ‘I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at God’s right hand!’ ⁵⁷ At this, with a loud shout, they stopped their ears and all rushed on him, forced him outside the city, ⁵⁸ and began to stone him, the witnesses laying their clothes at the feet of a young man named

Saul. ⁵⁹ And they stoned Stephen, while he cried to the Lord, 'Lord Jesus! Receive my spirit!' ⁶⁰ Falling on his knees, he called out loudly, 'Lord! Do not charge them with this sin;' and with these words he fell asleep.

8

¹ Saul approved of his being put to death.

On that very day a great persecution broke out against the church which was in Jerusalem; and its members, with the exception of the apostles, were all scattered over the districts of Judea and Samaria. ² Some religious men buried Stephen, with loud lamentations for him. ³ But Saul began to devastate the church; he entered house after house, dragged out men and women alike, and threw them into prison.

⁴ Now those who were scattered in different directions went from place to place proclaiming the good news. ⁵ Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and there began to preach the Christ. ⁶ The people, one and all, listened attentively to what Philip told them, when they heard of, and saw, the miracles which he was working. ⁷ For there were many instances of people with foul spirits, where the spirits, with loud screams, came out of them; and many who were paralysed or lame were cured, ⁸ so that there was great rejoicing throughout that city. ⁹ There was staying in the city a man named Simon, who had been practicing magic there and mystifying the Samaritan people, giving himself out to be some great being. ¹⁰ Everyone, high and low, paid attention to him.

“This man,” they used to say, “must be that power of God which people call ‘The Great Power.’”

¹¹ And they paid attention to him because they had for a long time been mystified by his magic arts.

¹² However, when they came to believe Philip, as he told them the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Even Simon believed, and after his baptism attached himself to Philip, and was in his turn mystified at seeing signs and great miracles constantly occurring.

¹⁴ When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that the Samaritans had welcomed God’s message, they sent Peter and John to them; ¹⁵ and they, on their arrival, prayed that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ (As yet the Spirit had not descended on any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). ¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ When Simon saw that it was through the placing of the apostles’ hands on them that the Spirit was given, he brought them a sum of money and said, ¹⁹ ‘Give me also this power of yours, so that, if I place my hands on anyone, he may receive the Holy Spirit.’

²⁰ ‘A curse on you and on your silver,’ Peter exclaimed, ‘for thinking that God’s free gift can be bought with money!’ ²¹ You have no share or part in our message, for your heart is not right with God. ²² Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord, that, if possible, you

may be forgiven for such a thought; ²³ for I see that you have fallen into the bitterness of envy and the fetters of sin.'

²⁴ 'Pray to the Lord for me, all of you,' Simon answered, 'so that none of the things you have spoken of may happen to me.'

²⁵ Peter and John, having borne their testimony and delivered the Lord's message, returned to Jerusalem, telling the good news, as they went, in many Samaritan villages.

²⁶ Meanwhile an angel of the Lord had said to Philip, 'Set out on a journey southwards, along the road that runs down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (It is now deserted). ²⁷ So Philip set out on a journey; and on his way he came on an official of high rank, in the service of Candace, Queen of the Abyssinians. He was her treasurer, and had been to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and was now on his way home, sitting in his carriage and reading the prophet Isaiah.

²⁹ The Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up to the carriage over there and keep close to it.' ³⁰ So Philip ran up, and he heard the Abyssinian reading the prophet Isaiah.

'Do you understand what you are reading?' he asked. ³¹ 'How can I,' the other answered, 'unless someone will explain it to me?' and he invited Philip to get up and sit by his side. ³² The passage of scripture which he was reading was this –

“Like a sheep, he was led away to slaughter,
and as a lamb is dumb in the hands of its
shearer,
so he refrains from opening his lips.

³³ He was humiliated and justice was denied him. Who will tell the story of his generation?

For his life is cut off from earth.”

³⁴ ‘Now,’ said the Treasurer, addressing Philip, ‘tell me, of whom is the prophet speaking? Of himself, or of someone else?’ ³⁵ Then Philip began, and, taking this passage as his text, told him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶ Presently, as they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the Treasurer exclaimed, ‘Look! Here is water; what is to prevent my being baptized?’ ³⁷ * ³⁸ So he ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water – both Philip and the Treasurer – and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ But, when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, and the Treasurer saw no more of him; for he continued his journey with a joyful heart. ⁴⁰ But Philip was found at Ashdod, and, as he went on his way, he told the good news in all the towns through which he passed, until he came to Caesarea.

9

¹ Meanwhile Saul, still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, ² and asked him to give him letters to the Jewish congregations at Damascus, authorising him, if he found there any supporters

* **8:37** Some later manuscripts add: Philip said, ‘If you believe with your whole heart, you may.’ And he replied, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’

of the Way, whether men or women, to have them put in chains and brought to Jerusalem.

³ While on his journey, as he was nearing Damascus, suddenly a light from the heavens flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him – ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’

⁵ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ he asked.

‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the voice answered; ⁶ ‘Yet stand up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’

⁷ The men traveling with Saul were meanwhile standing speechless; they heard the sound of the voice, but saw no one. ⁸ When Saul got up from the ground, though his eyes were open, he could see nothing. So his men led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus; ⁹ and for three days he was unable to see, and took nothing either to eat or to drink.

¹⁰ Now there was at Damascus a disciple named Ananias, to whom, in a vision, the Lord said, ‘Ananias.’

‘Yes, Lord,’ he answered. ¹¹ ‘Go at once,’ said the Lord, ‘to the Straight Street, and ask at Judas’s house for a man named Saul, from Tarsus. He is at this moment praying, ¹² and he has seen, in a vision, a man named Ananias coming in and placing his hands on him, so that he may recover his sight.’

¹³ ‘Lord,’ exclaimed Ananias, ‘I have heard from many people about this man – how much harm he has done at Jerusalem to your people there.’

¹⁴ And, here, too, he holds authority from the chief priests to put in chains all those who invoke your name.’ ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for this man is my chosen instrument to uphold my name before the Gentiles and their kings, and the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will myself show him all that he has to suffer for my name.’

¹⁷ So Ananias went, entered the house, and, placing his hands on Saul, said, ‘Saul, my brother, I have been sent by the Lord – by Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here – so that you may recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁸ Instantly it seemed as if a film fell from Saul’s eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and, after he had taken food, he felt his strength return.

Saul stayed for some days with the disciples who were at Damascus, ²⁰ and at once began in the synagogues to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God. ²¹ All who heard him were amazed.

‘Is not this,’ they asked, ‘the man who worked havoc in Jerusalem among those that invoke this name, and who had also come here for the express purpose of having such persons put in chains and taken before the chief priests?’ ²² Saul’s influence, however, kept steadily increasing, and he confounded the Jewish people who lived in Damascus by the proofs that he gave that Jesus was the Christ.

²³ After some time some of them laid a plot to kill Saul, ²⁴ but it became known to him. They even watched the gates day and night, to kill him;

²⁵ but his disciples let him down by night through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

²⁶ On his arrival in Jerusalem, Saul attempted to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, as they did not believe that he was really a disciple. ²⁷ Barnabas, however, taking him by the hand, brought him to the apostles, and told them the whole story of how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord, and how the Lord had talked to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out fearlessly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ After that, Saul remained in Jerusalem, in close contact with the apostles; and he spoke fearlessly in the name of the Lord, ²⁹ talking and arguing with the Jews of foreign birth, who, however, made attempts to kill him. ³⁰ But, when the followers found this out, they took him down to Caesarea, and sent him on his way to Tarsus.

³¹ And so it came about that the church, throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, enjoyed peace and became firmly established; and, ordering its life by respect for the Lord and the help of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

³² Peter, while traveling from place to place throughout the country, went down to visit the people of Christ living at Lydda. ³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years with paralysis. ³⁴ 'Aeneas,' Peter said to him, 'Jesus Christ cures you. Get up, and make your bed.' Aeneas got up at once; ³⁵ and

all the inhabitants of Lydda and of the Plain of Sharon saw him, and came over to the Lord's side.

³⁶ At Joppa there lived a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which is in Greek "Dorcas" – a Gazelle. Her life was spent in doing kind and charitable actions. ³⁷ Just at that time she was taken ill, and died; and they had washed her body and laid it out in an upstairs room. ³⁸ Joppa was near Lydda, and the disciples, having heard that Peter was at Lydda, sent two men with the request that he come to them without delay. ³⁹ Peter returned with them at once. On his arrival, he was taken upstairs, and all the widows came round him in tears, showing the coats and other clothing which Dorcas had made while she was among them. ⁴⁰ But Peter sent everybody out of the room, and knelt down and prayed. Then, turning to the body, he said, 'Tabitha! Stand up.'

She opened her eyes, and, seeing Peter, sat up. ⁴¹ Giving her his hand, Peter raised her up, and, calling in the widows and others of Christ's people, presented her to them alive. ⁴² This became known all through Joppa, and numbers of people came to believe in the Lord. ⁴³ And Peter stayed some days at Joppa with a tanner named Simon.

10

¹ At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in the regiment known as the "Italian Regiment," ² A religious man and one who revered God, with all his household. He was liberal

in his charities to the people, and prayed to God constantly. ³ One afternoon, about three o'clock, he distinctly saw in a vision an angel from God come to him, and call him by name. ⁴ Cornelius fixed his eyes on him and, in great alarm, said, 'What is it, Lord?'

'Your prayers and your charities,' the angel answered, 'have been an acceptable offering to God. ⁵ And now, send messengers to Joppa and fetch a man called Simon, who is also known as Peter. ⁶ He is lodging with a tanner named Simon, who has a house near the sea.'

⁷ When the angel, who had spoken to him, had gone, Cornelius called two servants and a religious soldier, who was one of his constant attendants, ⁸ and, after telling them the whole story, sent them to Joppa.

⁹ On the next day, while these men were on their way, just as they were nearing the town, Peter went up on the housetop about midday to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat; but while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance, ¹¹ and saw that the heavens were open, and that something like a great sail was descending, let down by its four corners towards the earth. ¹² In it were all kinds of quadrupeds, reptiles, and birds. ¹³ Then he was aware of a voice which said – 'Stand up, Peter, kill something, and eat.'

¹⁴ 'No, Lord, I cannot,' answered Peter, 'for I have never eaten anything defiled and unclean.' ¹⁵ Again he was aware of a voice which said – 'What God has pronounced clean, do not regard

as defiled.’ ¹⁶ This happened three times, and then suddenly it was all taken up into the heavens.

¹⁷ While Peter was still perplexed as to the meaning of the vision that he had seen, the men sent by Cornelius, having enquired the way to Simon’s house, came up to the gate, ¹⁸ and called out and asked if the Simon, who was also known as Peter, was lodging there. ¹⁹ Peter was still pondering over the vision, when the Spirit said to him, ‘There are two men looking for you at this moment. ²⁰ Go down at once and do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.’

²¹ Peter went down to the men and said, ‘I am the person you are looking for. What is your reason for coming?’

²² The men replied, ‘Our centurion, Cornelius, a pious man who reverences God and is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, has been instructed by a holy angel to send for you to his house, and to listen to what you have to say.’ ²³ So Peter invited them in and entertained them.

The next day he lost no time in setting out with them, accompanied by some of the Lord’s followers from Joppa; ²⁴ and the day following he entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them, and had invited his relatives and intimate friends to meet them. ²⁵ So, when Peter entered the city, Cornelius met him, and, throwing himself at Peter’s feet, bowed to the ground. ²⁶ Peter, however, lifted him up, saying as he did so, ‘Stand up, I am only human like yourself.’

²⁷ Talking with him as he went, Peter entered the house, where he found a large gathering of

people, to whom he said, ²⁸ ‘You are doubtless aware that it is forbidden for a Jew to be intimate with a foreigner, or even to enter his house; and yet God has shown me that I ought not to call anyone defiled or unclean. ²⁹ That was why I came, when I was sent for, without raising any objection. And now I ask your reason for sending for me.’

³⁰ ‘Just three days ago this very hour,’ Cornelius said, ‘I was in my house, saying the Afternoon Prayers, when a man in dazzling clothing suddenly stood before me. ³¹ “Cornelius,” he said, “your prayer has been heard, and your charities have been accepted, by God. ³² Therefore send to Joppa, and invite the Simon, who is also known as Peter, to come here. He is lodging in the house of Simon the tanner, near the sea.” ³³ Accordingly I sent to you at once, and you have been so good as to come. And now we are all here in the presence of God, to listen to all that you have been instructed by the Lord to say.’ ³⁴ Then Peter began.

‘I see, beyond all doubt,’ he said, ‘that God does not show partiality, ³⁵ but that in every nation he who reverences him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ God has sent his message to the Israelites and told them, through Jesus Christ, the good news of peace – and Jesus is Lord of all! ³⁷ You yourselves know the story which spread through all Judea, how, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed – ³⁸ the story, I mean, of Jesus of Nazareth, and how God consecrated him his Christ by enduing him with the Holy Spirit and with power; and how he went

about doing good and curing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. ³⁹ We are ourselves, too, witnesses to all that he did in Judea and in Jerusalem; yet they put him to death by hanging him on a cross! ⁴⁰ This Jesus God raised on the third day, and enabled him to appear, ⁴¹ not indeed to everyone, but to witnesses chosen beforehand by God – to us, who ate and drank with him after his resurrection from the dead. ⁴² Further, God charged us to proclaim to the people, and solemnly affirm, that it is Jesus who has been appointed by God judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him it is that all the prophets bear witness, when they say that everyone who believes in him receives through his name forgiveness of sins.'

⁴⁴ Before Peter had finished saying these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵ Those converts from Judaism, who had come with Peter, were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been bestowed even on the Gentiles; ⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in different languages and extolling God. At this Peter asked, ⁴⁷ 'Can anyone refuse the water for the baptism of these people, now that they have received the Holy Spirit as we did ourselves?' ⁴⁸ And he directed that they should be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; after which they asked him to stay there a few days longer.

11

¹ The apostles and the followers throughout

Judea heard that even the Gentiles had welcomed God's message. ² But, when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those who were converts from Judaism began to attack him, ³ on the ground that he had visited people who were not circumcised, and had taken meals with them. ⁴ So Peter began to relate the facts to them as they had occurred. ⁵ 'I was in the town of Joppa,' he said, 'and was praying; and, while in a trance, I saw a vision. There was something like a great sail descending, let down by its four corners out of the heavens; and it came right down to me. ⁶ Looking intently at it, I began to distinguish quadrupeds, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds; ⁷ and I also heard a voice saying to me - "Stand up, Peter, kill something and eat." ⁸ "No, Lord, I cannot," I answered, "for nothing defiled or unclean has ever passed my lips." ⁹ Then a second time there came a voice from the heavens. "What God has pronounced clean", it said, "you must not call defiled." ¹⁰ This happened three times, and then all was drawn up again into the heavens. ¹¹ At that moment three men, who had been sent from Caesarea to see me, came up to the house in which we were. ¹² The Spirit told me to go with them without hesitation. These six companions also went with me. And, when we came into the man's house, ¹³ he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and how the angel had said to him - "Send to Joppa and fetch the Simon, who is also known as Peter; ¹⁴ for he will tell you truths, which will prove the means of salvation to you and all your household." ¹⁵ I had but just begun to speak,' continued Peter,

‘when the Holy Spirit fell on them, exactly as on us at the first; ¹⁶ and I recalled the saying of the Master – “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁷ Since then, God had given them the very same gift as he gave us when we became believers in Jesus Christ the Master – who was I that I could thwart God?’

¹⁸ On hearing this statement, they said no more, but broke out into praise of God. ‘So even to the Gentiles,’ they exclaimed, ‘God has granted the repentance which leads to life!’

¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered in different directions, in consequence of the persecution that followed the death of Stephen, went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, telling the message – but only to Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, who were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, on coming to Antioch, addressed themselves also to the Jews of foreign birth, telling them the good news about that Lord Jesus. ²¹ The power of the Lord was with them, so that a great number who had learned to believe came over to the Lord’s side. ²² The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ On coming there he saw to his great joy these tokens of the loving kindness of God, and encouraged them all to make up their minds to be faithful to the Lord – ²⁴ For Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith – and a large number of people took their stand on the Lord’s side. ²⁵ Afterwards Barnabas left for Tarsus to look for Saul; ²⁶ and, when he had found him,

he brought him to Antioch. And so it came about that, for a whole year, they attended the meetings of the church there, and taught a large number of people; and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called “Christians.”

²⁷ During this time, some prophets came to Antioch from Jerusalem. ²⁸ One of them, named Agabus, came forward and, under the influence of the Spirit, foretold a great famine that was to spread over all the world – a famine which occurred in the reign of Claudius. ²⁹ So the disciples, without exception, determined, in proportion to their means, to send something to help the followers living in Judea. ³⁰ And this they did, sending it to the church elders by Barnabas and Saul.

12

¹ It was at that time that King Herod began to ill-treat some of the members of the church. ² He had James, the brother of John, beheaded; ³ and, when he saw that the Jews were pleased with this, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (This was during the Festival of the unleavened bread.) ⁴ After seizing Peter, Herod put him in prison, and entrusted him to the keeping of four Guards of four soldiers each, intending, after the Passover, to bring him up before the people. ⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but meanwhile the prayers of the church were being earnestly offered to God on his behalf. ⁶ Just when Herod was intending to bring him before the people, on that very night

Peter was asleep between two soldiers, chained to them both, while there were sentries in front of the door, guarding the prison. ⁷ Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the cell. The angel struck Peter on the side, and roused him with the words, 'Get up quickly.' ⁸ The chains dropped from his wrists, and then the angel said, 'Put on your belt and sandals.' When Peter had done so, the angel added, 'Throw your cloak round you and follow me.'

⁹ Peter followed him out, not knowing that what was happening under the angel's guidance was real, but thinking that he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ Passing the first Guard, and then the second, they came to the iron gate leading into the city, which opened to them of itself; and, when they had passed through that, and had walked along one street, all at once the angel left him.

¹¹ Then Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I know beyond all doubt that the Lord has sent his angel, and has rescued me from Herod's hands and from all that the Jewish people have been expecting.' ¹² As soon as he realized what had happened, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also known as Mark, where a number of people were gathered together, praying. ¹³ On his knocking at the door in the gate, a maidservant, named Rhoda, came to answer it. ¹⁴ She recognized Peter's voice, but in her joy left the gate unopened, and ran in, and told them that Peter was standing outside.

¹⁵ 'You are mad!' they exclaimed. But, when she persisted that it was so, they said, 'It must be his

spirit!’

¹⁶ Meanwhile Peter went on knocking, and, when they opened the gate and saw him, they were amazed. ¹⁷ Peter signed to them with his hand to be silent, and then told them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison, adding, ‘Tell James and the others all this.’ Then he left the house, and went away to another place.

¹⁸ In the morning there was a great stir among the soldiers – what could have become of Peter! ¹⁹ And, when Herod had made further search for him and failed to find him, he closely questioned the Guard, and ordered them away to execution. Then he went down from Judea to stay at Caesarea.

²⁰ It happened that Herod was deeply offended with the people of Tyre and Sidon, but they went in a body to him, and, having succeeded in winning over Blastus, the Chamberlain, they begged Herod for a reconciliation, because their country was dependent on the king’s for its food supply.

²¹ On an appointed day Herod, wearing his state robes, seated himself on his throne, and delivered an oration. ²² The people kept shouting, ‘It is the voice of God, and not of a person!’

²³ Instantly an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give God the glory; and he was attacked with worms, and died. ²⁴ Meanwhile the Lord’s message kept extending, and spreading far and wide.

²⁵ When Barnabas and Saul had carried out their mission, they returned to Jerusalem, and

took with them John, who was also known as Mark.

The Church and the Gentiles

13

Acts of the Apostle Paul

¹ Among the members of the church at Antioch there were several prophets and teachers – Barnabas, Simeon who was known by the name of “Black”, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, foster-brother of Prince Herod, and Saul. ² While they were engaged in the worship of the Lord and were fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which I have called them.’ ³ Accordingly, after fasting and prayer, they placed their hands on them and dismissed them.

⁴ Barnabas and Saul, sent on this mission, as they were, by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia, and from there sailed to Cyprus. ⁵ On reaching Salamis, they began to tell the message of God in the Jewish synagogues; and they had John with them as an assistant. ⁶ After passing through the whole island, they reached Paphos, where they found an astrologer who pretended to be a prophet – a Jew by birth, whose name was Barjoshua. ⁷ He was at the court of the Governor, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who sent for Barnabas and Saul and asked to be told God’s message. ⁸ But Elymas, the astrologer (for that is the meaning of the word), opposed them, eager to divert the Governor’s attention from the faith.

⁹ However, Saul (who is the same as Paul), full of the Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him and said, ¹⁰ ‘You incarnation of deceit and all fraud! You son of the devil! You opponent of all that is good! Will you never cease to divert the straight paths of the Lord? Listen! ¹¹ The hand of the Lord is on you even now, and you will be blind for a time and unable to see the sun.’ Immediately a mist and darkness fell on him, and he went feeling about for someone to guide him. ¹² When the Governor saw what had happened, he became a believer in Christ, being greatly impressed by the teaching about the Lord.

¹³ After this, Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and went to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them and returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ The others went on from Perga and arrived at Antioch in Pisidia. There they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and took their seats. ¹⁵ After the reading of the Law and the prophets, the synagogue leader sent them this message – ‘Friends, if you have any helpful words to address to the people, now is the time to speak.’ ¹⁶ So Paul rose and, motioning with his hand, said:

‘People of Israel and all here who worship God, hear what I have to say. ¹⁷ The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors, and during their stay in Egypt increased the prosperity of the people, and then with uplifted arm brought them out from that land. ¹⁸ For about forty years he bore with them in the desert; ¹⁹ then, after destroying seven heathen nations in Canaan, he allotted their

land to this people – ²⁰ For about four hundred and fifty years. In later times he gave them Judges, of whom the prophet Samuel was the last. ²¹ And, when they demanded a king, God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. ²² After removing him, he raised David to the throne, and bore this testimony to him – “In David, the son of Jesse, I have found a man after my own heart, who will carry out all my purposes.” ²³ It was from this man’s descendants that God, in accordance with his promise, gave Israel a Saviour – Jesus; ²⁴ John having first proclaimed, before the appearance of Jesus, a baptism on repentance for all the people of Israel. ²⁵ As John was drawing towards the end of his career, he said “What do you suppose that I am? I am not the Christ. But there is ‘one coming’ after me, whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” ²⁶ Brothers and sisters, descendants of Abraham, and all those among you who worship God, it was to us that the message of this salvation was sent. ²⁷ The people of Jerusalem and their leaders, failing to recognise Jesus, and not understanding the utterances of the prophets that are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. ²⁸ They found no ground at all for putting him to death, and yet demanded his execution from Pilate; ²⁹ and, after carrying out everything written about him, they took Jesus down from the cross, and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead; ³¹ and he appeared for many days to those who had gone up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and who are now

witnesses for him to the people. ³² We also have good news to tell you, about the promise made to our ancestors – ³³ That our children have had this promise completely fulfilled to them by God, by his raising Jesus. That is just what is said in the second Psalm –

“You are my Son; this day I have become your Father.”

³⁴ As to his raising Jesus from the dead, never again to return to corruption, this is what is said –

“I will give to you the sacred promises made to David;”

³⁵ And, therefore, in another Psalm it is said –

“You will not give up the Holy One to undergo corruption.”

³⁶ David, after obediently doing God’s will in his own time, fell asleep and was laid by the side of his ancestors, and did undergo corruption; ³⁷ but Jesus, whom God raised from the dead, did not undergo corruption. ³⁸ I would, therefore, like you to know, friends, that through Jesus forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and that, in union with him, everyone who believes in him is absolved from every sin from which under the Law of Moses you could not be absolved. ⁴⁰ Beware, therefore, that what is said in the prophets does not come true of you –

⁴¹ “Look, you despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I am doing a deed in your days –

a deed which, though told you in full, you will never believe”.

⁴² As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people begged for a repetition of this

teaching on the next Sabbath. ⁴³ After the congregation had dispersed, many of the Jews, and of the converts who joined in their worship, followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue to rely on the loving kindness of God.

⁴⁴ On the following Sabbath, almost all the city gathered to hear God's message. ⁴⁵ But the sight of the crowds of people filled the minds of the Jews with jealousy, and they kept contradicting Paul's statements in violent language. ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out fearlessly, and said:

'It was necessary that the message of God should be told to you first; but, since you reject it and reckon yourselves not worthy of the eternal life – we turn to the Gentiles! ⁴⁷ For this is the Lord's command to us –

"I have destined you for a light to the Gentiles, a means of salvation to the ends of the earth".'

⁴⁸ On hearing this, the Gentiles were glad and extolled God's message; and all those who had been enrolled for eternal life became believers in Christ; ⁴⁹ and the Lord's message was carried throughout that district. ⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the women of high social standing who worshiped with them, and the leading men of the town, and started a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region. ⁵¹ They, however, shook the dust off their feet in protest, ⁵² and went to Iconium, leaving the disciples full of joy and of the Holy Spirit.

14

¹ The same thing occurred in Iconium, where Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish synagogue, and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed in Christ. ² But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles, and poisoned their minds against the Lord's followers. ³ Therefore Paul and Barnabas spent a long time there, and spoke out fearlessly, relying on the Lord, who confirmed the message of his love by permitting signs and wonders to take place at their hands. ⁴ But the townspeople were divided, some siding with the Jews, some with the apostles; ⁵ and, when there was an attempt on the part of both Gentiles and Jews, with their leaders, to resort to violence and to stone them, ⁶ the apostles heard of it, and took refuge in Lystra and Derbe, towns in Lycaonia, and in the district round, ⁷ and there they continued to tell the good news.

⁸ In the streets of Lystra there used to sit a man who had no power in his feet; he had been lame from his birth, and had never walked. ⁹ This man was listening to Paul speaking, when Paul, looking intently at him, and seeing that he had the faith to be healed, ¹⁰ said loudly, 'Stand upright on your feet.'

The man leaped up, and began walking about, ¹¹ and the crowd, seeing what Paul had done, called out in the Lycaonian language, 'The Gods have come down to us in human form.' ¹² So they called Barnabas "Zeus," and Paul "Hermes," because he took the lead in speaking; ¹³ and the

priest of Zeus-beyond-the-Walls, accompanied by the crowd, brought bullocks and garlands to the gates, with the intention of offering sacrifices. ¹⁴ But, when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd.

‘Friends, why are you doing this?’ they shouted. ¹⁵ ‘We are only people like yourselves, and we have come with the good news that you should turn away from these follies to a living God, who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them. ¹⁶ In bygone times he permitted all the nations to go their own ways. ¹⁷ Yet he has not failed to give you, in the good he does, some revelation of himself – sending you from heaven rain and fruitful seasons, and gladdening your hearts with plenty and good cheer.’ ¹⁸ Even with this appeal they could hardly restrain the people from offering sacrifice to them.

¹⁹ Presently, however, there came some Jews from Antioch, and Iconium who, after they had won over the people, stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the town, thinking him to be dead. ²⁰ But, when the disciples had gathered round him, he got up and went back into the town; the next day he went with Barnabas to Derbe. ²¹ After telling the good news throughout that town, and making a number of converts, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ²² reassuring the minds of the disciples, urging them to remain true to the faith, and showing that it is only through many troubles that we can enter the kingdom of God. ²³ They also appointed elders for them

in every church, and, after prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had learned to believe. ²⁴ Paul and Barnabas then went through Pisidia, and came into Pamphylia, ²⁵ and, after telling the message at Perga, went down to Attaleia. ²⁶ From there they sailed to Antioch – the place where they had been committed to the gracious care of God for the work which they had now finished. ²⁷ After their arrival, they gathered the church together, and gave an account of all that God had helped them to do, and especially how he had opened to the Gentiles the door of faith; ²⁸ and at Antioch they stayed with the disciples for a considerable time.

15

¹ But certain persons came down from Judea, and began to teach the Lord's followers that, unless they were circumcised, in accordance with the custom required by Moses, they could not be saved. ² This gave rise to a serious dispute, and much discussion, between Paul and Barnabas and these people, and it was therefore settled that Paul and Barnabas and others of their number should go up to Jerusalem, to consult the apostles and church elders about the matter under discussion.

³ The church, therefore, sent them on their journey, and they made their way through Phoenicia and Samaria, telling the story of the conversion of the Gentiles, to the great joy of all the followers. ⁴ On their arrival at Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, as well as by the apostles

and the elders, and gave an account of all that God had helped them to do. ⁵ Some of the Pharisees' party, however, who had become believers in Christ, came forward and declared that they were bound to circumcise converts and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses. ⁶ The apostles and the church elders held a meeting to consider this question. ⁷ After much discussion, Peter rose and said:

'You, my friends, know well that long ago God singled me out - that through my lips the Gentiles should hear the message of the good news, and become believers in Christ. ⁸ Now God, who reads all hearts, declared his acceptance of the Gentiles, by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. ⁹ He made no distinction between them and us, when he purified their hearts by their faith. ¹⁰ Why, then, do you now provoke God, by putting on the necks of these disciples a yoke which neither our ancestors nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ No, it is through the loving kindness of the Lord Jesus that we, just as they do, believe that we have been saved.'

¹² Every voice in the assembly was hushed, as they listened to Barnabas and Paul, while they gave an account of all the signs and wonders which God had shown among the Gentiles through them. ¹³ After they had finished speaking, James addressed the Council.

'Friends,' he began, 'hear what I have to say. ¹⁴ Simon has described the manner in which God first visited the Gentiles, in order to take from among them a people to bear his name. ¹⁵ And

that is in harmony with the words of the prophets, where they say –

¹⁶ “After this I will return; and I will rebuild the house of David which has fallen – its ruins I will rebuild, and will set it up once more;

¹⁷ that so the rest of mankind may earnestly seek the Lord – even all the Gentiles on whom my name has been bestowed,

¹⁸ says the Lord, as he does these things, known from long ago.”

¹⁹ In my judgment, therefore, we should not add to the difficulties of those Gentiles who are turning to God, ²⁰ but we should write to them to abstain from food that has been polluted by being sacrificed to idols, from impurity, from eating the flesh of strangled animals, and from blood. ²¹ For in every town, for generations past, there have been those who preach Moses, read as he is in the synagogues every Sabbath.’

²² It was then decided by the apostles and the elders, with the assent of the whole church, to choose some of their number, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Those chosen were Judas (called Barsabas) and Silas, who were leaders among the community. ²³ They were bearers of the following letter –

“The apostles, and the followers who are the church elders, send their greetings to the followers of the Lord of Gentile birth in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. ²⁴ As we had

heard that some of our number had upset you by their assertions, and unsettled your minds – without instructions from us – ²⁵ We met and decided to choose certain men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶ who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. ²⁷ We are accordingly sending Judas and Silas, and they will tell you by word of mouth what we are now writing. ²⁸ We have, therefore, decided, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to lay no further burden on you beyond these necessary conditions – ²⁹ That you abstain from food offered to idols, from blood, from eating the flesh of strangled animals, and from impurity. If you guard yourselves against such things, it will be well with you. Farewell.”

³⁰ So the bearers of this letter were sent on their way, and went down to Antioch. There they called a meeting of all the followers, ³¹ and delivered the letter, the reading of which caused great rejoicing by its encouraging contents. ³² Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, further encouraged the them by many an address, and strengthened their faith. ³³ After some stay, they were dismissed with kind farewells from the followers, and returned to those who had sent them. ³⁴*

³⁵ Paul and Barnabas, however, remained in Antioch, where they taught and, with the help of many others, told the good news of the Lord's

* **15:34** Some later manuscripts add: But Silas decided to stay.

message. ³⁶ Some time after this, Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us go back and visit the Lord's followers in every town in which we have told the Lord's message, and see how they are prospering.' ³⁷ Barnabas wished to take with them John, whose other name was Mark; ³⁸ but Paul felt that they ought not to take with them the man who had deserted them in Pamphylia, and had not gone on with them to their work. ³⁹ This caused such unpleasant feeling between them that they parted ways, Barnabas taking Mark and sailing for Cyprus, ⁴⁰ while Paul chose Silas for his companion and, after he had been committed by the followers to the gracious care of the Lord, ⁴¹ started on his journey and went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches in the faith.

16

¹ Among other places Paul went to Derbe and Lystra. At the latter place they found a disciple, named Timothy, whose mother was a Jewish woman who was a believer, while his father was a Greek, ² and who was well spoken of by the followers of the Lord in Lystra and Iconium. ³ Wishing to take this man with him on his journey, Paul caused him to be circumcised out of consideration for the Jews in that region, for they all knew that his father had been a Greek. ⁴ As they traveled from town to town, they gave the followers the decisions which had been reached by the apostles and church elders at Jerusalem, for them to observe.

⁵ So the churches grew stronger in the faith, and increased in numbers from day to day.

⁶ They next went through the Phrygian district of Galatia, but were restrained by the Holy Spirit from delivering the message in Roman Asia.

⁷ When they reached the borders of Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them. ⁸ Passing through Mysia, they went down to Troas; ⁹ and there one night Paul saw a vision. A Macedonian was standing and appealing to him – “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰ So, immediately after Paul had seen the vision, we looked for an opportunity to cross over to Macedonia, concluding that God had summoned us to tell the good news to the people there.

¹¹ Accordingly we set sail from Troas, and ran before the wind to Samothrace, reaching Neapolis the next day. ¹² From there we made our way to Philippi, which is the principal city of that part of Macedonia, and also a Roman Settlement.

In that city we spent several days. ¹³ On the Sabbath we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and talked to the women who were gathered there. ¹⁴ Among them was a woman, named Lydia, belonging to Thyatira, a dealer in purple cloth, who was accustomed to join in the worship of God. The Lord touched this woman’s heart, so that she gave attention to the message delivered by Paul, ¹⁵ and, when she and

her household had been baptized, she urged us to become her guests.

‘Since you have shown your conviction,’ she said, ‘that I really am a believer in the Lord, come and stay in my house.’ And she insisted on our doing so.

¹⁶ One day, as we were on our way to the place of prayer, we were met by a girl possessed by a divining spirit, who made large profits for her masters by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, calling, ‘These men are servants of the most high God, and they are bringing you news of a way to salvation.’ ¹⁸ She had been doing this for several days, when Paul, much vexed, turned and said to the spirit within her, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to leave her.’ That very moment the spirit left her.

¹⁹ When her masters saw that there was no hope of further profit from her, they seized Paul and Silas, dragged them into the public square to the authorities, ²⁰ and took them before the Magistrates.

‘These men are causing a great disturbance in our town,’ they complained; ²¹ ‘They are Jews, and they are teaching customs which it is not right for us, as Romans, to sanction or adopt.’

²² The mob rose as one person against them, and the Magistrates stripped them of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. ²³ After beating them severely, the Magistrates put them in prison, with orders to the jailer to keep them in safe custody. ²⁴ On receiving so strict an order, the Governor put them into the inner cell, and

secured their feet in the stocks. ²⁵ About midnight, while Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and while the prisoners were listening to them, ²⁶ suddenly there was an earthquake of such violence that the jail was shaken to its foundations; all the doors flew open, and all the prisoners' chains were loosened. ²⁷ Roused from his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, the Governor drew his sword intending to kill himself, in the belief that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul called out loudly, 'Do not harm yourself; we are all here.'

²⁹ Calling for a light, the Governor rushed in, and flung himself trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he led them out, and said, 'What must I do to be saved?'

³¹ 'Believe in Jesus, our Lord,' they replied, 'and you will be saved, you and your household too.'
³² Then they spoke to him of God's message, and to all his household as well. ³³ And that very hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds, and he himself and everyone belonging to him were baptized without delay. ³⁴ Afterwards he took them up to his house and set before them something to eat, rejoicing that he, with all his household, had come to believe in God.

³⁵ In the morning the Magistrates sent the guards with an order for the men to be discharged. ³⁶ The jailer told Paul of his instructions. 'The Magistrates have sent an order for your discharge,' he said, 'so you had better leave the place at once and go quietly away.'

³⁷ But Paul's answer to them was, 'They have flogged us in public without trial, though we are Roman citizens, and they have put us in prison, and now they are for sending us out secretly! No, indeed! Let them come and take us out themselves.' ³⁸ The guards reported his words to the Magistrates, who, on hearing that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, were alarmed, ³⁹ and went to the prison, and did their best to conciliate them. Then they took them out, and begged them to leave the city. ⁴⁰ When Paul and Silas left the prison, they went to Lydia's house, and, after they had seen the Lord's followers, and encouraged them, they left the place.

17

¹ After passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica. Here the Jews had a synagogue; ² and, following his usual custom, Paul joined them, and for three Sabbaths addressed them, drawing his arguments from the scriptures. ³ He laid before them and explained that the Christ must undergo suffering and rise from the dead; and 'It is this man,' he declared, 'who is the Christ - this Jesus about whom I am telling you.'

⁴ Some of the people were convinced, and threw in their lot with Paul and Silas, as did also a large body of Greeks who were accustomed to join in the Jewish services, and a great number of leading women. ⁵ But the Jewish leaders, becoming jealous, engaged some worthless fellows from the

streets, and, getting a mob together, kept the city in an uproar. They attacked Jason's house, with the intention of bringing Paul and Silas before the Popular Assembly; ⁶ and, not finding them there, they proceeded to drag Jason and some of the Lord's followers before the city magistrates, shouting out,

'These men, who have turned the world upside down, have now come here, ⁷ and have been harboured by Jason! They are all defying the decrees of the Emperor. They say that someone else is king – a man called Jesus!'

⁸ On hearing this, the people and the city magistrates were much concerned; ⁹ and, before letting them go, they took bail from Jason and the others. ¹⁰ That very night the followers sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea; and on reaching that place, they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ These Jews of Beroea were better disposed than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message with great readiness, and daily examined the scriptures to see if what was said was true. ¹² As a consequence, many of them became believers in Christ, besides a considerable number of Greek women of position, and of men also. ¹³ But, when the Jewish leaders in Thessalonica found out that God's message had been delivered by Paul at Beroea, they came there too, exciting and disturbing the minds of the people. ¹⁴ The followers immediately arranged for Paul to go away to the coast, but both Silas and Timothy stayed behind in Beroea. ¹⁵ The friends who escorted Paul took him as far as Athens, and,

after receiving a message for Silas and Timothy to join him as quickly as possible, they started on their return.

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his heart was stirred at seeing the whole city full of idols. ¹⁷ So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and with those who joined in their worship, as well as daily in the public Square with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Among others, some Epicurean and Stoic Philosophers joined issue with him. Some asked ‘What is this prater wanting to make out?’, while others said ‘He seems to be a preacher of foreign Deities.’ (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection). ¹⁹ So they laid hold of him and took him to the Court of Areopagus.

‘May we hear,’ they asked, ‘what new teaching this is which you are giving?’ ²⁰ For you are bringing some strange things to our notice, and we should like to know what they mean.’ ²¹ (All Athenians and the foreigners staying in the city found no time for anything else but telling, or listening to, the last new thing.)

²² So Paul took his stand in the middle of the Court, and said – ‘People of Athens, on every hand I see signs of your being very devout. ²³ For as I was going about, looking at your sacred shrines, I came upon an altar with this inscription – “To an Unknown God.” What, therefore, you worship in ignorance, that I am now proclaiming to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and all things that are in it – he, Lord as he is of heaven and earth,

does not live in temples made by hands, ²⁵ neither do human hands minister to his wants, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives, to all, life, and breath, and all things. ²⁶ He made all races of the earth's surface – fixing a time for their rise and fall, and the limits of their settlements – ²⁷ That they might search for God, if by any means they might feel their way to him and find him. And yet he is not really far from any one of us; ²⁸ for in him we live and move and are. To use the words of some of your own poets –

“His offspring, too, are we.”

²⁹ Therefore, as the offspring of God, we must not think that the Deity has any resemblance to anything made of gold, or silver, or stone – a work of human art and imagination. ³⁰ True, God looked with indulgence on the days of people's ignorance, but now he is announcing to everyone everywhere the need for repentance, ³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he intends to judge the world with justice, by a man whom he has appointed – and of this he has given all people a pledge by raising this man from the dead.'

³² On hearing of a resurrection of the dead, some began jeering, but others said that they wanted to hear what he had to say about that another time. ³³ And so Paul left the Court. ³⁴ There were, however, some people who joined him, and became believers in Christ. Among them were Dionysius, a member of the Court of Areopagus, a woman named Damaris, and several others.

18

¹ On leaving Athens, Paul next went to Corinth. ² There he met a Jew of the name of Aquila, from Pontus, who, with his wife Priscilla, had lately come from Italy, in consequence of the order which had been issued by the Emperor Claudius for all Jews to leave Rome. Paul paid them a visit, ³ and, since their trade was the same as his, he stayed and worked with them – their trade was tent-making. ⁴ Every Sabbath Paul gave addresses in the synagogue, trying to convince both Jews and Greeks.

⁵ But, when Silas and Timothy had come down from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself entirely to delivering the message, earnestly maintaining before the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶ However, as they set themselves against him and became abusive, Paul shook his clothes in protest and said to them, ‘Your blood be on your own heads. My conscience is clear. From this time forward I will go to the Gentiles.’

⁷ So he left, and went to the house of a certain Titius Justus, who had been accustomed to join in the worship of God, and whose house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, came to believe in the Lord, and so did all his household; and many of the Corinthians, as they listened to Paul, became believers in Christ and were baptized. ⁹ One night the Lord said to Paul, in a vision, ‘**Have no fear, but continue to speak, and refuse to be silenced;** ¹⁰ **for I am with you, and no one will do you harm, for I have many people in this city.**’ ¹¹ So he settled there for a year

and a half, and taught God's message among the people.

¹² While Gallio was governor of Greece, some of the Jewish leaders made a combined attack on Paul, and brought him before the Governor's Bench, ¹³ charging him with persuading people to worship God in a way forbidden by the Law. ¹⁴ Just as Paul was on the point of speaking, Gallio said to them, 'If this were a case of misdemeanour or some serious crime, there would be some reason for my listening patiently to you; ¹⁵ but, since it is a dispute about words, and names, and your own Law, you must see to it yourselves. I do not choose to be a judge in such matters.'

¹⁶ Saying this, he drove them back from the Bench. ¹⁷ Then they all set on Sosthenes, the synagogue leader, and beat him in front of the Bench, but Gallio did not trouble himself about any of these things.

¹⁸ Paul remained there some time after this, and then took leave of the followers, and sailed to Syria with Priscilla and Aquila, but not before his head had been shaved at Cenchreae, because he was under a vow. ¹⁹ They put into Ephesus, and there Paul, leaving his companions, went into the synagogue and addressed the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked him to prolong his stay, he declined, saying however, ²¹ as he took his leave, 'I will come back again to you, please God,' and then set sail from Ephesus. ²² On reaching Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and exchanged greetings with the church, and then went down to Antioch. ²³ After making some stay in Antioch, he set out

on a tour through the Phrygian district of Galatia, strengthening the faith of all the disciples as he went.

²⁴ Meanwhile there had come to Ephesus an Alexandrian Jew, named Apollos, an eloquent man, who was well-versed in the scriptures. ²⁵ He had been well-instructed in the Way of the Lord, and with burning zeal he spoke of, and taught carefully, the facts about Jesus, though he knew of no baptism but John's. ²⁶ This man began to speak out fearlessly in the synagogue; and when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home and explained the Way of God to him more carefully still. ²⁷ When he wanted to cross to Greece, the followers furthered his plans, and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On his arrival he proved of great assistance to those who had, through the loving kindness of God, become believers in Christ, ²⁸ for he vigorously confuted the Jews, publicly proving by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

19

¹ While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland districts of Roman Asia, and went to Ephesus. There he found some disciples, of whom he asked, ² 'Did you, when you became believers in Christ, receive the Holy Spirit?'

'No,' they answered, 'we did not even hear that there was a Holy Spirit.'

³ 'What then was your baptism?' Paul asked.

⁴ 'John's baptism was a baptism on repentance,'

rejoined Paul, ‘and John told the people (speaking of the “one coming” after him) that they should believe in him – that is in Jesus.’

⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, ⁶ and, after Paul had placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit descended on them, and they began to speak in other languages and to preach. ⁷ There were about twelve of them in all.

⁸ Paul went to the synagogue there, and for three months spoke out fearlessly, giving addresses and trying to convince his hearers, about the kingdom of God. ⁹ Some of them, however, hardened their hearts and refused to believe, denouncing the Way before the people. So Paul left them and withdrew his disciples, and gave daily addresses in the lecture-hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all who lived in Roman Asia, Jews and Greeks alike, heard the Lord’s message.

¹¹ God did miracles of no ordinary kind by Paul’s hands; ¹² so that people would carry home to the sick handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his body, and their diseases would leave them and the wicked spirits go out of them. ¹³ An attempt was made by some itinerant Jews, who were exorcists, to use the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had wicked spirits in them.

‘I order you,’ they would say, ‘by the Jesus, whom Paul preaches.’ ¹⁴ The seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this; ¹⁵ but the wicked spirit answered them, ‘Jesus I acknowledge, and Paul I know, but you – who are you?’

¹⁶ Then the man, in whom this wicked spirit was, sprang on them, mastered both of them, and so completely overpowered them, that they fled out of the house, stripped of their clothes, and wounded. ¹⁷ This incident came to the knowledge of all the Jews and Greeks living at Ephesus; they were all awe-struck, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in the highest honour. ¹⁸ Many, too, of those who had become believers in Christ came with a full confession of their practices; ¹⁹ while a number of people, who had practiced magic, collected their books and burnt them publicly; and on reckoning up the price of these, they found it amounted to fifty thousand silver coins. ²⁰ So irresistibly did the Lord's message spread and prevail.

²¹ Sometime after these events Paul resolved to go through Macedonia and Greece, and then make his way to Jerusalem. 'And after I have been there,' he said, 'I must visit Rome also.' ²² So he sent to Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, while he himself stayed for some time longer in Roman Asia.

²³ Just about that time a great disturbance arose about the Way. ²⁴ A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver models of the shrine of Artemis, and so gave a great deal of work to the artisans, ²⁵ got these men together, as well as the workmen engaged in similar occupations, and said:

'Men, you know that our prosperity depends on this work, ²⁶ and you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but in almost the whole of Roman

Asia, this Paul has convinced and won over great numbers of people, by his assertion that those Gods which are made by hands are not Gods at all. ²⁷ So that not only is this business of ours likely to fall into discredit, but there is the further danger that the Temple of the great Goddess Artemis will be thought nothing of, and that she herself will be deprived of her splendour – though all Roman Asia and the whole world worship her.’

²⁸ When they heard this, the men were greatly enraged, and began shouting – ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’ ²⁹ The commotion spread through the whole city, and the people rushed together into the amphitheater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, two Macedonians who were Paul’s traveling companions. ³⁰ Paul wished to go into the amphitheater and face the people, but the disciples would not let him, ³¹ while some of the chief religious officials of the province, who were friendly to him, sent repeated entreaties to him not to trust himself inside. ³² Meanwhile some were shouting one thing and some another, for the Assembly was all in confusion, most of those present not even knowing why they had met. ³³ But some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom several of the Jewish leaders had pushed to the front, and he waved his hand to show that he wanted to speak in their defence to the people. ³⁴ However, when they recognised him as a Jew, one cry broke from them all, and they continued shouting for two hours – ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’

³⁵ When the Recorder had succeeded in quieting

the crowd, he said, 'People of Ephesus, who is there, I ask you, who needs to be told that this city of Ephesus is the Warden of the Temple of the great Artemis, and of the statue which fell down from Zeus? ³⁶ As these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and do nothing rash; ³⁷ for you have brought these men here, though they are neither robbers of Temples nor blasphemers of our Goddess. ³⁸ If, however, Demetrius and the artisans who are acting with him have a charge to make against anyone, there are court days and there are Magistrates; let both parties take legal proceedings. ³⁹ But if you want anything more, it will have to be settled in the regular Assembly. ⁴⁰ For I tell you that we are in danger of being proceeded against for today's riot, there being nothing to account for it; and in that case we will be at a loss to give any reason for this disorderly gathering.'

⁴¹ With these words he dismissed the Assembly.

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¹ When the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and, with encouraging words, bade them goodbye, and started on his journey to Macedonia. ² After going through those districts and speaking many encouraging words to the disciples, he went into Greece, where he stayed three months. ³ He was about to sail to Syria, when he learned that a plot had been laid against him by several of the Jewish leaders; so he decided to return by way of Macedonia. ⁴ He was

accompanied by Sopater the son of Pyrrhus, of Beroea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, as well as by Tychicus and Trophimus of Roman Asia. ⁵ These people went to Troas and waited for us there; ⁶ while we ourselves sailed from Philippi after the Passover, and joined them five days later at Troas, where we stayed for a week.

⁷ On the first day of the week, when we had met for the breaking of bread, Paul, who was intending to leave the next day, began to address those who were present, and prolonged his address until midnight. ⁸ There were a good many lamps in the upstairs room, where we had met; ⁹ and a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, was gradually overcome with great drowsiness, as Paul continued his address. At last, quite overpowered by his drowsiness, he fell from the third story to the ground, and was picked up for dead. ¹⁰ But Paul went down, threw himself on him, and put his arms round him.

‘Do not be alarmed,’ he said, ‘he is still alive.’ ¹¹ Then he went upstairs; and, after breaking and partaking of the bread, he talked with them at great length until daybreak, and then left. ¹² Meanwhile they had taken the lad away alive, and were greatly comforted.

¹³ We started first, went on board ship, and sailed for Assos, intending to take Paul on board there. This was by his own arrangement, as he intended to go by land himself. ¹⁴ So, when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went on to Mitylene. ¹⁵ The day after we had sailed from

there, we arrived off Chios, touched at Samos the following day, and the next day reached Miletus; ¹⁶ for Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so as to avoid spending much time in Roman Asia. He was making haste to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the Festival at the close of the Harvest.

¹⁷ From Miletus, however, he sent to Ephesus and invited the church elders to meet him; ¹⁸ and, when they came, he said to them, 'You know well the life that I always led among you from the very first day that I set foot in Roman Asia, ¹⁹ serving the Lord, as I did, in all humility, amid the tears and trials which fell to my lot through the plots of some of the Jewish leaders. ²⁰ I never shrank from telling you anything that could be helpful to you, or from teaching you both in public and in private. ²¹ I earnestly pointed both Jews and Greeks to the repentance that leads to God, and to faith in Jesus, our Lord. ²² And now, under spiritual constraint, I am here on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that in town after town the Holy Spirit plainly declares to me that imprisonment and troubles await me. ²⁴ But I count my life of no value to myself, if only I may complete the course marked out for me, and the task that was allotted me by the Lord Jesus – which was to declare the good news of the love of God. ²⁵ And now, I tell you, I know that none of you will ever see my face again – you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom. ²⁶ Therefore I declare to you this day, that my conscience is clear in regard to the

fate of any of you, ²⁷ for I have not shrunk from announcing the whole purpose of God regarding you. ²⁸ Be watchful over yourselves, and over the whole flock, of which the Holy Spirit has placed you in charge, to shepherd the church of God, which he won for himself at the cost of his life. ²⁹ I know that, after my departure, merciless wolves will get in among you, who will not spare the flock; ³⁰ and from among yourselves, too, people will arise, who will teach perversions of truth, so as to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore, be on your guard, remembering how for three years, night and day, I never ceased, even with tears, to warn each one of you. ³² And now I commend you to the Lord and to the message of his love – a message which has the power to build up your characters, and to give you your place among all those who have become Christ's people. ³³ I have never coveted anyone's gold or silver or clothing. ³⁴ You, yourselves, know that these hands of mine provided not only for my own wants, but for my companions also. ³⁵ I left nothing undone to show you that, labouring as I laboured, you ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said himself – **“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”** ³⁶ When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ All were in tears; and throwing their arms round Paul's neck, they kissed him again and again, ³⁸ grieving most of all over what he had said – that they would never see his face again. Then they escorted him

to the ship.

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¹ When we had torn ourselves away and had set sail, we ran before the wind to Cos; the next day we came to Rhodes, and from there to Patara, ² where we found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, and went on board and set sail. ³ After sighting Cyprus and leaving it on the left, we sailed to Syria, and put into Tyre, where the ship was to discharge her cargo. ⁴ There we found the disciples and stayed a week with them. Speaking under the influence of the Spirit, they warned Paul not to set foot in Jerusalem. ⁵ However, when we had come to the end of our visit, we went on our way, all the disciples with their wives and children escorting us out of the city. We knelt down on the beach, and prayed, ⁶ and then said goodbye to one another; after which we went on board, and they returned home.

⁷ After we had made the run from Tyre, we landed at Ptolemais, and exchanged greetings with the followers there, and spent a day with them. ⁸ The next day we left, and reached Caesarea, where we went to the house of Philip, the missionary, who was one of the Seven, and stayed with him. ⁹ He had four unmarried daughters, who had the gift of prophecy. ¹⁰ During our visit, which lasted several days, a prophet, named Agabus, came down from Judea. ¹¹ He came to see us, and, taking Paul's belt, and binding his own feet and hands with it, said, 'This is what the Holy

Spirit says – “The man to whom this belt belongs will be bound like this by the religious authorities in Jerusalem, and they will give him up to the Gentiles”.’ ¹² When we heard that, we and the people of the place began to entreat Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

¹³ It was then that Paul made the reply, ‘Why are you weeping and breaking my heart like this? For my part, I am ready not only to be bound, but even to suffer death at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.’ ¹⁴ So, as he would not be persuaded, we said no more to him, only adding – ‘The Lord’s will be done.’

¹⁵ At the end of our visit, we made our preparations, and started on our way up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶ Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, and brought Mnason with them, a Cypriot disciple of long standing, with whom we were to stay. ¹⁷ On our arrival at Jerusalem, the followers of the Lord there gave us a hearty welcome; ¹⁸ and the next day Paul went with us to see James, and all the church elders were present. ¹⁹ After greeting them, Paul related in detail all that God had done among the Gentiles through his efforts; ²⁰ and, when they had heard it, they began praising God, and said to Paul:

‘You see, brother, that those of our people who have become believers in Christ may be numbered by tens of thousands, and they are all naturally earnest in upholding the Jewish Law. ²¹ Now they have heard it said about you, that you teach all of our people in foreign countries to

forsake Moses, for you tell them not to circumcise their children or even to observe Jewish customs. ²² Well now, as they are certain to hear of your arrival, do what we are going to suggest. ²³ We have four men here, who have of their own accord put themselves under a vow. ²⁴ Join these men, share their purification, and bear their expenses, so that they may shave their heads; and then all will see that there is no truth in what they have been told about you, but that, on the contrary, you yourself rule your life in obedience to the Jewish Law. ²⁵ As to the Gentiles who have become believers in Christ, we have sent our decision that they should avoid food offered to idols, and blood, and the flesh of strangled animals, and impurity.'

²⁶ Paul joined the men, and the next day shared their purification, and went into the Temple, and gave notice of the expiration of the period of purification when the usual offering should have been made on behalf of each of them.

²⁷ But, just as the seven days were drawing to a close, some of the Jewish people from Roman Asia caught sight of Paul in the Temple, and caused great excitement among all the people present, by seizing Paul and shouting, ²⁸ 'People of Israel! Help! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people, our Law, and this place; and, what is more, he has actually brought Greeks into the Temple and defiled this sacred place.' ²⁹ (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in Paul's company in the city, and were under the belief that Paul had taken

him into the Temple.)

³⁰ The whole city was stirred, and the people quickly collected, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the Temple, when the doors were immediately shut. ³¹ They were bent on killing him, when it was reported to the officer commanding the garrison, that all Jerusalem was in commotion. ³² He instantly got together some officers and soldiers, and charged down on the crowd, who, when they saw the commanding officer and his soldiers, stopped beating Paul. ³³ Then he went up to Paul, arrested him, ordered him to be doubly chained, and proceeded to inquire who he was, and what he had been doing. ³⁴ Some of the crowd said one thing, and some another; and, as he could get no definite reply because of the uproar, he ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. ³⁵ When Paul reached the steps, he was actually being carried by the soldiers, owing to the violence of the mob; ³⁶ for the people were following in a mass, shouting out, 'Kill him!'

³⁷ Just as he was about to be taken into the Fort, Paul said to the commanding officer, 'May I speak to you?'

'Do you know Greek?' asked the commanding officer. ³⁸ 'Aren't you, then, the Egyptian who some time ago raised an insurrection and led the four thousand Bandits out into the wilderness?'

³⁹ 'No,' said Paul, 'I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of a city of some note. I beg you to give me permission to speak to the people.'

⁴⁰ The commanding officer gave his permission, and Paul, standing on the steps, made signs with

his hand to the people, and, when comparative silence had been obtained, he said to them in Hebrew:

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¹ ‘Brothers and fathers, listen to the defence which I am about to make.’ ² When they heard that he was speaking to them in Hebrew, they were still more quiet; and Paul went on:

³ ‘I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, but I was brought up in this city under the teaching of Gamaliel, and educated in accordance with the strict system of our ancestral Law. I was as zealous in God’s service as any of you who are here today. ⁴ In my persecution of this Way I did not stop even at the taking of life. I put in chains, and imprisoned, men and women alike – ⁵ And to that the high priest himself and all the council of elders can testify. For I had letters of introduction from them to our fellow Jews at Damascus, and I was on my way to that place, to bring those whom I might find there prisoners to Jerusalem for punishment. ⁶ While I was still on my way, just as I was getting close to Damascus, about midday, suddenly there flashed from the heavens a great light all round me. ⁷ I fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to me “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” ⁸ “Who are you, Lord?” I replied. Then the voice said “I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.” ⁹ The men with me saw the light, but did not hear the speaker’s voice. ¹⁰ Then I said “What am I to do, Lord?” “Get up and go into Damascus,” The Lord said to me, “and there

you will be told all that you have been appointed to do.” ¹¹ In consequence of that dazzling light I could not see, but my companions held me by the hand, until I reached Damascus. ¹² There a man named Ananias, a strict observer of our Law, well spoken of by all the Jewish inhabitants, came to see me. ¹³ Standing close to me, he said “Saul, my brother, recover your sight.” And then and there I recovered my sight and looked up at him. ¹⁴ Then he said “The God of our ancestors has appointed you to learn his will, and to see the righteous one, and to hear words from his lips; ¹⁵ for you will be a witness for him to all the world of what you have just seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now why wait any longer, Be baptized at once, wash away your sins, and invoke his name.” ¹⁷ After my return to Jerusalem, while I was praying one day in the Temple, I fell into a trance, ¹⁸ and saw Jesus saying to me **“Make haste and leave Jerusalem at once, because they will not accept your testimony about me.”** ¹⁹ “Lord,” I answered, “these people know that I used to imprison and scourge, in synagogue after synagogue, those who believed in you; ²⁰ and, when the blood of your martyr, Stephen, was being shed, I was myself standing by, approving of his death, and took charge of the clothes of those who were murdering him.” ²¹ But Jesus said to me **“Go; for I will send you to the Gentiles far away”.**

²² Up to this point the people had been listening to Paul, but at these words they called out, ‘Kill him! A fellow like this ought not to have been allowed to live!’ ²³ As they were shouting, tearing off

their clothes, and throwing dust in the air, ²⁴ the commanding officer ordered Paul to be taken into the Fort, and directed that he should be examined under the lash so that he might find out the reason for their outcry against him.

²⁵ But just as they had tied him up to be scourged, Paul said to the centurion standing near, 'Is it legal for you to scourge a Roman citizen, unconvicted?' ²⁶ On hearing this, the centurion went and reported it to the commanding officer. 'Do you know what you are doing?' he said. 'This man is a Roman citizen.' ²⁷ So the commanding officer went up to Paul and said, 'Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?'

'Yes,' replied Paul. ²⁸ 'I had to pay a heavy price for my position as citizen,' said the officer. 'I am one by birth,' rejoined Paul.

²⁹ The men who were to have examined Paul immediately drew back, and the officer, finding that Paul was a Roman citizen, was alarmed at having put him in chains.

³⁰ On the next day the commanding officer, wishing to find out the real reason why Paul was denounced by the Jewish leaders, had his chains taken off, and directed the chief priests and the whole of the High Council to assemble, and then took Paul down and brought him before them.

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¹ Paul fixed his eyes on the Council, and began: 'Brothers, for my part, I have always ordered my life before God, with a clear conscience, up to

this very day.’ ² At this, the high priest Ananias ordered the men standing near to strike him on the mouth; ³ Paul turned to him and said:

‘God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting there to try me in accordance with law, and yet, in defiance of law, order me to be struck?’

⁴ The people standing near said to Paul, ‘Do you know that you are insulting God’s high priest?’

⁵ ‘I did not know, brothers, that it was the high priest,’ said Paul, ‘for scripture says –
“Of the ruler of your people you should speak no ill”.’

⁶ Noticing that some of those present were Sadducees and others Pharisees, Paul called out in the Council, ‘Brothers, I am a Pharisee and a son of Pharisees. It is on the question of hope for the dead and of their resurrection that I am on my trial.’

⁷ As soon as he said this, a dispute arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and there was a sharp division of opinion among those present.

⁸ (For Sadducees say there is no such thing as a resurrection, and that there is neither angel nor spirit, while Pharisees believe in both.) ⁹ So a great uproar ensued, and some of the Teachers of the Law belonging to the Pharisees’ party stood up and hotly protested, ‘We find nothing whatever wrong in this man. Suppose a spirit did speak to him, or an angel...’ ¹⁰ The dispute was becoming so violent, that the commanding officer, fearing that Paul would be torn in pieces between them, ordered the Guard to go down and rescue him from them, and take him into the Fort.

¹¹ That night the Lord came and stood by Paul, and said, 'Courage! You have borne witness for me in Jerusalem and you must bear witness in Rome also.' ¹² In the morning some Jewish men combined together, and took an oath that they would not eat or drink until they had killed Paul. ¹³ There were more than forty in the plot; ¹⁴ and they went to the chief priests and the elders, and said, 'We have taken a solemn oath not to touch food until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ So we want you now, with the consent of the Council, to suggest to the commanding officer that he should bring Paul down before you, as though you intended to go more fully into his case; but, before he comes here, we will be ready to make away with him.'

¹⁶ However, the son of Paul's sister, hearing of the plot, went to the Fort, and on being admitted, told Paul about it. ¹⁷ Paul called one of the garrison centurion and asked him to take the lad to the commanding officer, as he had something to tell him. ¹⁸ The centurion went with the lad to the commanding officer, and said, 'The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this lad to you, as he has something to tell you.'

¹⁹ The commanding officer took the lad by the hand, and, stepping aside, asked what it was he had to tell him. ²⁰ 'Some men have agreed,' answered the lad, 'to ask you to bring Paul down before the Council tomorrow, on the plea of your making further inquiry into his case. ²¹ But do not let them persuade you, for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him, who have taken an oath that they will not eat or drink, until they have

made away with him; and they are at this very moment in readiness, counting on your promise.’

²² The commanding officer then dismissed the lad, cautioning him not to mention to anybody that he had given him that information. ²³ Then he called two Captains, and ordered them to have two hundred soldiers ready to go to Caesarea, as well as seventy troopers and two hundred lancers, by nine o’clock that night, ²⁴ and to have horses ready for Paul to ride, so that they might take him safely to Felix, the Governor. ²⁵ He also wrote a letter along these lines:

²⁶ “Claudius Lysias sends his compliments to His Excellency Felix the Governor. ²⁷ The man whom I send with this had been seized by some Jews, and was on the point of being killed by them, when I came upon them with the force under my command, and rescued him, as I learned that he was a Roman citizen. ²⁸ Wanting to know exactly the ground of the charges they made against him, I brought him before their Council, ²⁹ when I found that their charges were connected with questions of their own Law, and that there was nothing alleged involving either death or imprisonment. ³⁰ Having, however, information of a plot against the man, which was about to be put into execution, I am sending him to you at once, and I have also directed his accusers to prosecute him before you.”

³¹ The soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took charge of Paul and conducted him by night

to Antipatris; ³² and on the next day, leaving the troopers to go on with him, they returned to the Fort. ³³ On arriving at Caesarea, the troopers delivered the letter to the Governor, and brought Paul before him. ³⁴ As soon as Felix had read the letter, he enquired to what province Paul belonged, and, learning that he came from Cilicia, he said, ³⁵ 'I will hear all you have to say as soon as your accusers have arrived.' And he ordered Paul to be kept under guard in Herod's Government house.

24

¹ Five days afterwards the high priest Ananias came down with some of the elders and a barrister named Tertullus. They laid an information with the Governor against Paul; ² and, when the hearing came on, Tertullus began his speech for the prosecution. ³ 'We owe it to your Excellency,' he said, 'that we are enjoying profound peace, and we owe it to your foresight that this nation is constantly securing reforms - advantages which we very gratefully accept at all times and places. ⁴ But - not to be tedious - I beg you, with your accustomed fairness, to listen to a brief statement of our case. ⁵ We have found this man a public pest; he is one who stirs up disputes among our people all the world over, and is a ringleader of the Nazarene heretics. ⁶ He even attempted to

desecrate the Temple itself, but we caught him; ⁷*
⁸ and you will be able, by examining him on all these points, to satisfy yourself as to the charges which we are bringing against him.'

⁹The Jewish crowd also joined in the attack and bore out his statements. ¹⁰ On a sign from the Governor, Paul made this reply:

'Knowing, as I do, for how many years you have acted as judge to this nation, it is with confidence that I undertake my own defence. ¹¹ For you can easily verify that it is not more than twelve days ago that I went up to worship at Jerusalem, ¹² where my prosecutors never found me holding discussions with anyone, or causing a crowd to collect - either in the Temple, or in the synagogues, or about the city; ¹³ and they cannot establish the charges which they are now making against me. ¹⁴ This, however, I do acknowledge to you, that it is as a believer in the Way which they call heretical, that I worship the God of my ancestors. At the same time, I believe everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the prophets; ¹⁵ and I have a hope that rests in God - a hope which they also cherish - that there will one day be a resurrection of good and bad alike. ¹⁶ This being so, I strive at all times to keep my conscience clear before both God and people. ¹⁷ After some years' absence I had come to bring charitable gifts to my nation, and to make

* **24:7** Some later manuscripts add: We wanted to judge him according to our law. But Lysias the commanding officer came and took him out of our hands by force, ordering his accusers to come before you.

offerings; ¹⁸ and it was while engaged in this that they found me in the Temple, after completing a period of purification, but not with any crowd or disorder. ¹⁹ There were, however, some Jews from Roman Asia who ought to have been here before you, and to have made any charge that they may have against me – ²⁰ Or else let my opponents here say what they found wrong in me when I was before the Council, ²¹ except as to the one sentence that I shouted out as I stood among them – “It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on my trial before you today”.’

²² Felix, however, adjourned the case – though he had a fairly accurate knowledge of all that concerned the Way – with the promise, ‘When Lysias, the commanding officer, comes down, I will give my decision in your case.’ ²³ So he gave orders to the centurion in charge of Paul to keep him in custody, but to relax the regulations, and not to prevent any of his personal friends from attending to his wants.

²⁴ Some days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and, sending for Paul, listened to what he had to say about faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁵ But, while Paul was speaking at length about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became terrified, and interrupted him – ‘Go for the present, but, when I find an opportunity, I will send for you again.’ ²⁶ He was hoping, too, for a bribe from Paul, and so he used to send for him frequently and talk with him. ²⁷ But, after the lapse of two years, Felix was

succeeded by Porcius Festus; and, wishing to gain popularity with the Jewish leaders, he left Paul a prisoner.

25

¹ Three days after Festus had arrived in his province, he left Caesarea and went up to Jerusalem. ² There the chief priests and the leading men among the Jews laid an information before him against Paul, ³ and asked a favour of him, to Paul's injury – to have Paul brought to Jerusalem. All the while they were plotting to make away with him on the road. ⁴ But Festus answered that Paul was in prison at Caesarea, and that he himself would be leaving for that place shortly.

⁵ 'So let the influential men among you,' he said, 'go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, charge him formally with it.' ⁶ After staying among them some eight or ten days, Festus went down to Caesarea. The next day he took his seat on the Bench, and ordered Paul to be brought before him. ⁷ On Paul's appearance, the Jewish leaders who had come down from Jerusalem surrounded him, and made many serious charges, which they failed to establish. ⁸ Paul's answer to the charge was – "I have not committed any offence against the Jewish Law, or the Temple, or the Emperor." ⁹ But, as Festus wished to gain popularity with the Jews, he interrupted Paul with the question, 'Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and be tried on these charges before me there?'

¹⁰ ‘No,’ replied Paul, ‘I am standing at the Emperor’s court, where I ought to be tried. I have not wronged the Jews, as you yourself are well aware. ¹¹ If, however, I am breaking the law and have committed any offence deserving death, I do not ask to escape the penalty; but, if there is nothing in the accusations of these people, no one has the power to give me up to them. I appeal to the Emperor.’

¹² Festus, after conferring with his Council, answered, ‘You have appealed to the Emperor; to the Emperor you will go.’

¹³ Some days later King Agrippa and Bernice came down to Caesarea, and paid a visit of congratulation to Festus; ¹⁴ and, as they were staying there for several days, Festus laid Paul’s case before the king. ‘There is a man here,’ he said, ‘left a prisoner by Felix, ¹⁵ about whom, when I came to Jerusalem, the Jewish chief priest and the elders laid an information, demanding judgment against him. ¹⁶ My answer to them was, that it was not the practice of Romans to give up anyone to their accusers until the accused had met them face to face, and had also had an opportunity of answering the charges brought against them. ¹⁷ So they met here, and without loss of time I took my seat on the Bench the very next day, and ordered the man to be brought before me. ¹⁸ But, when his accusers came forward, they brought no charge of wrongdoing such as I had expected; ¹⁹ but I found that there were certain questions in dispute between them about their own religion, and about some dead man called Jesus, whom

Paul declared to be alive. ²⁰ And, as I was at a loss how to enquire into questions of this kind, I asked Paul if he were willing to go up to Jerusalem, and be put on trial there. ²¹ Paul, however, appealed to have his case reserved for the consideration of his August Majesty, so I ordered him to be detained in custody, until I could send him to the Emperor.'

²² 'I should like to hear this man myself,' Agrippa said to Festus.

'You will hear him tomorrow,' Festus answered.

²³ So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come in full state and had entered the Audience Chamber, with the superior officers and the principal people of the city, by the order of Festus Paul was brought before them. ²⁴ Then Festus said, 'King Agrippa, and all here present, you see before you the man about whom the whole Jewish people have applied to me, both at Jerusalem and here, loudly asserting that he ought not to be allowed to live. ²⁵ I found, however, that he had not done anything deserving death; so, as he had himself appealed to his August Majesty, I decided to send him. ²⁶ But I have nothing definite to write about him to my Imperial Master; and for that reason I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, that, after examining him, I may have something to write. ²⁷ For it seems to me absurd to send a prisoner, without at the same time stating the charges made against him.'

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¹ Turning to Paul, Agrippa said, 'You are at lib-

erty to speak for yourself.’ Then Paul stretched out his hand and began his defence. ² ‘I have been congratulating myself, King Agrippa,’ he said, ‘that it is before you that I have to make my defence today, with regard to all the charges brought against me by my own people, ³ especially as you are so well-versed in all the customs and questions of the Jewish world. I beg you therefore to give me a patient hearing. ⁴ My life, then, from youth upwards, was passed, from the very first, among my own nation, and in Jerusalem, and is within the knowledge of all Jews; ⁵ and they have always known – if they choose to give evidence – that, in accordance with the very strictest form of our religion, I lived a true Pharisee. ⁶ Even now, it is because of my hope in the promise given by God to our ancestors that I stand here on my trial – ⁷ A promise which our twelve tribes, by earnest service night and day, hope to see fulfilled. It is for this hope, your Majesty, that I am accused – and by Jews themselves! ⁸ Why do you all hold it incredible that God should raise the dead? ⁹ I myself, it is true, once thought it my duty to oppose in every way the name of Jesus of Nazareth; ¹⁰ and I actually did so at Jerusalem. Acting on the authority of the chief priests, I myself threw many of the people of Christ into prison, and, when it was proposed to put them to death, I gave my vote for it. ¹¹ Time after time, in every synagogue, I tried by punishments to force them to blaspheme. So frantic was I against them, that I pursued them even to towns beyond our borders.

¹² It was while I was traveling to Damascus on an errand of this kind, entrusted with full powers by the chief priests, ¹³ that at midday, your Majesty, I saw right in my path, coming from the heavens, a light brighter than the glare of the sun, which shone all round me and those traveling with me. ¹⁴ We all fell to the ground, and then I heard a voice saying to me in Hebrew - “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? By kicking against the goad you are punishing yourself.” ¹⁵ “Who are you, Lord?” I asked. And the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting; ¹⁶ but get up and stand upright; for I have appeared to you in order to appoint you a servant and a witness of those revelations of me which you have already had, and of those in which I will yet appear to you, ¹⁷ since I am choosing you out from your own people and from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; so that they may receive pardon for their sins, and a place among those who have become God’s people, by faith in me.” ¹⁹ After that, King Agrippa, I did not fail to obey the heavenly vision; ²⁰ on the contrary, first to those at Damascus and Jerusalem, and then through the whole of Judea, and to the Gentiles as well, I began to preach repentance and conversion to God, and a life befitting that repentance. ²¹ This is why some men seized me in the Temple, and made attempts on my life. ²² However I have received help from God to this very day, and so stand here, and bear my

testimony to high and low alike – without adding a word to what the prophets, as well as Moses, declared should happen – ²³ That the Christ must suffer, and that, by rising from the dead, he was destined to be the first to bring news of light, not only to our nation, but also to the Gentiles.’

²⁴ While Paul was making this defence, Festus called out loudly, ‘You are mad, Paul; your great learning is driving you mad.’

²⁵ ‘I am not mad, your Excellency,’ he replied. ‘On the contrary, the statements that I am making are true and sober. ²⁶ Indeed, the king knows about these matters, so I speak before him without constraint. I am sure that there is nothing whatever of what I have been telling him that has escaped his attention; for all this has not been done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.’

²⁸ But Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You are soon trying to make a Christian of me!’

²⁹ ‘Whether it is soon or late,’ answered Paul, ‘I pray to God that not only you, but all who are listening to me, might today become just what I am myself – except for these chains!’ ³⁰ Then the king rose, with the Governor and Bernice and those who had been sitting with them, ³¹ and, after retiring, discussed the case among themselves. ‘There is nothing,’ they said, ‘deserving death or imprisonment in this man’s conduct’; ³² and, speaking to Festus, Agrippa added, ‘The man might have been discharged, if he had not appealed to the Emperor.’

27

¹ As it was decided that we were to sail to Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were put in charge of a centurion of the Augustan Guard, named Julius. ² We went on board a ship from Adramyttium, which was on the point of sailing to the ports along the coast of Roman Asia, and put to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, went with us. ³ The next day we put in to Sidon, where Julius treated Paul in a friendly manner, and allowed him to go to see his friends and receive their hospitality. ⁴ Putting to sea again, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the wind was against us; ⁵ and, after crossing the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we reached Myra in Lycia. ⁶ There the Roman officer found an Alexandrian ship on her way to Italy, and put us on board of her. ⁷ For several days our progress was slow, and it was only with difficulty that we arrived off Cnidus. As the wind was still unfavourable when we came off Cape Salmone, we sailed under the lee of Crete, ⁸ and with difficulty, by keeping close in shore, we reached a place called "Fair Havens," near which was the town of Lasea.

⁹ This had taken a considerable time, and sailing was already dangerous, for the Fast was already over; and so Paul gave this warning. ¹⁰ 'My friends,' he said, 'I see that this voyage will be attended with injury and much damage, not only to the cargo and the ship, but to our own lives also.'

¹¹ The Roman officer, however, was more influenced by the captain and the owner than by what was said by Paul. ¹² And, as the harbour was not

a suitable one to winter in, the majority were in favour of continuing the voyage, in hope of being able to reach Phoenix, and winter there. Phoenix was a Cretan harbour, open to the north-east and south-east. ¹³ So, when a light wind sprang up from the south, thinking that they had found their opportunity, they weighed anchor and kept along the coast of Crete, close in shore. ¹⁴ But shortly afterwards a hurricane came down on us off the land – a north-easter, as it is called. ¹⁵ The ship was caught by it and was unable to keep her head to the wind, so we had to give way and let her drive before it. ¹⁶ Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we only just managed to secure the ship's boat, ¹⁷ and, after hoisting it on board, the men frapped the ship. But, afraid of being driven on to the Syrtis Sands, they lowered the yard, and then drifted. ¹⁸ So violently were we tossed about by the storm, that the next day they began throwing the cargo overboard, ¹⁹ and, on the following day, threw out the ship's tackle with their own hands. ²⁰ As neither sun nor stars were visible for several days, and, as the gale still continued severe, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.

²¹ It was then, when they had gone a long time without food, that Paul came forward, and said, 'My friends, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and so incurred this injury and damage. ²² Yet, even as things are, I beg you not to lose courage, for there will not be a single life lost among you – only the ship. ²³ For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong,

and whom I serve, stood by me, and said – ²⁴“Have no fear, Paul; you must appear before the Emperor, and God himself has given you the lives of all your fellow voyagers.” ²⁵ Therefore, courage, my friends! For I believe God, that everything will happen exactly as I have been told. ²⁶ We will, however, have to be driven on some island.’

²⁷ It was now the fourteenth night of the storm, and we were drifting about in the Adriatic Sea, when, about midnight, the sailors began to suspect that they were drawing near land. ²⁸ So they took soundings, and found twenty fathoms of water. After waiting a little, they took soundings again, and found fifteen fathoms. ²⁹ Then, as they were afraid of our being driven on some rocky coast, they let go four anchors from the stern, and longed for daylight. ³⁰ The sailors wanted to leave the ship, and had lowered the boat, on pretence of running out anchors from the bows, ³¹ when Paul said to the Roman officer and his men, ‘Unless the sailors remain on board, you cannot be saved.’ ³² So the soldiers cut the ropes which held the boat, and let her drift away. ³³ In the interval before daybreak Paul kept urging them all to take something to eat.

‘It is a fortnight today,’ he said, ‘that, owing to your anxiety, you have gone without food, taking nothing. ³⁴ So I beg you to take something to eat; your safety depends on it, for not one of you will lose even a hair of his head.’ ³⁵ With these words he took some bread, and, after saying the thanksgiving to God before them all, broke it in pieces, and began to eat; ³⁶ and the men all felt

cheered and had something to eat themselves. ³⁷There were about seventy-six of us on board, all told. ³⁸After satisfying their hunger, they further lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea. ³⁹When daylight came, they could not make out what land it was, but, observing a creek in which there was a beach, they consulted as to whether they could run the ship safely into it. ⁴⁰Then they cast off, and abandoned the anchors, and at the same time unlashd the gear of the steering oars, hoisted the foresail to the wind, and made for the beach. ⁴¹They got, however, into a kind of channel, and there ran the ship aground. The bows stuck fast and could not be moved, while the stern began breaking up under the strain. ⁴²The advice of the soldiers was that the prisoners should be killed, so that none of them could swim away and make their escape. ⁴³But the Roman officer, anxious to save Paul, prevented their carrying out their intention, and ordered that those who could swim should be the first to jump into the sea and try to reach the shore; ⁴⁴and that the rest should follow, some on planks, and others on different pieces of the ship. In these various ways everyone managed to get safely ashore.

28

¹ When we were all safe, we found that the island was called Malta. ² The island's people showed us marked kindness, for they lit a fire and took us all under shelter, because it had come

on to rain and was cold. ³ Paul had gathered a quantity of dry sticks and laid them on the fire, when a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, fastened on his hand. ⁴ When the islanders saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, 'Evidently this man is a murderer, for though he has been saved from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.' ⁵ However, Paul shook the creature off into the fire and took no harm. ⁶ The islanders were expecting inflammation to set in, or that he would suddenly fall dead; but, after waiting for a long time, and seeing that there was nothing amiss with him, they changed their minds and said that he was a God.

⁷ In that region there was an estate belonging to the Governor of the island, whose name was Publius. He took us up to his house, and for three days entertained us most courteously. ⁸ It happened that the father of Publius was lying ill of fever and dysentery. So Paul went to see him; and, after praying, he placed his hands on him and cured him. ⁹ After this, all the people in the island who had any illness came to Paul, and were cured. ¹⁰ They also presented us with many gifts, and when we set sail they put supplies of necessaries on board.

¹¹ After three months, we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island. She was an Alexandrian vessel, and had the Twin sons of Zeus for her figure-head. ¹² We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days, ¹³ and from there we worked to windward and so got to Rhegium. A day later a south wind sprang up and took us to Puteoli in

two days. ¹⁴ There we found some of the Lord's followers, and were urged to stay a week with them; after which we went on to Rome. ¹⁵ The followers there had heard about us, and came out as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At sight of them Paul thanked God and was much cheered. ¹⁶ On our reaching Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, except for the soldier who was in charge of him.

¹⁷ Three days after our arrival, Paul invited the leading Jews to meet him; and, when they came, he said, 'Brothers, although I had done nothing hostile to the interests of our nation or to our ancestral customs, yet I was sent from Jerusalem as a prisoner, and handed over to the Romans. ¹⁸ The Romans, when they had examined me, were ready to release me, because there was nothing in my conduct deserving death. ¹⁹ But, as the Jewish leaders opposed my release, I was compelled to appeal to the Emperor - not, indeed, that I had any charge to make against my own nation. ²⁰ This, then, is my reason for urging you to come to see me and talk with me; because it is for the sake of the hope of Israel that I am here in chains.'

²¹ 'We,' was their reply, 'have not had any letter about you from Judea, nor have any of our fellow Jews come and reported or said anything bad about you. ²² But we will be glad to hear from you what your views are, for, with regard to this sect, we are well aware that it is spoken against on all sides.'

²³ They then fixed a day with him, and came to the place where he was staying, in even larger numbers, when Paul proceeded to lay the subject before them. He bore his testimony to the kingdom of God, and tried to convince them about Jesus, by arguments drawn from the Law of Moses and from the prophets – speaking from morning until evening. ²⁴ Some were inclined to accept what he said; others, however, rejected it. ²⁵ So, as they disagreed among themselves, they began to disperse, Paul adding only –

‘True, indeed, was the declaration made by the Holy Spirit, through the prophet Isaiah to your ancestors –

²⁶ Go to this nation and say:

You will hear with your ears without ever understanding,
and, though you have eyes, you will see
without ever perceiving.

²⁷ For the mind of this nation has grown dense,
and their ears are dull of hearing,
their eyes also have they closed;
otherwise some day they might see with their eyes,
and with their ears they might hear,
and in their mind they might understand, and
might turn –
and I might heal them.

²⁸ Understand, then, that this salvation of God was sent for the Gentiles; and they will listen.’ ²⁹ *

* **28:29** Some later manuscripts add: After he said these things the Jews left, all the while engaging in a heated debate among themselves.

³⁰ For two whole years Paul stayed in a house which he rented for himself, welcoming all who came to see him, ³¹ proclaiming the kingdom of God, and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ, with perfect fearlessness, unhindered.

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