

The followers of Jesus did great things This page tells a bit more about this book

A doctor called Luke wrote this book. This is the 2nd book he wrote. His 1st book is about what Jesus did when he was here on the earth. This book is about what Jesus's followers did after he went back to heaven. Luke wrote both of these books for a man called Theophilus.

Luke was different from most of the people that wrote the bible. They all belonged to the Israel nation, and most of them belonged to the Israel tribe called Jews, or the Jewish people.

But Luke was not a Jew.

The Israel people knew about God a long time before the other people in the world knew about him. God picked some Israel men to tell his messages to people. We call them prophets. A lot of those messages are in God's book. We call it the Holy Bible.

The Israel people built a big house for God in their big city called Jerusalem. We call that kind of big house a temple. They had special ceremonies for God at that place. They used to kill animals and burn them there for God, so that he will not pay them back for the bad things they did.

Luke helped Paul go around telling everyone the good news about Jesus.

Luke saw some of the things happen that he wrote about, and he heard Jesus's followers talk about the other things in his book.

Luke wrote this book about 33 years after Jesus went back to heaven. It is now part of the Holy Bible and it is important for us today. It tells us about the way the first Christians got together and became the first church. And it tells us the way God's Holy Spirit worked in them, and the way they told everyone about Jesus, so that a lot more people believed in him. We can learn a lot from this book.

¹ Dear Theophilus

I wrote to you before about all the things Jesus did and the things he taught to people. ² He kept doing these things until God took him up to heaven. But before God took Jesus up to heaven the Holy Spirit helped Jesus tell his close followers the things they had to do.

³ It is like this, Jesus died, and then he came alive again, and his followers saw him a lot of times in the next 40 days. Jesus showed them that he really was alive, so they are really sure that this is true. He talked to them too, and told them a lot of things about God's family.

⁴ At one time Jesus was eating some food with his followers and he said to them, "Don't leave this city called Jerusalem yet. I already told you that my Father promised to give you the Holy Spirit. Well, wait here until God does that. ⁵ Do you remember John the Baptist? He baptised people with water, but God will baptise you with the Holy Spirit very soon."

God took Jesus up into heaven

⁶ After that some of the close followers of Jesus met together with him. (At that time the Roman government people were the bosses over the Israel people.) The followers asked Jesus, "Sir, are you going to fight the Romans at this time and beat them, and give us back our own country, Israel, with our own boss?"

⁷ Jesus said to them, “My Father controls all these things. He knows the time that all these things will happen. You don’t need to know that time. ⁸ But the Holy Spirit will come to you and he will give you power, and then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and all over Judea country and Samaria country, and you will go to people everywhere in the world and tell them about me.”

⁹⁻¹⁰ Jesus told them this, then God lifted him up to heaven. His followers were looking at him as he was going up. Then a cloud came in front of Jesus and his followers couldn’t see him any more. They kept looking up into the sky, and suddenly 2 men wearing white clothes stood next to them. ¹¹ They said, “Hey, you men from Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the sky? God took Jesus up into heaven, but he will come back again. You saw him go up into heaven and he will come back in the same way that you saw him go.”

They found a man to take the place of Judas

¹² Then Jesus’s followers left that place, the hill called Olive Trees, and they walked about a kilometre back ¹³ to Jerusalem, and then they went upstairs to the room where they were living.

These were the close followers that came back from Olive Trees Hill – Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (his father was called Alphaeus), Simon (he used to be one of the mob that wanted to fight the Roman people), and Judas (his father was called James).

¹⁴ All these men met every day to pray together. Some women met with them too. One of those women was Mary, the mother of Jesus. And his brothers came to pray with them too.

¹⁵ After a few days these people that believed in Jesus had a meeting. There were about 120 people in that meeting. Peter stood up and talked to them. ¹⁶⁻¹⁷ He said, “Listen, friends, a long time ago the Holy Spirit talked to David about Judas, the son of Iscariot. David wrote the story in God’s book, and now that story has come true. Judas used to be with us and he worked with us. He was one of us close followers of Jesus. But the Jewish leaders paid Judas to take a mob of bad men to catch Jesus. ¹⁸ After that the Jewish leaders used that same money to buy some farm land. Judas fell down in that place and his belly split open, and all his guts fell out, and he died. ¹⁹ Everybody that lived in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that place Akeldama in their language. That means the Farm Land of Blood.”

²⁰ Peter kept on talking, he said, “God’s man called David wrote about Judas a long time ago, and it is in God’s book, in the part called Psalms. He wrote, ‘Empty out his house, God, and let nobody else live in it.’

And he also wrote,
‘Let somebody else have his job.’ ”

²¹⁻²² And Peter said, “So now we need to pick somebody else to be one of us 12 close followers, that have that job. He will help us tell people the true story, that Jesus is alive. Yes, Jesus died, but then God made him alive again. The man we pick has to be one of the men that went around with our leader Jesus here, and he has to be one that was with us all those 3 years, from the time that John baptised Jesus, right up to the time that God took Jesus up into heaven.”

²³ So they all talked together and found 2 men that did all those things. One man was Joseph Barsabbas. He also had another name, Justus. The other man was called Matthias. ²⁴⁻²⁵ Then the close followers of Jesus prayed.

They said, “Judas left his job, and went his own way, and now he is dead. He went to that bad place. And God, you really know everyone, and you know the way they are thinking. Please show us the man that you want to take the place of Judas, to do his job, and to be a close follower of Jesus.”

²⁶ So the close followers put the names of the 2 men into a jar and one man shook it. Then he closed his eyes and took out one of those names. That name was Matthias. So Matthias joined the 11 close followers, to work with them.

2

The Holy Spirit came

¹ The special day came for the Jewish ceremony called Pentecost, and all Jesus’s followers met together in one place. ² Suddenly there was a noise that came from the sky, like a strong wind blowing. Everyone in the house heard that noise. ³ Then they saw flames of fire that spread out and touched each person there. ⁴ The Holy Spirit went into all of them and they all began to talk in different languages. The Holy Spirit gave them power to talk these languages.

⁵ There were some Jews that were staying in Jerusalem at that time. They really respected God. They came from a lot of different countries. ⁶ They heard the noise and they crowded around that house. They heard Jesus’s followers talking in the languages of all their different countries, and they were really surprised. ⁷ They said, “These men are from Galilee, ⁸ so how come we can hear them talking in our own languages? ⁹⁻¹¹ Some of us were born Jews and some of us became Jews later. We are from a lot of different countries, and we can hear them talking the languages of these countries. Some of us are from Parthia,

and some from Media, and some from Elam, and some from Mesopotamia, and some from Judea, and some from Cappadocia, and some from Pontus, and some from Asia, and some from Phrygia, and some from Pamphylia, and some from Egypt, and some from places in Libya near Cyrene, and some of us are from Crete, and some of us are from Arabia, and some of us are visiting from Rome. But all of us can hear these people talking in our own languages. They are talking about the wonderful things that God does.”

¹² Those people were shocked and they didn't understand. They asked each other, “What does this mean?”

¹³ But some people laughed and made fun of Jesus's followers. They said, “That mob are drunk. They drank too much sweet wine.”

Peter talked to the people at Jerusalem

¹⁴ Then Peter got up to talk to those people. The 11 other close followers of Jesus got up too. Peter said, in a loud voice, “All you mob that are Jews that live in Jerusalem, listen to me properly now and I'll tell you the true story. ¹⁵ You reckon we are drunk, but no, we are not drunk. It is only 9 o'clock in the morning, too early for anyone to get drunk.

¹⁶ But a long time ago God told his man called Joel to write about what is happening here now, and it is in God's book. He wrote,

¹⁷ ‘God said, “In the last days, before I judge everybody, I will give my Holy Spirit to everyone.

I will give my spirit to your sons and daughters and they will tell other people the things that I tell them to say.

Your young men will see the special things that I will show them,

and your old men will dream about the special things I want them to know.

¹⁸ I will even give my Holy Spirit to all my workers, men and women, and they will tell other people the things that I tell them to say.”

¹⁹⁻²¹ But first God will do powerful things in the sky that will shock everyone.

The sun will turn dark and the moon will turn red like blood.

And God will do powerful things on the earth too.

People will fight each other, and there will be fire and big smoke.

But, at that time, God will save everybody that calls to him and asks him to save them.

Then God’s really great and special day will come, and he will judge everybody.’

Joel wrote that in God’s book.”

²²⁻²³ Peter kept on talking. He said, “All you mob, listen to me. The man from Nazareth, called Jesus, was a very special man. God helped him to do great and powerful things to show you that he is really special. You mob saw Jesus doing those things right here in front of your eyes. But you grabbed him and you gave him to bad men that don’t know God, and they killed him on a cross. But you see, a long time ago God already knew everything you were going to do, and he planned to let you do it a long time before you did it. ²⁴ Yes, those bad men killed Jesus. He hurt a lot, and then he died. But God didn’t let him stay dead. God made him alive again. Nobody could make Jesus stay dead.

²⁵⁻²⁸ A long time ago God’s man called David wrote about Jesus in God’s book. He wrote, ‘I saw you, God. You are always right here in front of me.

You are close by my side and you look after me, so nobody can frighten me.

So I am very happy and I tell everyone you are good.

I know you will not leave my dead body in a grave.

You will not let the body of your special person rot away.

You showed me the right way to live so that I can keep on living,

You are right here with me and you make me very happy.’ David wrote that in God’s book.”

²⁹ Peter kept on talking. He said, “My friends, I can tell you, for sure, about our grand-father David of long ago. He was not talking about himself. You see, he died and people buried him. His grave is still here, and we can see it today. So we know he didn’t come alive again. ³⁰ But David was one of God’s men, and he wrote God’s messages for people. And God promised David that one day, some time later, a man from David’s own family will become the big boss of his people. ³¹ You see, God told David something that will happen later, so David wrote that message for us. That message was about the man God was going to send, and it tells us that God was going to make him alive again. It tells us God was not going to leave him in the grave or let his body rot away. ³² And now, all of us mob here can tell you that message is all about Jesus. He died, but then God made him alive again, and we all saw him alive again. ³³ Then God took him up into heaven. Now he is sitting right next to God, on God’s right side, and God gave him his power.

³⁴⁻³⁵ You see, David didn’t go up into heaven, but Jesus did, so we know David didn’t write those words about himself, but he wrote them about Jesus. And David wrote some more words about Jesus too. He wrote, ‘God told my leader,

“Sit with me, on my right side, until I beat all your enemies,
and then you can put your feet on them to show that you are their boss.” ’

That’s in God’s book.”

³⁶ Then Peter said, “So, all of us Israel mob have to know this for sure. Yes, you got the soldiers to nail Jesus to a cross and kill him. But God made him alive again, and God made him our boss. Yes, he is the one God promised to send to save us.”

³⁷ All the people heard the things Peter said and they felt really ashamed. So they said to Peter, and to the other close followers of Jesus, “Friends, what can we do?”

³⁸⁻³⁹ Peter told them, “You have to turn around and follow Jesus. Then let us baptise you to show that you turned away from the wrong things you are doing, and now you follow Jesus Christ. Then God will not pay you back for those bad things. And he will give you the Holy Spirit to live in you just like he promised. You see, God promised to give the Holy Spirit to everyone that he picks to be his own people. God promised this to you, and to your kids, and even to people in other countries a long way away.”

⁴⁰ And Peter told them a lot more things to be careful about. He kept telling them, “Let God save you so that he will not punish you along with all these crooks that don’t want Jesus.”

⁴¹ Then a lot of people believed the things Peter said. So the close followers of Jesus baptised them. They baptised about 3,000 people that day, and those people joined the other followers of Jesus. ⁴² They all kept meeting together with the Christians and they listened to everything the close followers of Jesus taught them. They were like a big

family. They had meals together and remembered that Jesus died for them, and they prayed together to God.

The followers of Jesus shared everything together

⁴³ God gave power to the close followers of Jesus and they did powerful things. So all the people really respected God. ⁴⁴ The people that believed in Jesus met together and shared all the things they had with each other all the time. ⁴⁵ Some of them sold the things they owned and then gave that money to other people that needed it. ⁴⁶ They all met together every day in the yard of God's ceremony house. And they met together in each other's houses too, to eat meals and remember that Jesus died for them. They were all very happy and good to each other. ⁴⁷ Those people praised God and told others that he is really good. All the people in Jerusalem thought those people that believed in Jesus were good people. And God saved more people every day, and they joined the other people that believed in Jesus.

3

A man couldn't walk but Peter made him better

¹⁻³ There was a man that couldn't walk. He was crippled all his life. Every day somebody brought him to sit near the gate at God's ceremony house. Everyone called that gate the Beautiful Gate. He asked people for money as they went in through that gate.

One day, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Peter and John went to pray at God's ceremony house. They were going in through that Beautiful Gate, and that crippled man saw them and asked them for money. ⁴ Peter and John looked straight at the man, and Peter said, "Look at us." ⁵ So the

man looked at them. He thought, “I reckon these 2 will give me some money.”

⁶ But Peter said, “I haven’t got any money. No silver. No gold. But I have got something good for you. Jesus Christ, the man from Nazareth, has the power to make you better, so I’m talking to you with his power, and I tell you, get up and walk.”

⁷ Then Peter grabbed the man’s right hand and helped him to stand up. Straight away the man’s feet and ankles got strong. ⁸ He jumped up and started to walk around. He went with Peter and John into the yard of God’s ceremony house. That man was walking and jumping around and telling everyone that God is really great and really good.

⁹ All the people that were there saw him walking and they heard him telling them that God is really great.

¹⁰ They knew he was the man that used to sit near the Beautiful Gate and ask them for money, and they were really surprised. They thought, “How did this happen to him?” ¹¹ The man didn’t want to let Peter and John go away. They were at a place in God’s house called Solomon’s shade area. All the people were really surprised, and they ran to that place.

Peter told the people about Jesus

¹² Peter saw them and said to them, “Hey, all you Israel people, why are you surprised like this? Why are you looking at us? Do you think that we are really powerful and we made this man walk? Do you think that we are so good that we can do that? No. We are not. ¹³⁻¹⁴ God made this man better, so that everyone will know Jesus is really great. But you mob grabbed Jesus and gave him to the soldiers, for them to kill him. The judge, called Pilate, he wanted to let him go free, but all you mob kept shouting,

‘No, don’t let Jesus go. You have to kill him. You have to let another man go free instead, even though he is a murderer.’ Jesus was a properly good man that lived God’s way, but you said he wasn’t. But Jesus was God’s special workman, and God made him come alive again and God made him really powerful. This is the same God that our grand-fathers of a long time ago respected. They were called Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. ¹⁵ So you killed Jesus, the one that gives life to people. But God made him alive again. Yes, both of us saw him alive again with our own eyes. ¹⁶ Now you are looking at this man here and you know he used to be crippled. But we believed that Jesus can make him better, so Jesus made him better. You mob saw that with your own eyes.”

¹⁷ Peter kept talking to them, he said, “My friends, I know you and your leaders didn’t understand about Jesus. You mob didn’t know he was the one that God sent to us. ¹⁸ But a long time ago God told his men to write about Jesus, and it is in God’s book. They said that God was going to send his special man, and that people were going to kill him. And now God has made all that happen.

¹⁹ So listen. You mob have to change the way you live and turn back to God, so that he will not blame you or pay you back for the bad things you did. ²⁰⁻²¹ Then God will make your spirits happy and strong. You see, God picked Jesus to be his special man for you. Jesus will stay in heaven until the right time comes for God to make everything new and right again. Then God will send Jesus to you again.

God told everyone about this a long time ago, and he got his men to write about it in his book. ²² One of those men was Moses. He said, ‘God, the one that is your God, he picked me to tell you his messages, and just like that

he will pick one of your own people later to be his special man, to tell you his messages. You have to listen to everything that man tells you. ²³ If anyone will not listen to him, that person will not belong to God's people, and he will die.'

²⁴ Samuel was another of God's men a long time ago. He also told people that all these things were going to happen. And all God's other men that came later, they told people the same story. ²⁵ God promised all these things to our grand-fathers of a long time ago. He promised them to his own men, and he promised them to you too. A long time ago God said to our grand-father Abraham, 'I will use your family to do good to every tribe in the world.' ²⁶ So, you see, first of all God made Jesus alive again. After that he sent him to help you Israel mob turn away from the bad way you live and to live the right way."

4

Soldiers grabbed Peter and John

¹ Peter and John were still talking to the people, then some Jewish boss men got up and came to them. Those bosses were the men that look after the Jewish ceremonies, and the boss of the soldiers that looked after God's ceremony house, and some men called Sadducees. They all came to Peter and John. ² They heard Peter and John teaching the people and saying that God will make people alive, just like he made Jesus alive. And those boss men were really angry. ³ So they grabbed Peter and John. Those boss men wanted to take them to court, but it was already late in the afternoon, so the soldiers locked up Peter and John in jail to wait until the next day. ⁴ But already a lot of the people listened to Peter and John,

and they believed everything those 2 men said, and they started to follow Jesus. More and more people started to follow Jesus until there were about 5,000 men following him at that time. ⁵ The next day all the Jewish leaders met together for a court in the city called Jerusalem. They were the Jewish bosses, and the leaders of the Jewish ceremonies, and the men that taught about Jewish law. ⁶ The big boss of all the Jewish ceremonies, called Annas, was there. Some of his family were there, the men called Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and some other men too.

⁷ That boss mob got Peter and John to stand there in the middle of them, and they said, “This man couldn’t walk. He was crippled. What power did you use to make this man better? And who told you to do that?”

⁸ The Holy Spirit was in Peter and told him what to say. He said, “Listen, all you leaders and bosses. ⁹ You are asking us now about the good thing we did for this crippled man. You are asking us about the way we made him better. ¹⁰ We used the power of Jesus Christ to make this man better. We want you, and all our Israel countrymen, to know about Jesus, the man from Nazareth. You nailed him to a cross and killed him, but God made him alive again.

¹¹ You know, a long time ago one of God’s men told a picture story about you boss mob, and about Jesus. He wrote this in God’s book,
‘You boss builders reckoned that a stone was rubbish, so you threw it away.

But now that stone is the most important one of all.’

¹² You see, Jesus is the only one that can save people. God didn’t send anyone else to save us. Jesus is the only one in the world that has power to save people.”

¹³ The leaders knew that Peter and John were ordinary men that never went to bible school, but they were not frightened to talk back to those bosses. So those leaders were shocked. Then they remembered that Peter and John were friends of Jesus, and often listened to him. ¹⁴ And those leaders saw the man that used to be crippled. He stood right there next to Peter and John. So those leaders couldn't say anything bad about Peter and John.

¹⁵ So they told Peter and John to go out of the meeting, and then they talked to each other. ¹⁶ They said, "It's hard for us to punish those 2 men. Everyone in Jerusalem knows they did that powerful thing, they made that crippled man better. We can't say that it isn't true. ¹⁷ But we have to stop people talking about it. So we will tell those 2 men not to talk to anyone about Jesus again, and if they do we will make trouble for those 2 men."

¹⁸ So those leaders called Peter and John back to the meeting. They told them, "Don't you talk to any other people about Jesus. Don't you teach anyone about him."

¹⁹ But Peter and John said to those leaders, "Do you think that God wants us to listen to you? Or do you think he wants us to listen to him, and do the things he says? What do you reckon? We know he wants us to do whatever he says, ²⁰ and we can't stop now. We have to talk about the things that we have seen and heard."

²¹⁻²² The leaders couldn't think of any way to punish Peter and John. They knew that all the people were saying that God made that man better, so God is really great and really good. That man was more than 40 years old. So those bosses again told Peter and John, "Don't you talk about Jesus any more or we'll give you big trouble." Then they let them go free.

The Christians prayed together

²³ Peter and John left that meeting and went back to the other people that believed in Jesus. They told them everything that the big bosses of the Jewish ceremonies and the older leaders said. ²⁴ They listened to Peter and John and then they all prayed to God together. They said to him, “God, you are the boss of everything. You made the sky, and the earth, and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ The Holy Spirit talked to your man David, our grand-father of a long time ago, and the Holy Spirit told him to write this in God’s book. David wrote, ‘The people from different countries are really angry and they are talking about doing something stupid, something that will not work.

²⁶ Their bosses and leaders are getting ready to fight. They want to get together to fight against God, and they want to fight against the man God picked to be his special person.’

²⁷⁻²⁸ And now that has happened. The message that David wrote has now come true. Those bosses called Herod and Pontius Pilate come from different countries. They, and some of their countrymen, they all met together in this city. And they met with Jewish people too. They tried to work out a way to get rid of Jesus, your special worker that you sent to us. But you, God, are the one with power, and you knew everything they were going to do, and you let them do it. ²⁹ And now, God, you heard the bad things they reckon they will do to us. We are your workers. Please help us to not be frightened, and help us to keep telling everyone about Jesus. ³⁰ Show everyone your great power. Make sick people better. Let us do powerful things with the power

of Jesus, your special worker. Then everyone will know that we are telling them the true story.”

³¹ After they finished praying God shook the house that they were meeting in, and the Holy Spirit went into them all and filled them. They started telling everyone God’s message about Jesus, and they weren’t frightened of anyone.

The Christians shared all their things

³² All those people that believed in Jesus felt the same way about their things. They shared everything. They never said, “Those things are mine, you can’t have them.” No, they reckoned everything belonged to everyone. ³³ At the same time the close followers of Jesus talked in a powerful way and told everyone, “Our leader Jesus is alive again.” And God was good to his followers and gave them everything they needed.

³⁴⁻³⁵ All those Christians had everything they needed. Nobody was poor or hungry. You see, sometimes Christians that owned farm land or houses sold them and got some money, and gave it to the close followers of Jesus, and those close followers gave that money to anyone that needed it.

³⁶ One follower of Jesus was called Joseph. The close followers of Jesus called him Barnabas. That name means helper. He was from the island called Cyprus, and he belonged to the Levi tribe. ³⁷ Barnabas sold his farm land, then he took the money to the close followers of Jesus.

5

A couple tried to trick the Holy Spirit

¹ A man called Ananias and his wife, called Sapphira, also sold some land. ² But they kept some of the money

for themselves. Ananias only took some of it to Peter and the other close followers of Jesus, to share with the other Christians. He lied to them. He said, “This is all the money we got for our land.” His wife knew what he was doing, and she agreed to it.

³ Then Peter said to him, “Ananias, why did you let Satan be your boss and get you to lie to the Holy Spirit? You kept for yourself some of the money that you got for that land. ⁴Look, that land was yours and you didn’t have to sell it. But you sold it and got some money. Then you could do whatever you liked with that money. You didn’t have to bring it to us. So why did you think you could trick us and tell us that this little bit of money was all you got for that land? You lied to us, and you lied to God too.”

⁵ As soon as Ananias heard Peter say that he fell down and died. A lot of people heard about what happened and they were frightened. ⁶ And the young men there got up and wrapped up his body in cloth, then they took it out of the house and buried it.

⁷ About 3 hours later the wife of Ananias came into that house, but she didn’t know that her husband was dead. ⁸ Peter asked her, “Can you tell me, is this all the money that you and Ananias got for that land?”

She said, “Yes, that’s all the money.”

⁹ So Peter said to her, “Why did you and your husband agree with each other to try to trick the Holy Spirit? Listen. Your husband is dead, and the men that buried him are near the door right now, and they will carry you out too.”

¹⁰ Right then, Sapphira fell down and died in front of Peter. Then the young men came in and saw her dead, so they took her out and buried her next to her husband.

¹¹ Then all the Christians were really frightened. And all the other people that heard about those things were really frightened too.

The followers of Jesus made a lot of people better

¹² The close followers of Jesus kept doing powerful things to show everyone that God is powerful. All the Christians kept meeting together in God's ceremony house, in the part called Solomon's shade area. ¹³ There were other people in that city that were too frightened to join the Christians. But most of the people thought the Christians were really good people, ¹⁴ and some of them kept listening, and then a lot of men and women started believing in Jesus, and then they joined up with the Christians. ¹⁵ A lot of people saw the close followers of Jesus do powerful things, so they brought sick people and put them on beds and mats on the roads. They thought, "Even if Peter doesn't touch them maybe his shadow will touch them as he walks past them, and that will make them better." ¹⁶ Big mobs of people that lived in small towns near Jerusalem brought their sick people into the city, and they brought people that had bad spirits in them too. And the close followers of Jesus made all of them better.

An angel messenger opened the jail doors

¹⁷ There were some Jewish people called Sadducees. The big boss of the Jewish ceremonies was a Sadducee. He and all the other Sadducees were really jealous of the close followers of Jesus. ¹⁸ So those Sadducees sent some soldiers to grab the close followers of Jesus and lock them up in the jail. ¹⁹ But that night God sent an angel messenger to them, and he opened the jail doors and took the close followers of Jesus out. ²⁰ That angel said to them,

“Go and stand in God’s ceremony house and tell all the people there everything about this new life that Jesus gives.”

²¹ So those men listened to that angel and they went to God’s ceremony house very early in the morning, and they started teaching the people there.

At the same time the big boss of the Jewish ceremonies and his friends called all the Jewish council men together for a meeting. (They had these meetings to work out if something was right or wrong.) Then they sent the soldiers to the jail to get the close followers of Jesus. ²² But those soldiers got there and they couldn’t find those men in the jail. So they went back to the meeting and they said, ²³ “We got to the jail, and the guards were standing there near the locked doors. We opened the doors and went inside but we couldn’t find anyone there.”

²⁴ The boss of the soldiers that guarded God’s ceremony house heard the soldiers say that, and so did the bosses of the Jewish ceremonies, and they didn’t understand. They thought, “How did they get out? What will happen next?”

²⁵ Then somebody came and said to them, “Listen. Those men that you put in the jail are in the yard of God’s ceremony house. They are standing there teaching the people.” ²⁶ So the boss of those soldiers went there with his men and they got the close followers of Jesus. But they were not rough on them and they didn’t force them to come. They just asked them to come quietly. The soldiers didn’t want to hurt them. They were frightened, because they thought the people there might get angry and throw stones to try to kill them.

²⁷ The soldiers brought the close followers of Jesus to the Jewish council men to talk to them. Then the big boss of the Jewish ceremonies growled at them and said, ²⁸ “We

told you not to teach about Jesus. But you didn't listen to us. You told everyone in Jerusalem about him. You want people to think that we killed him. You are blaming us."

²⁹ Peter stood there with the other close followers of Jesus, and he said, "We've got to listen to God and do whatever he says, and not listen to people. ³⁰ You got men to kill Jesus by nailing him to a cross. But God made him alive again. We Jewish people respect God, and so did our grand-fathers from a long time ago. That same God made Jesus alive again ³¹ and gave him the best place in heaven, right next to God himself, on his right side. And God made Jesus our leader, the one that can save us. And God did this so that all the Israel people can turn back to him and stop doing bad things, and then he will not punish them. ³² We saw everything that Jesus did, so we tell everyone all about it. And God gave his Holy Spirit to the people that follow Jesus, and that Holy Spirit does powerful things, to show everyone that what we say is true."

³³ The Jewish council men heard Peter talking like that and they were really angry. They wanted to kill those close followers of Jesus. ³⁴ But one of the Jewish council men stood up in the meeting. He was called Gamaliel. He was a Jewish law man, one of the mob called Pharisees. All the people knew he was a good man and they respected him. Gamaliel told the soldiers, "Take these followers of Jesus outside for a while."

³⁵ Then he said to the council men, "Listen, you Israel mob. We have to think carefully now. You want to kill those men, but listen to this. ³⁶ A while ago there was a man called Theudas. He got up to fight the Roman government. He told everyone that he was great, and about 400 men listened to him and followed him to fight the Romans. But he died in that fight, and his followers all

ran away. So in the end nothing happened. ³⁷ After that another man came along. He was called Judas. He came from Galilee country. (The Romans were counting all the people in Judah country at that time.) Judas led a mob of men to fight the Romans, but the Romans killed him too, and chased all his followers away.

³⁸ So I'm telling you now, don't kill those followers of Jesus. Let them go. You see, if normal men told them to do these things and tell people about Jesus, nothing will happen. ³⁹ But if God told them to do these things, you can't stop them. If you try to stop them, you might find yourselves fighting against God."

The Jewish council men listened to Gamaliel and agreed with him. ⁴⁰ They called the close followers of Jesus back to the meeting and they told the soldiers to hit those men with whips. Then the council men told them, "Don't you ever teach people about Jesus again." Then the council men let them go.

⁴¹ The close followers of Jesus left those Jewish council men, and went away. They were very happy. They knew that God thought they were good enough to feel pain for Jesus, and to be shamed for following him, so they were happy, even though the soldiers hit them.

⁴² And Jesus's followers kept on telling people the good news about him. They never stopped. Every day they kept teaching people in the yard of God's ceremony house, and they also went to different people's houses to teach them. They said, "Jesus is the one that God sent to save people."

6

The Christians picked 7 men to be church workers

¹ At that time a lot of people believed in Jesus and started to follow him. Some of them talked in the Greek

language and the others talked in the Jewish language, called Hebrew. The Christians that talked Greek complained about the Christians that talked Hebrew. They said that the people that looked after the widows didn't give enough food or money to the widows that talked Greek.

² So the 12 close followers of Jesus called all the others to a meeting. They said, "We 12 men have been giving out the money and food, but now that job is too big for us. We haven't got the time to do that job and then teach people God's word properly. That's not right. ³ So, friends, you pick 7 of your own men to do that job. They can give the widows money and food. You have to pick men that other people say are good men. They have to be men that God's Holy Spirit controls properly, and they have to be men that always think properly. We will make those men bosses of that work. They will give money and food to the widows. ⁴ And we will keep on praying and teaching God's word."

⁵ All the Christians agreed with those 12 men. So they picked a man called Stephen. He was a man that God's Holy Spirit controlled properly. And they picked some other men called Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas. (Nicolas came from a town called Antioch. He was not born a Jew but he turned to God and started to follow the Jewish ceremonies, and after that he believed in Jesus.) ⁶ They brought those 7 men to the 12 close followers of Jesus, and those 12 men prayed for God to help those 7 men, and they put their hands on their heads to show that they were giving those 7 men that job.

⁷ At that time the Christians kept telling God's word to more people, and a lot more people in Jerusalem believed

in Jesus. A lot of the men that looked after the Jewish ceremonies also believed in Jesus.

The Jewish leaders grabbed Stephen

⁸ God helped Stephen to be good to everybody, and he gave Stephen the power to do great things to show people that God was great. ⁹ But some Jewish men started arguing with him. Those men came from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia and Asia. They belonged to a Jewish meeting house that they called the Meeting House of the Free Men. ¹⁰ But God's Holy Spirit helped Stephen to think properly, and gave him the right words to say. His words were so strong that those men couldn't win any argument. ¹¹ So they talked to some other men in secret and paid them money to tell lies about Stephen. Then those other men said, "We heard Stephen say really bad things about Moses, and about God."

¹² They told these lies to the older Jewish leaders, and to their law teachers, and to a lot of other people. Then all those leaders got upset, and they went out and grabbed Stephen and they brought him to the Jewish council, for them to judge him. ¹³ Those men from the Meeting House of the Free Men got those liars to stand up and say, "Stephen keeps on talking against this place, God's special place. And he keeps on talking against our Jewish law. ¹⁴ You know, we heard him say that Jesus from Nazareth will smash this place down. He says that Jesus will change the way we live and stop us doing the things that Moses told us to do."

¹⁵ All the men in the Jewish council looked carefully at Stephen and they saw that his face was shining, just like the face of one of God's angel messengers.

7

Stephen told the Jewish leaders a long story

¹ The big boss of the Jewish ceremonies said to Stephen, “These men are saying bad things about you. Are they telling the true story about you?”

²⁻⁴ Then Stephen said, “Listen to me, my countrymen and my leaders. Do you remember the story about our grand-fathers of a long time ago? Our great God came to our grand-father Abraham while he was still living in Mesopotamia country. God said to him, ‘Leave your country and your family. Go to the country that I will show you.’ Abraham listened to God and left that country of the Chaldean mob, and he went to live in Haran country. He lived there until his father died. Then God brought him here to this country that you live in now.

⁵ God didn’t give any of this country to Abraham to be his own land, not even a little bit of it. But God promised that some time later his grand-kids to come will own all of this land, even though Abraham didn’t even have any kids at that time. ⁶ But God told Abraham, ‘Your grand-kids will live in a country that belongs to other people. Those people will treat your grand-kids really bad and make them work hard for no pay. They will do that for 400 years. ⁷ But after that I will pay back those other people for treating your grand-kids bad. Then your grand-kids will come out from that country and they will show respect to me here in this place.’

⁸ Then God promised to look after Abraham, and Abraham agreed to follow him. God told Abraham, ‘Your mob will always have to do a young man’s operation on their boys, to show that they agree with God.’ After that Abraham had a son called Isaac, and 8 days later Abraham did a young man’s operation on him. After that Isaac grew

up and had a son called Jacob, and he did that operation on him too. And Jacob did the same for his 12 sons, and those 12 men became our grand-fathers of a long time ago.

⁹ Joseph was one of them. His brothers were jealous of him and sold him to some people that took him to Egypt. He had to work there for no pay. But God was with Joseph there in Egypt. ¹⁰ Joseph got big trouble there, but God saved him from all that trouble. God helped Joseph to think properly about everything. The big boss of Egypt was called Pharaoh. God showed Pharaoh that Joseph was really good. He made Joseph the boss over all the people in Egypt, and he made him boss over Pharaoh's own big house.

¹¹ After a long time there was a dry time for all those countries. There was no rain, so no food grew in Egypt or in Canaan, the country that our grand-fathers were living in. They had no food and they were very hungry. ¹² Then Jacob heard that there was food in Egypt. So he sent his sons to Egypt to get food. They were our grand-fathers of a long time ago. They met Joseph there but he looked so different that they didn't know him. Then they took that food home.

¹³ After that, Jacob sent them to Egypt again to get more food, and this time Joseph told them, 'I am your brother.' And Pharaoh heard that Joseph had some brothers. ¹⁴ Then Joseph sent his brothers to get his father Jacob, and all his family, to go and live in Egypt. So all 75 of them went to Egypt. ¹⁵ That's the way Jacob and his family went to Egypt, and after that they died there. ¹⁶ Later their grand-kids took their bodies back to the place called Shechem and buried them in a cave. A long time before

that their grand-father Abraham bought that cave from Hamor's family. He paid the full price for that cave."

Stephen talked about Moses

¹⁷ Stephen said to the Jewish council men, "Remember, a long time before that God told Abraham, 'Your family will live in Egypt for a long time.' And when it was almost time for God to bring them back from Egypt, they had lots of kids and grand-kids till they grew into a big mob of people. ¹⁸ Then, a new man became the big boss of Egypt, and he didn't know anything about Joseph. ¹⁹ That big boss tricked our family and was very hard on them. He made our mob throw their baby boys into the river to kill them. ²⁰ Moses was born while that man was the big boss. Moses was a very good little baby, and his mother and father looked after him in their house for 3 months. ²¹ After that they had to leave Moses out at the river, but just then the big boss's daughter came along and found him, and she took him home and called him her own son. ²² So Moses grew up in the big boss's family, and the Egyptian teachers taught him a lot of things. Moses became an important man. He did everything powerfully and he talked powerfully too.

²³ Moses kept living in the big boss's family until he was 40 years old, then one day he went to visit his own people, us Israel mob. ²⁴ While he was there he saw an Egyptian boss beating up an Israel man. So Moses killed that Egyptian boss. ²⁵ Moses reckoned, 'Now my people will understand about me, and God will use me to save them.' But they didn't understand anything about Moses.

²⁶ The next day Moses saw 2 of his own people fighting and he tried to get them to stop fighting. He said, 'You 2 men, you are both family. Why do you hit each other?'

²⁷ But the man that started the fight pushed Moses away.

He said, ‘Nobody said you can be our boss or our judge. ²⁸ Are you going to kill me like you killed that Egyptian man yesterday?’ ²⁹ Moses heard that man’s words and he got really frightened. He thought, ‘Hey, everyone knows that I killed that man. Now I will get big trouble.’ So he ran away from Egypt and went to live in the country called Midian. He didn’t belong to that country, but he got married there and had 2 sons.

³⁰ Moses stayed in Midian country for 40 years. Then one day he was in the desert place near the big hill called Sinai, and God sent one of his angel messengers to him there. Moses saw a little tree that was burning with flames of fire. ³¹ It kept on burning all the time, and Moses was really surprised. He thought, ‘How come?’ He went closer to have a good look at it. Then he heard God talk to him from that fire. God said, ³² ‘I am the God of your grand-fathers, called Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I am their God.’

Moses was so frightened that he started shaking. He was too frightened to look at that little tree any more. ³³ Then God said to him, ‘Moses, take off your shoes. The ground you are standing on is my special ground. ³⁴ Listen, I saw the bosses of Egypt hitting my people. I heard my people crying and groaning, and now I’m going to save them. So now, Moses, you go back to Egypt. I’m sending you back there to save them.’ ”

³⁵ Stephen kept on talking to them. He said, “You see, God’s people didn’t listen to Moses before. They said, ‘Nobody said you can be our boss or our judge.’ But later God sent Moses back to save them, and to be their boss. And God sent his angel messenger to help Moses, the same angel that made that little tree keep burning with fire. ³⁶ So all our people followed Moses out of Egypt. He

did powerful things in Egypt for them to see, and again when they came to the water called the Red Sea he did a powerful thing to let them cross it, and he did great things for them while they walked around in the desert for 40 years.

³⁷ That same man, Moses, said to the people of Israel, ‘God will get one of your own people, and send him to tell you his message. He will be like me.’

³⁸ All our grand-fathers followed Moses together through the desert. And God sent an angel messenger to Moses at the big hill called Sinai, to tell him the good message that has life, and then Moses told our grand-fathers that same message.

³⁹ But our grand-fathers wouldn’t listen to Moses. They didn’t want him to be their leader. They just wanted to go back to Egypt. ⁴⁰ So they told Aaron, ‘Make us statues of gods, and we will get them to lead us back to Egypt. We followed that Moses out from Egypt, but now he is not here. What happened to him? We don’t know.’ ⁴¹ So then they made a statue that looked like a baby cow. They brought money and things to it, and they had a big party to show respect to the thing they made. ⁴² So God turned away from our grand-fathers. He left them, and they showed respect to the sun and the moon and the stars.

Some time later a man that told God’s messages wrote about it in God’s book. He wrote this, ‘You people of Israel, you were in the desert for 40 years, and at that time, did you bring animals to kill and give to me? No, they were not for me.

⁴³ You only respected the god called Molech, and the star god called Rephan. You made statues of them and you carried things around with you to help you respect them.

So listen, I will send you all away from your country, I will send you a really long way away, even past the city called Babylon.’ ”

Stephen talked about God’s house

⁴⁴ Stephen kept on talking to them. He said, “A long time ago our grand-fathers carried God’s special tent with them through the desert. That special tent showed that God was with them all the time. You see, God talked to Moses and showed him a picture of that tent and told him the way to make it.

⁴⁵ Some years later Moses died, and Joshua was their leader. He and our grand-fathers came into this country and they fought against the people that lived here. God made those people run away, and our grand-fathers got this country, and they brought that tent with them into this country, and they kept it here for a long time, until David was their boss.

⁴⁶ God was good to David. And David wanted to build a ceremony house for God. He is the God that all of us Israel people respect. So David asked God to let him build that house. ⁴⁷ But God stopped David and instead it was David’s son, called Solomon, that built God’s ceremony house. ⁴⁸ But, you know, our great God does not live in houses that people build. You see, God got one of his men to write about that in his book. He wrote, ⁴⁹⁻⁵⁰ ‘God says, “I fill up all of heaven. It is my big seat.

And the earth is just big enough to be something for me to rest my feet on.

So what kind of house will you people build for me?

You can’t build a place big enough for me to live in.

You see, I made everything.” ’ ”

Stephen talked strong to the council men

⁵¹ Then Stephen told them straight, he said, “You mob are just like your grand-fathers of long ago. You don’t take any notice of God. You will not listen to him or do anything he says. You will not do anything the Holy Spirit tells you to do. ⁵² God sent men to your grand-fathers to tell them his messages but they beat up God’s men. He got some to say that God will send his really good man to us, but they even killed those messengers from God. Then that really good man came to us, and you mob told the people to kill him. You were the ones that murdered him. ⁵³ You see, even though God sent his angel messengers to your grand-fathers to give you God’s law, you don’t listen, and you will not do anything it says.”

They killed Stephen with stones

⁵⁴ The Jewish council men heard Stephen say this and they got really angry. They were so angry they were grinding their teeth. ⁵⁵ But the Holy Spirit controlled Stephen. He looked up into the sky and he saw God there, shining very bright, and he saw Jesus standing at God’s right side. ⁵⁶ Stephen said, “Look, I can see into heaven. Its door is open, and I can see God’s special man there in heaven. He is standing at God’s right side.”

⁵⁷ The Jewish council men heard this and they yelled out really loud. Then they covered their ears so they couldn’t hear Stephen. They jumped up quick and grabbed him. ⁵⁸ Then they dragged Stephen outside the city and started throwing big stones at him to kill him. And the men that told lies about Stephen took off their coats and gave them to a young man to look after. His name was Saul.

⁵⁹ Those men kept hitting Stephen with big stones. Then he called out, “Jesus, my leader, let my spirit come

to be with you now.” ⁶⁰ Then he went down on to his knees, and he shouted, “Jesus, don’t blame these men for doing this bad thing.” And after he said that, he died.

8

¹⁻³ And that man called Saul agreed with that Jewish council mob. He reckoned it was all right for them to kill Stephen.

Then some good men got Stephen’s body and buried it, and they cried a lot for him.

Saul made trouble for the Christians

But Saul and those other men started making a lot of trouble for the Christians in Jerusalem. They went into the houses of Christians and dragged out the men and women, and locked them up in jail. Saul and his men were trying to finish up the Christian people, that are called the church, so a lot of the Christians ran away from Jerusalem to Judea country and to Samaria country. The only ones that stayed in Jerusalem were the 12 close followers of Jesus.

Philip went to Samaria

⁴ The Christians that ran away from Jerusalem went to a lot of different places, and they told people the good news about Jesus in all those places. ⁵ One of them was Philip. He went to the town called Samaria and told everyone, “Jesus is the special man that God promised to send.” ⁶ A lot of people listened to Philip and thought carefully about his message. And God gave him a lot of power. People saw him do powerful things and everyone knew that God was with him. ⁷ You see, a lot of people had bad spirits in them, and Philip used God’s power to throw those bad spirits out of them. Those bad spirits screamed

as they left those people. Philip also used God's power to make a lot of crippled and weak people better.

⁸ The people in that town were very happy.

⁹ A man called Simon lived in that place, Samaria. He used to do magic tricks. He did these things for a long time before Philip went there. Everyone was surprised by the things he did. He used to say, "I am a great man,"¹⁰ and the people looked at him and said, "This man is really great. He has God's power." The important people said that, as well as the other people.

¹¹ Simon did this for a long time, and everyone there used to listen to him. ¹² But then Philip came and told them the good news about Jesus, and about God's family, and he told them that God sent Jesus Christ to save people. A lot of men and women listened to Philip and believed in Jesus, and then Philip baptised them. ¹³ Simon believed in Jesus too, so Philip baptised him. After that Simon followed Philip everywhere and watched him doing powerful things. Simon was very surprised by those powerful things that Philip did.

¹⁴⁻¹⁷ But at that time the Holy Spirit didn't go into any of those Samaria people. Philip only baptised the people to show they belonged to Jesus. Then the close followers of Jesus in Jerusalem heard that the people in Samaria believed God's word, so they sent Peter and John to Samaria. After those 2 men got there, they put their hands on the people that believed in Jesus, and prayed for them. Then the Holy Spirit came into those people.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ Simon watched Peter and John. He saw them put their hands on people, and he saw the Holy Spirit go into those people. So Simon said to Peter, "Let me have that power too. I will pay you money if you give me that power,

so that if I put my hands on people the Holy Spirit will go into them.”

²⁰⁻²¹ But Peter said to him, “You think you can buy God’s power with money, but you are wrong. No way. God can see that you are not thinking the right way. You are just thinking about money. If you are like that you can’t be with us. Look out, God can finish you up, and finish up your money too. ²² Stop thinking in that really bad way. Turn around and think God’s way. Pray to him and ask him to not punish you for thinking like that. ²³ I can see that you are jealous, and you want to do bad things, and those bad things are controlling you.”

²⁴ Then Simon said to Peter, “Pray to God for me so that he will not punish me, and those things you said will not happen to me.”

²⁵ After that Peter and John told the people there more of the message about Jesus. Then they left that town to go back to Jerusalem. They went through a lot of little towns along that road in Samaria country. They told the good news about Jesus to the people in all those towns.

Philip talked to a man from Ethiopia

²⁶ While Philip was there at Samaria one of God’s angel messengers came to him and said, “Get ready and go south along the desert road, you know, the road that goes from Jerusalem to the town called Gaza.” ²⁷ So Philip got ready and went to that road, and he saw a man from Ethiopia country sitting in a wagon, going along that road. That man worked for the queen of Ethiopia. Her name was Candace. That man was one of her important workers. He looked after all her money. But he had a break from that work and went to Jerusalem to show respect to God, and then he started to go back home along that road. ²⁸ Philip saw him sitting in his wagon and he

was reading God's book. He was reading the part that God's man, called Isaiah, wrote a long time ago. ²⁹ Then the Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Catch up with that wagon and walk along beside it."

³⁰ So Philip ran up close to the wagon and he heard that man reading from Isaiah's book. Philip asked him, "Can you understand that book you are reading?" ³¹ The Ethiopian man said, "No, I don't understand it. I need somebody to help me." Then he asked Philip to climb up into the wagon and sit beside him. ³² He was reading this part of God's book,

"Some people led him away to kill him,
just like men lead a sheep away to kill it,
but he was quiet and didn't say anything.
You know the way a sheep is quiet and doesn't make a
noise

while men cut off all its wool,
well, he was quiet, just like that.

³³ Men shamed him, and they didn't give him a proper trial in court.

Then they killed him, so he can't have any kids."

³⁴ And the Ethiopian man said to Philip, "Who was Isaiah talking about? Was he talking about himself or somebody else?" ³⁵ Then Philip told him the meaning of those words in God's book. And from there he kept on talking and told that Ethiopian man the good news about Jesus.

³⁶⁻³⁷ They kept going along the road and came to some water. The Ethiopian man said, "Look. There is some water. Can you baptise me now?" ³⁸ So he told the driver of the wagon to stop. That man and Philip went down into the water, and Philip baptised him.

³⁹ After they came up out of the water the Holy Spirit quickly took Philip away. The Ethiopian man never saw

him again, but he was really happy and he kept going on his way home.

⁴⁰ But Philip was in a different place, called Azotus. Philip told the people there the good news about Jesus. Then he left that town and started walking north. He told the good news about Jesus to the people in all the towns along the way, until he came to the town called Caesarea, and he stayed there.

9

Saul kept on making trouble

¹⁻² At that time Saul was still making trouble for Jesus's followers. He was telling them, "I'm going to hurt you and kill you." He went to the big boss of the Jewish ceremonies and asked him, "Will you write letters for me to take to the Jewish people in the town called Damascus? Tell them that you want me to grab anyone there that belongs to that mob called the Jesus Way. I will grab those men, and women too, and tie them up, and bring them back to Jerusalem for you to punish them." So that big boss wrote a letter like that and gave it to Saul.

Jesus changed Saul

³ Then Saul got some men and they went along the road to Damascus. As they got close to that town, suddenly a bright light from heaven shone down on Saul, and it shone all around him. ⁴ He fell down on to the ground, and he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul. Saul. Why are you making trouble for me and hurting me?"

⁵ Saul asked, "Who are you, Boss?"

And that voice said, "I am Jesus. You are making trouble for me and hurting me. ⁶ But get up and go into the town. Somebody there will tell you what to do."

⁷ The men that were with Saul stood there. They heard that voice, but they couldn't see anyone. They were so shocked they couldn't say anything. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes, but he couldn't see. He was blind. So the men held his hand and took him into Damascus. ⁹ He was blind for 3 days, and he didn't eat anything or drink anything.

¹⁰ There was a man called Ananias that lived in Damascus. He believed in Jesus. While Ananias was awake he had like a dream. He heard Jesus say to him, "Ananias."

And Ananias, said, "Yes, Jesus, I'm here."

¹¹ And Jesus said to him, "I want you to get up and go to Straight Street, to the house that Judas lives in, and find a man there from the town called Tarsus. His name is Saul, and he is praying to me right now. ¹² He had like a dream, and he saw you, and he heard your name Ananias, and he saw you come and put your hands on him, to make him see again."

¹³ But Ananias said, "What? Hey, Jesus, people have told me about that man called Saul. He's a properly cheeky man. He hurt your people in Jerusalem and did a lot of bad things to them. ¹⁴ And the leaders of the Jewish ceremonies told him he can grab all the people here that believe in you, and take them to jail. He came here now to do just that."

¹⁵ But Jesus said to Ananias, "Don't worry. Go to him anyway. You see, I picked that man to be my special worker. He will tell a lot of people about me. He will tell Jewish people about me, and he will even tell those people that are not Jews about me. And he will tell the bosses of their countries about me too. ¹⁶ I will show him that some people will not like him talking about me, so they will give him big trouble and hurt him."

¹⁷ So Ananias got up and went to that house that Judas lived in, and he went inside, and he put his hands on Saul, and he said, “Brother Saul. You saw Jesus on the road as you were coming here. Well, he has sent me so that you can see again, and the Holy Spirit will come into you and fill you.” ¹⁸ Then something like fish scales, or like finger nails, they fell down from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up, and they baptised him. ¹⁹ Then he ate some food and he got strong again.

Saul told the people in Damascus about Jesus

Saul stayed in Damascus for a few days with the people that followed Jesus. ²⁰ Straight away he started talking to the Jews in their meeting places. He told them, “Jesus is God’s son.” ²¹ All the Jews that heard him were really shocked. They said, “Hey, this man has really changed. He’s the man that really hurt the people in Jerusalem that followed Jesus. And he came here to grab the people that follow Jesus here. He was going to tie them up with chains and take them back to the Jewish bosses in Jerusalem.”

²² But Saul told those people about Jesus, and he got better and better at talking to them. The Jews in Damascus argued with him, but he showed them that Jesus really is the man that God promised to send. Those Jews couldn’t show that he was wrong, and they got worried and upset.

²³⁻²⁴ After that some Jews talked with each other about killing Saul. There was a big wall around that town with some gates in it. Every day and every night the Jews watched those gates. They thought they might see Saul going out of the town, and then they will catch him and kill him. But somebody told Saul about them. ²⁵ So the new Christians helped Saul get away. They got a big

basket and they took Saul to that big wall in the night. They went up high to a hole in that wall. Then they tied ropes to the basket and put Saul in it, and lowered it down through that hole, down to the ground outside the wall. Then Saul got out of the basket and ran away.

²⁶ After that Saul went to Jerusalem and tried to join with the people there that followed Jesus. But they didn't believe that he followed Jesus too. They were afraid of him, so they kept away from him. They didn't let him join with them.

²⁷ But a Christian man called Barnabas listened to Saul and took him to the close followers of Jesus and told them Paul's story. He said, "On the way to Damascus, Saul saw our leader, Jesus, and Jesus talked to him. After that Saul told the people in Damascus about Jesus. He wasn't afraid of them." ²⁸ Those church leaders in Jerusalem believed Barnabas, so Saul stayed there with them and let the Jerusalem people see him with them. He talked to everyone about Jesus and wasn't afraid of anyone.

²⁹ There were some Jewish people in Jerusalem that talked the Greek language. Saul told them to believe in Jesus, but they argued with him. Then they got upset and tried to kill him. ³⁰ The Christians heard about this, so they took Saul to the town called Caesarea and put him on a ship, and sent him back to his home town, called Tarsus.

³¹ Then, at last, everything settled down and was quiet for the Christians in the churches in Judea, Galilee and Samaria countries. They respected their leader Jesus more, and they followed him more properly, and the Holy Spirit helped them feel strong, so that more people joined them and believed in Jesus.

Peter went to Lydda and Joppa

³² After that, Peter went around visiting God's people that lived in Judea country, and he went to the town called Lydda. ³³ He met a man there called Aeneas. About 8 years before that time Aeneas got crippled. He couldn't move, so he just lay in bed for 8 years till Peter came along. ³⁴ Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ makes you better. Get up and roll up your mat." Aeneas got better right then, and he stood up. ³⁵ All the people in Lydda saw him, and the other people in that flat country called Sharon, they all saw him too, and a lot of them changed their ways and believed in Jesus.

³⁶ There was a woman called Tabitha that lived in a town called Joppa. She was a follower of Jesus. (Her name in the Greek language was Dorcas.) She always did good things and helped poor people. ³⁷ But she got sick and died. The Christian people washed her body and put it in a room upstairs in her house. ³⁸ Joppa was near Lydda, and the people in Joppa that followed Jesus heard that Peter was in Lydda. So they sent 2 men to Lydda and they asked him, "Please come to Joppa with us right now."

³⁹ So Peter went with those 2 men. After he got there the Christians took him to the house and then they all went upstairs. They stood there with Peter, and the widows cried and showed him the shirts and other clothes that Dorcas made for them while she was still alive.

⁴⁰ Peter told everyone to go outside. Then he got down on his knees, to show respect to God, and he prayed, then he turned and looked at the body, and said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, then she saw Peter and sat up. ⁴¹ Peter held out his hand for her and helped her to stand up. Then he called God's people and the widows to come, and he showed them that Tabitha was alive. ⁴² The people that saw this started telling other people about it,

and soon everybody in Joppa heard that story, and a lot of people believed in our leader Jesus.

⁴³ Peter stayed in Joppa for a long time. He lived with a man called Simon that was a leather worker.

10

An angel messenger came to a Roman soldier

¹⁻² There was a boss in the Roman army called Cornelius. He was in the part of the Roman army called the Italian Unit. He lived in the town called Caesarea. He and his family lived good lives, and they respected God. Cornelius gave a lot of money and things to poor people, and he prayed to God every day.

³ One afternoon at 3 o'clock he was praying, and it was like he had a dream, but he was not asleep, he was awake. He saw an angel messenger from God coming to him and calling his name, "Cornelius."

⁴ Cornelius looked at the angel and was afraid of him. He asked him, "What do you want, boss?"

The angel said, "Cornelius, God heard you praying and saw you give money and things to the poor people. It is like you gave those things and money to God, so God is thinking about you. ⁵ So send some men to Joppa to find a man called Simon Peter. ⁶ He is staying with a leather worker called Simon. His house is near the sea. Tell your men to get Peter and bring him back to you."

⁷ The angel finished talking with Cornelius and went away. Then Cornelius called 2 of the men that worked in his house, and one of the soldiers that looked after him. That soldier respected God too. ⁸ Cornelius told them everything that happened and then he told them to go to Joppa and get Peter.

Peter had like a dream while he was still awake

⁹ The next day, about the middle of the day, those men were walking along and getting near to Joppa. At that same time Peter went up on to the flat roof of the house to pray. ¹⁰ He started feeling hungry and he wanted something to eat, but he waited and prayed while the people in the house were getting some food ready. Then Peter had like a dream, but he was still awake. ¹¹⁻¹² He saw the sky open up, then he saw something like a big sheet. Somebody was holding on to the 4 corners of that sheet, and there was something in the middle of it. It was coming down from the sky to the ground. There were all kinds of animals in it, and lizards, and snakes, and birds. (Their Jewish law said, “Don’t eat those kinds of animals, they are no good.”) ¹³ Then a voice said to Peter, “Get up, Peter. Kill some of those animals and eat them.”

¹⁴ But Peter said, “No, boss. I can’t do that. Our Jewish law says we can’t eat that kind of animal. They are no good, so I never eat any of them.”

¹⁵ Then the voice said to Peter, “If God says that something is good, don’t say it is no good.”

¹⁶ That happened 3 times. Each time that voice told Peter to eat one of those animals, and each time Peter said, “No,” and each time the voice said, “If God says that something is good, don’t say it is no good.” Then that sheet went back up into the sky. ¹⁷ Peter sat there and thought, “What does this mean? What is God telling me?”

While Peter was still trying to understand it, those 3 men from Cornelius walked into that town, Joppa. They asked people, “Where does Simon live, the leather worker man?” Then they stood outside at the gate of that house ¹⁸ and asked, “Is Simon Peter here?”

¹⁹ At that same time, Peter was thinking about what he just saw, and the Holy Spirit said to him, “Listen, 3 men are down at the gate. They are looking for you. ²⁰ So get

up and go down to them. You see, I sent them to you, so just go with them. Don't worry."

²¹ Peter went down and said to the men, "Hey, I'm the man you are looking for. Why did you come here?"

²² They said, "Cornelius sent us. He is a boss in the Roman army. He is a good man and he respects God. All the Jews say he is a good man too. God sent one of his angel messengers to Cornelius and told him to ask you to come to his house and talk to him."

²³ So Peter asked them to come in and stay there that night.

Peter went to the Roman soldier's house

The next morning Peter got up and went with those men. Some of the Joppa Christians went with him too. They had to camp one night along the road. ²⁴ The next day Cornelius called all his relatives and close friends to come to his house in Caesarea, and about 3 o'clock that day Peter and his mob came and found them waiting there.

²⁵ Peter started to go into the house, and Cornelius met him and got down on to his knees in front of Peter, to show him respect. ²⁶ But Peter lifted him up and said, "Stand up. I'm only a man, like you." ²⁷ Peter kept talking with Cornelius, then they went into the house, and Peter saw a lot of people there. ²⁸ He said to them, "You know that the Jewish law teachers reckon that people that aren't Jews are no good, so a Jew shouldn't go into their house. But God showed me that I shouldn't say that anyone is no good. He showed me that it is all right for me to visit you. ²⁹ Then these men came and asked me to come here, so I didn't talk back. I came here with them. Now, please tell me, why did you ask me to come here?"

³⁰ Cornelius said, “4 days ago I was praying in my house at 3 o’clock in the afternoon. Suddenly I saw a man wearing bright shining clothes standing in front of me. ³¹ And he said to me, ‘Cornelius, God heard you pray and he knows that you give money and things to the poor people. ³² So send some men to Joppa and tell them to get Simon Peter and bring him back here. He is staying in a leather worker’s house, whose name is Simon. His house is near the sea. ³³ So right away I sent those men to bring you here. Thank you for coming. God can see us all here. We are ready to hear everything that he told you to say to us.”

Peter told the Romans about Jesus

³⁴ Then Peter started telling them his message. He said, “Now I really understand that God treats everyone the same. ³⁵ If anyone respects God and does the right thing, God will let them come to him, and he will listen to them. It doesn’t matter if they are Jews, or if they belong to another tribe.

³⁶ This is the message that God sent to the Israel people, that Jesus Christ can make all of us friends with God. You see, Jesus is the boss over everybody. ³⁷ Listen, you know the things that happened, first in Galilee country, and then in Judea country. At first John the Baptist told the people to turn to God, ³⁸ then God gave the Holy Spirit and power to Jesus, a man from the town called Nazareth. God was with Jesus, and he went everywhere doing good things. Some people were sick, and the devil was giving them big trouble. But Jesus made them better.

³⁹ We went around with Jesus and saw all the things that he did, in the Jewish people’s country, and in Jerusalem city. But then his enemies killed him. They nailed him to a cross. ⁴⁰ But after 3 days God made him

alive again, and God let people see him alive. ⁴¹ Not everybody saw him alive, but we saw him. We even ate and drank with him. So God picked us to tell other people about him. ⁴² Jesus told us to tell them that one day God will take everybody to a big court and Jesus will be the judge. He will judge everybody that is alive, and he will judge everybody that is dead too.

⁴³ You see, a long time ago God sent his men to tell his messages, and they all talked about Jesus. They said that if anyone believes in him, God will not blame them for the wrong things they did.”

The Holy Spirit went into people that were not Jews

⁴⁴ While Peter was still talking, the Holy Spirit came down and went into all the people that were listening to him. ⁴⁵ Peter’s mob there were Jewish Christians, and they were surprised to see God give his Holy Spirit freely to people that were not Jews. ⁴⁶ You see, they heard that mob talk in different languages and say that God is great, so they knew that God gave them his spirit.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ “God gave the Holy Spirit to these people too, just like he gave him to us. Now nobody can stop us from baptising them in water, can they?” ⁴⁸ So he told the Christians there, “Baptise them, to show that they follow Jesus, the one God sent to save people.”

Then those people asked Peter to stay with them for a few more days.

11

Peter told the Jewish Christians about the thing God showed him

¹ The close followers of Jesus and the other Christians in Judea heard about Peter’s visit to Caesarea, and they

heard that some people in Caesarea believed God's word, even though they were not Jews. ² After Peter got back to Jerusalem some of the Jewish Christians growled at him. ³ They said, "You went into the house of people that are not Jews, and you even ate food with them."

⁴ Then Peter told them all the things that happened. ⁵ He said, "I was in the town called Joppa and I was praying, and I had like a dream, but I was still awake. I saw something like a big sheet with things in it. Somebody was holding on to the 4 corners and they let it come down from heaven to me, on the ground. ⁶ I looked inside it and saw all kinds of animals, and lizards, and snakes, and birds. ⁷ Then I heard a voice say to me, 'Get up Peter. Kill some of those animals and eat them.' ⁸ But I said, 'No, boss. I will not. Our law says we can't eat that kind of animal. They are no good, so I never eat any of them.'

⁹ Then I heard that voice from heaven again. It said, 'If God says that something is good, don't say it is no good.' ¹⁰ That happened 3 times, and then that sheet and everything in it went back up into heaven.

¹¹ Just then 3 men came to the house I was staying in. They came from Caesarea. ¹² The Holy Spirit told me, 'Don't worry, just go with those men.' So I went with them, and these 6 other men here, they went with me too. We got there and went into a man's house. ¹³⁻¹⁴ That man told us that he saw an angel in his house. The angel said, 'Simon Peter has a message for you, so send somebody to Joppa to get him. He will tell you the way God can save you, and your family, and everyone else in your house too.'

¹⁵ I started talking to those people and then the Holy Spirit came into them. It was just like the first time that he came into us. ¹⁶ And I remembered that our

leader Jesus said, ‘John baptised people with water but God will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷ You know, we believed in our leader Jesus Christ and God gave us the Holy Spirit. And now those people that are not Jews, believe in Jesus too, and God gave them the Holy Spirit too, just like he gave him to us. So, you see, I couldn’t try to stop God, could I? No way.”

¹⁸ The Jewish Christians heard Peter say that, and they stopped growling at him. They started to thank God and say he is really good. They said, “Now we understand it. God will let anyone come to him, even people that are not Jews, and after they turn away from doing bad and come to him, he will give them new life that never stops. God is so good.”

The Christian people in Antioch got strong

¹⁹ Before this, at the time when some men killed Stephen, they wanted to kill the rest of the Christians too. So a lot of Christians ran away from Jerusalem, and went a long way, even to other countries. They told people in those places the message about Jesus, but they only told it to their own countrymen, the Jews. Some of those Christians went to Phoenicia country, and some to the island called Cyprus, and some to the town called Antioch.

²⁰ But some of them, men that belonged to Cyprus and the town called Cyrene, they went to Antioch and didn’t just talk only to Jews. They talked to Greek people too, and told them the good news about our leader Jesus. ²¹ God helped them tell his message, and a lot of people that were not Jews believed in Jesus and followed him.

²² The Christians in the church in Jerusalem heard about these things happening at Antioch, so they sent one of their men called Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ He got there, and he saw everything that was happening, then he knew

that God was very good to those people in Antioch, so he was very happy. He told those new Christians, “Stay strong for Jesus and keep following him all the time.”²⁴ Barnabas was a good man. The Holy Spirit controlled him and he really trusted God. He got lots more people there to follow Jesus.

²⁵ After that Barnabas left Antioch and went to the town called Tarsus to look for Saul. ²⁶ He found Saul there and took him back to Antioch. They stayed there for a whole year, and they met with the Christians in the church there, and they kept teaching them. A lot of people there followed Jesus, and it was in Antioch that other people first used the name Christians for the people that followed Jesus Christ.

The Antioch Christians helped the Judea Christians

²⁷ At that time some Christian men came from Jerusalem to Antioch. They had the power to tell God’s messages. ²⁸ One of those men was called Agabus. He stood up in a meeting, and the Holy Spirit told him a message to tell everybody. He said, “There is going to be a very hard time for all the people in the world. There will be no food to eat anywhere.” (And that really happened when the big Roman boss was Claudius.)²⁹⁻³⁰ The Christians in Antioch heard Agabus tell that message, and they remembered the Christians in Judea. They knew the Judea people will have a very hard time if there was not much food, and the Antioch Christians wanted to help them. So they all put money into a bag. Each of them gave as much money as they could. Then they gave it to Barnabas and Saul, and those 2 men took it to the Christian leaders in Jerusalem, in Judea country.

12

The big boss killed a follower of Jesus, called James

¹ At that time the big boss, called Herod, told his soldiers to grab some of the Christians. ² One of them was James. He, and his young brother called John, were both close followers of Jesus. Herod told his soldiers to kill James with a big knife.

³ The Jewish leaders told Herod that they were happy for him to kill James, so Herod told his soldiers to grab Peter too. They grabbed him at the time for the Jewish people to have their ceremony where they ate flat damper. ⁴ Herod thought, "I will wait until the end of that ceremony, then I will judge Peter and kill him." So they put Peter in jail, and Herod told 16 soldiers to guard him there. Those soldiers were in 4 little mobs, with 4 soldiers in each little mob.

⁵ Peter stayed there in jail, and the other Christians prayed for him a lot.

Peter walked out of the jail

⁶ That Jewish ceremony was almost finished, and Herod was going to judge Peter the next day, but that night he was still in jail there. There was one soldier on each side of Peter, and they tied each of his hands with chains to those soldiers. Peter was asleep in between them. Other soldiers stood at the gate of the jail.

⁷ Suddenly, there was a bright light in that jail cell, and one of God's angel messengers came and stood in front of Peter. That angel hit him on the side to wake him up, and said, "Quick. Get up." And the chains fell off Peter's hands. ⁸ Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and put on your shoes." So Peter did that, then the angel said, "Now put on your coat and follow me."

⁹ So Peter followed the angel, and they just walked out of that jail cell. Peter was not sure that all these things were true. He thought, “Maybe I’m dreaming. Maybe this is not really happening to me.”

¹⁰ Peter and the angel walked past the 1st mob of soldiers in that jail, then they walked past the 2nd mob of soldiers. After that they came to the big iron gate in the outside wall of the jail. That gate just opened by itself in front of them, and they walked out of the jail into the city street. They walked together along that street, and then suddenly the angel left Peter and went away.

¹¹ Then Peter woke up properly. He said to himself, “Now I know that this is true. I’m not dreaming. God did send one of his angels to save me. That big boss Herod and the Jewish leaders wanted to hurt me, but God saved me from them.” ¹² Peter thought about this, then he went to Mary’s house. She was the mother of a man called John Mark. A lot of Christians were praying for Peter there in her house.

¹³ Peter knocked on the door of that house. A working girl called Rhoda came to the door, ¹⁴ but she didn’t open it. She heard his voice and knew it was Peter, and she was so happy she just ran back into the house and told all the people, “Peter is here, standing outside the door.”

¹⁵ Those people said, “You are mad.” But she kept telling them that Peter really was there. Then they said, “It can’t be him. It has to be the angel that looks after him.”

¹⁶ But Peter kept on knocking on that door. After a little while they stopped arguing and opened the door and saw him, and they were really surprised. ¹⁷ Peter held up his hand to get them to be quiet, then he told them the story, about the way God got him out of that jail. Then he said,

“Tell this story to the other Christians, and make sure you tell it to that other man called James too.” Then he left them and went to another place.

¹⁸ After the sun came up the soldiers were really upset and worried. They were all saying things like, “Hey, what happened to Peter? Who let him get away?” ¹⁹ Then Herod told them all to look everywhere to find him. But they didn’t find him. So Herod judged those 16 soldiers. He asked them some questions, then he told the other soldiers to kill them.

After that Herod left Judea country and went to stay for a while in the town called Caesarea.

The big boss called Herod died

²⁰⁻²¹ At that time Herod was very angry with the people that lived in the towns called Tyre and Sidon. This made a problem for those people. You see, Herod was the boss of Galilee country and those people got all their food from Galilee, and they didn’t want Herod to stop them from getting that food. So some of them went to Herod’s house to talk to him about this problem. At Herod’s house a man called Blastus was one of his important workers, so those men talked to Blastus and said, “Please help us get a chance to talk with Herod. We want to stop all this trouble.” So Blastus got Herod to agree to talk to those people, and Herod told them the day for that talk.

On that day Herod put on his special clothes, and he sat in his special seat, to show everyone that he is the big boss of that country. And then he talked to all the people. ²² Those people all wanted to make him happy so they shouted, “This is not a man talking. He is a god.”

²³ Herod liked their talk. He didn’t tell them that he is only a man, and that God is the great and powerful one. So then one of God’s angels hit Herod to punish him. That

angel got worms to eat the inside of Herod's body, and he died.

²⁴ At the same time the Christians kept on telling everybody about Jesus, so a big mob of people heard God's word, and a lot of them started to believe in Jesus.

The Holy Spirit picked Barnabas and Saul for a special job

²⁵ After that, Barnabas and Saul finished their job at Jerusalem, so they got up and went back to Antioch. And they took John Mark with them.

13

¹ There were some good Christians in the church in the town called Antioch. They were men that told God's messages and taught God's word to people. They were Barnabas, and Simeon (his other name was Niger), and Lucius from the land called Cyrene, and Manaen (he grew up with the big boss called Herod), and Saul. ² Those men had a special time when they stopped eating any food for a while and they prayed to God. At that time the Holy Spirit said to them, "Pick out Barnabas and Saul for me now. I have special work for them to do." ³ So those men kept on praying and not eating any food for a bit longer, then they put their hands on Barnabas and Saul, and prayed for them, and told them, "You can go now and do God's work."

Barnabas and Saul went to Cyprus island

⁴ The Holy Spirit told Barnabas and Saul the way to go, so they went to the town called Seleucia, and then they got on a ship and sailed to the island called Cyprus. ⁵ They took John Mark with them to help them in their work. They got off the ship at a town called Salamis, and they

went to the Jewish meeting houses and told the people God's message about Jesus.

⁶⁻⁸ Barnabas, Saul and John Mark went over to the other side of the island, to the town called Paphos. The Roman boss of the island lived there. His name was Sergius Paulus. He had a good head, and he wanted to hear God's message, so he sent men to bring Barnabas and Saul to him. (Saul had another name. They called him Paul.) There was a Jewish man there that worked for Sergius Paulus. His Jewish name was Bar-Jesus, and his Greek name was Elymas. He was a magic man, and he used to reckon that he was telling people God's messages, but he was lying.

Elymas tried to stop Barnabas and Paul from telling God's message to Sergius Paulus. He kept telling his Roman boss, "Don't listen to them." ⁹ But the Holy Spirit was with Paul, and gave him power. He looked straight at Elymas ¹⁰ and said, "You are just like the devil. You are full of lies and bad tricks. You try to stop everything that is good. You try to change God's true story and you lie about him, trying to trick people. Are you ever going to stop doing that? ¹¹ God will punish you now. He will make you blind and you will not see the sunlight for a while." Suddenly Elymas felt himself going blind, and he walked around asking somebody to hold his hand and lead him.

¹² The Roman boss saw all that happen, and he heard everything Paul said about our leader Jesus. He thought, "Wow. This is different, and it's really good." So he believed in Jesus.

Paul and Barnabas went to another town called Antioch

¹³ Paul and his friends got on a ship and left Paphos, on Cyprus Island, and they sailed to the town called Perga,

in the country called Pamphylia. Then John Mark got up and left them there, and went back to Jerusalem.

¹⁴ And Paul and Barnabas went on from Perga to another town called Antioch, in the country called Pisidia. Then on Saturday, the day the Jews get together to show respect to God, Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish meeting house and sat down with the men there. ¹⁵ Some of the leaders in that meeting read from God's book. They read words from the Law that Moses wrote, and they read other words that God's men wrote. Then the leaders asked Paul and Barnabas, "Friends, do you have something to say that will help the people here? If you do, tell us."

Paul told the Antioch people the message about Jesus

¹⁶ So Paul stood up and lifted up his hand to get the people to listen to him. He said, "All you Jewish men and all you other people that respect God, listen to me.

¹⁷ A long time ago the God of us Jewish people picked our grand-fathers of long ago to be his own people. They went to the country called Egypt to live, and while they were there, God made them strong, and they had a lot of kids. So they became a really big mob of people. Then God used his great power and took them out of that country.

¹⁸ Then they were in the desert country for 40 years. Sometimes they didn't listen to God, but he looked after them anyway. ¹⁹ Then they came to the country called Canaan, and God helped them fight against 7 different tribes, and they won. They killed all their enemies, and God gave that country to his own people to keep.

²⁰ All of that took about 450 years. Then God picked leaders to look after them, until the time that Samuel was their leader. He was a man that told God's messages to the people. ²¹ Samuel was their leader, but the people asked

him to get a man to be their big boss, and God gave them a man called Saul. He was the son of a man called Kish. Saul belonged to the Benjamin tribe, and he was their big boss for 40 years.

²² Then God stopped Saul from being their big boss, and God picked David, and made him the big boss of the Israel people. And God said this, 'Look at this man, David, the son of Jesse. He is a man that makes me happy. He will do everything that I want him to do.' ²³ And God promised that a man from David's family will come to save us Israel people. And now that man has come. His name is Jesus.

²⁴ But before Jesus came, a man called John came and talked to us Israel people. He said, 'Stop doing bad things. Turn around. Turn back to God, and then I will baptise you.' ²⁵ And John said, 'Who do you reckon I am? Do you think I'm that special man that God promised to send? No way. He will come later. I am nothing. I'm not good enough to touch his feet or untie his shoes.' That's what John told everyone when he was finishing his work.

²⁶ Listen, friends. Some of you are Jews that belong to our grand-father Abraham's family, and some of you are not Jews but you respect our God. All of you listen to this message that God sent to us. It is about the way God wants to save us. ²⁷ A long time ago the men that told God's words to people wrote those words in his book. They said that God will send a special man, but people will kill him. And people read those words from God's book in their meetings every Saturday, but they don't understand them. The people in Jerusalem and their leaders didn't know that Jesus was that special man, and they said, 'We have to kill him.' ²⁸ So, even though he didn't do anything wrong, they asked the judge, Pilate, to kill him anyway.

²⁹ In that way Jesus died, just like those men wrote in God's book.

And after they killed Jesus they took him down from the cross and put him into a grave. ³⁰ But then God made Jesus alive again. ³¹ Then Jesus's followers saw him a lot of times. They were the mob from Galilee country that came to Jerusalem with him. And now those people are telling everyone about Jesus.

³² And we are telling you the same good news about Jesus. You see, a long time ago God promised our grand-fathers that he will do something good for them, ³³ and now God did it for us, their grand-kids. He made Jesus alive again. You see, we can read it in God's book, in the part called Psalm number 2. We can read that God said, 'You are my son.

Now people will know that I am your Father.'

³⁴ You see, God made Jesus alive, and he will never rot in the grave. We know this is right because we can read that God told his son, 'I made special promises to David, and I'm making those same promises to you.'

³⁵ And there is another psalm that David wrote, and in it God said, 'You will not let your special person rot in the grave.'

³⁶ But God was not saying that about David. You see, at that time, David lived for God, and then he died, and people buried him next to his grand-fathers. His body rotted in that grave. ³⁷ But Jesus's body didn't rot in a grave. God made him alive again. So God didn't say those words about David. He said them about Jesus.

³⁸⁻³⁹ You see, my friends I'm telling you this message. Jesus died for us, so if we believe in him God will not say we are guilty for the bad things we did. The law that

Moses gave us can't make us right and good, so that God will not say we are guilty. But if anyone believes in Jesus, God will make them right and good. ⁴⁰⁻⁴¹ A long time ago God got some of his men to tell people this. They wrote in his book,

'Listen. You people make fun of God, but I will do something that you will not believe, even if somebody tells you about it. You will be really shocked, and then you will die.'

So you people be careful. Don't be like those people that God's men wrote about." That is the message that Paul told the people in that meeting in Antioch.

⁴²⁻⁴³ Then the meeting finished, and Paul and Barnabas started to go out of that meeting house. Some of the people asked them, "Can you come back the next Saturday and tell us more about those things?" And a lot of Jews and other people that respected God followed Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas talked with them and told them to keep on trusting God, and keep letting him help them.

⁴⁴ The next Saturday nearly all the people in that town came together to hear God's message about Jesus. ⁴⁵ But the Jewish leaders saw those big mobs of people and they got really jealous. They started saying bad things to the people about Paul, and they said, "Paul is telling lies. His message about Jesus is not true."

⁴⁶ Paul and Barnabas were not frightened of them. They said, "God sent us to tell his message to you Jews first. But you wouldn't listen to it, and that shows us that you don't want to live for ever with God. So now we will tell that message to people that are not Jews. ⁴⁷ You see, God told us to do this. It's in God's book. He said,

'I gave you this job, to be like a light for the people that are not Jews.

You will tell people everywhere in the world that I can save them.' ”

⁴⁸ Those people that were not Jews heard these words and they were very happy. They said, “Thank you God for this message. It is really good.” And a lot of people there believed in Jesus. You see, a long time before this God picked those people to live with him for ever. ⁴⁹ And those people told God’s message about Jesus to other people, and a lot of people all over that country heard that word from God.

⁵⁰ But the Jewish leaders made trouble for Paul and Barnabas. There were some important women in that town that were not Jews but they respected God. And there were some important men there too. The Jewish leaders said bad things to them about Paul and Barnabas, so that they made big trouble for them. They made so much trouble that Paul and Barnabas had to leave that place. ⁵¹ As they left they shook the dust off their feet to show those Jews that they were wrong. Then Paul and Barnabas went to the town called Iconium. ⁵² But those people in Antioch that believed in Jesus were very happy, and they kept on letting the Holy Spirit control them.

14

Paul and Barnabas told the Iconium people about Jesus

¹⁻³ The same thing happened in the town called Iconium. Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish teaching house and they talked strongly about Jesus to the people there. They stayed in Iconium a long time telling people about Jesus, and they were not frightened of anyone. God helped Paul and Barnabas do powerful things, and this showed that they were telling the true story about Jesus,

that he is very good to people. And a big mob of people believed everything Paul and Barnabas told them. Some of them were Jews and some were not Jews. But some other Jews didn't believe in Jesus and they talked to some local men and got them to hate the Christians. ⁴ The people of Iconium split up into 2 mobs. One mob reckoned Paul and Barnabas were right and the other mob reckoned the Jews that didn't believe in Jesus were right.

⁵ Then some of those people, and their leaders, talked with each other about hurting Paul and Barnabas and killing them with stones. Some of that mob were Jews, and some were not Jews. ⁶ But somebody told Paul and Barnabas what they wanted to do, so Paul and Barnabas ran away to the country called Lycaonia. They went to the towns called Lystra and Derbe, and to the country around those towns, ⁷ and they told people the good news about Jesus.

Paul got Jesus to make a crippled man better

⁸ In Lystra there was a man that was born crippled. He never walked in his life. ⁹ He was sitting there listening to Paul talking to the people. Paul looked straight at him, and then Paul knew that this man believed that Jesus can make him better. ¹⁰ So Paul shouted at him, "Stand up on your feet." And the man jumped up and started to walk around. ¹¹ A big mob of people saw Paul do that, and they yelled out in their own Lycaonian language, "The gods turned themselves into men and they came here to us." ¹² And those people reckoned Barnabas was their god called Zeus and they reckoned Paul was their god called Hermes, because Paul did all the talking. ¹³ There was a house for Zeus just outside the town, and there was a man there that looked after the ceremonies for Zeus. That man, with all the people, got some bulls and some flowers,

and took them to the gates of the town. They wanted to show respect to Paul and Barnabas, just like they always showed respect to their gods. They were going to kill those bulls for them, and they were going to give them the flowers too. ¹⁴ But somebody told Paul and Barnabas what they wanted to do, and then Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes to show them they were upset, and they ran into the crowd of people. They shouted, ¹⁵ “Hey, you fellows, what are you doing? Why are you doing this? We are just men, like you. We are telling you good news, and we are saying that you have to stop showing respect to things that are not the true God. You have to turn around and follow the God that is alive. He made the sky and the earth and the sea and everything in them. ¹⁶ And he let the people in every country go their own way, up till now, ¹⁷ but he still shows them that he is the only real God. He always did good things for them, and he does good things for you too. He gives you rain and makes your food grow so that you can be happy.” ¹⁸ Paul and Barnabas kept talking to the people like that. The people still wanted to kill the bulls for them, but at last they listened to Paul and Barnabas and they didn’t kill those bulls.

¹⁹ After that, some Jews came to that place from the towns called Antioch and Iconium, and they talked to the Lystra people and made them angry with Paul. Then those people threw big stones at Paul until they thought he was dead, then they dragged him outside the town and left him there. ²⁰ But some Christians came and stood around Paul, and he got up and went back into the town. The next day Paul and Barnabas left that place and went to the town called Derbe. ²¹ Paul and Barnabas told the people there the good news about Jesus, and a lot of people believed in him.

Paul and Barnabas went back home

After that Paul and Barnabas went back to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch in Pisidia country. ²² In each of those towns they talked to the Christians and said, “Keep on believing in Jesus and don’t turn back from him. Some people will keep making big trouble for all of us Christians, but don’t worry, Jesus is with us. We are in God’s family now.” ²³ Then Paul and Barnabas picked leaders for the Christians in each church. After that they stopped eating for a while and prayed for those leaders. They prayed, “Jesus, our leader, these men believe in you now, so we ask you to look after them all the time.”

²⁴ Then Paul and Barnabas left that place and went through that Pisidia country and they came to the country called Pamphylia. ²⁵ In a town called Perga they talked to the people about Jesus, then they went to the town called Attalia near the sea.

²⁶ They got on a ship at Attalia and went back to Antioch, in Syria country. Some time before that, the Christians at Antioch asked God to look after those 2 men and be good to them, and after that they sent them out to tell people about Jesus. So, after Paul and Barnabas finished that work, they went back to the Christians at Antioch. ²⁷ Then Paul and Barnabas got all those Christians to meet together, and they told them all about the things God helped them do. They said, “We told the people that are not Jews about Jesus and God gave them the chance to believe in him.” ²⁸ After that Paul and Barnabas stayed there a long time, with the Christians at Antioch.

¹ At that time some men went from Judea country to Antioch, and they started to teach the Christian men, “God will not save you if you don’t have that young man’s operation, that Moses wrote about. That’s our law.” ² Paul and Barnabas heard those men saying that, and they didn’t agree with them. They argued with them and told them they were wrong. The Christians at Antioch thought about that problem, then they told Paul and Barnabas to go with some other men to Jerusalem, to talk about it with the church leaders and the close followers of Jesus there.

³ So Paul and Barnabas did what the Christians at Antioch said. They got up to go to Jerusalem, and on their way they went through Phoenicia country and Samaria country, and they talked to the Christians in those places and told them, “A lot of people that are not Jews are believing in Jesus now.” They told them everything that God did in the other countries. The Christians in Phoenicia and Samaria were very happy to hear that news.

⁴ After that Paul and the men with him got to Jerusalem, and the Christians there were happy to see them. The close followers of Jesus and all those church leaders there told them, “Good. We are glad you came.” Then Paul and Barnabas, and the other men with them, told the Christians in Jerusalem everything that God helped them to do. ⁵ But some of those Christians in Jerusalem were Jewish law men called Pharisees, and they stood up and said, “Those Christian men that are not Jews have to have that young man’s operation, just like Moses said. We have to tell them to do all the things in the law of Moses.”

⁶ Then the close followers of Jesus, and all the church leaders met together to talk about that problem. ⁷ They talked about it for a long time, and then Peter stood up

and said to them, “My friends, you know that God picked me, and I was the first one to go to the people that are not Jews to tell them the good news about Jesus. God did that so they could hear about Jesus and believe in him. ⁸ God knows what people are thinking, and he gave them the Holy Spirit to show them that he wants them in his family too. You see, at first he gave the Holy Spirit to us, then he gave the Holy Spirit to those people that are not Jews. ⁹ He did the same thing for them that he did for us. They believed in him and he made them clean from the wrong things they did. ¹⁰ So, why are you telling those Christians that are not Jews to do something that is too hard for them. You might upset God. You know that we can’t keep all of the law of Moses. It is too hard for us, and it was too hard for our grand-fathers too ¹¹ But our leader, Jesus, is good to everybody in the same way. We believe in him, and he saves us.”

¹² Then everyone stopped talking and listened to Barnabas and Paul. They told everyone that God gave them power to do great things for the people that are not Jews.

¹³ They finished talking, then a man called James stood up and said, “My friends, listen to me. ¹⁴ Peter just told us about the first time God showed everyone that he loves those people that are not Jews, and that he picked some of them to be his own people. ¹⁵ A long time ago God’s men told that same message. They wrote,

¹⁶ ‘God said,

“I will come back later

and I will fix up David’s family again.

They are like a tent that broke and fell down.

But I will fix them up and make them strong again.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ And some people from other countries will ask me for help.

They are my people too.

I am God. I promised to do that a long time ago, so I will do it.” ’

That’s in God’s book.”

¹⁹ And James kept talking, he said, “Those people that are turning to God are not Jews, and I think we shouldn’t make it hard for them. ²⁰ We have to write a letter to tell them not to worry about getting that young man’s operation. But we’ll tell them to follow these rules,

- Don’t eat food that other people have given to sacred statues.
- And don’t sleep with people that you are not married to, as if they are they are your wives or husbands.
- And if somebody strangles an animal, don’t eat its meat.
- And don’t eat blood.

²¹ You see, every Saturday the Jews read the law of Moses aloud in their meeting houses, in all the towns where those people live. They have been doing that for a long time, and people that are not Jews have heard that law. So we have to tell them not to worry about getting that young man’s operation.”

The church leaders wrote to the Christians that are not Jews

²² Then all the Christians and their leaders picked 2 of their men. One was called Judas Barsabbas and the other was Silas. Those 2 men were Christian leaders in Jerusalem. The others told them, “You 2 go with Paul and Barnabas and take this news to the Christians in Antioch, in Syria country.” ²³ And the church leaders wrote a letter for them to take with them. They wrote this,

“This letter is from the close followers of Jesus, and the church leaders in Jerusalem. We are writing to you Christian people that are not Jews, that live in Antioch, and in Syria country and Cilicia country. You are like

brothers and sisters to us. We hope you are all good and happy.

²⁴ Listen, we heard that some men from here went to you and told you things that really upset you. But we didn't send those men. ²⁵ So we met together and picked some messengers, and we are sending them with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul. ²⁶ You know, Barnabas and Paul work for our leader Jesus Christ and people tried to kill them for doing that. ²⁷ We are sending Judas and Silas with them, and they will tell you the same things that we are writing in this letter.

²⁸ The Holy Spirit told us that you don't need to get that young man's operation. That's the way we think, too. So we are telling you to just follows these rules,

- ²⁹ If somebody gives food to a sacred statue, don't you eat any of that food.
- And don't eat blood.
- And if somebody strangles an animal, don't eat its meat.
- And don't sleep with people that you are not married to, as if they are they are your wives or husbands.

Make sure you don't do those things, and you will be all right.

That's our message to you now.

Goodbye."

³⁰ Then Judas and Silas went to Antioch, and they called all the Christians to come to a meeting, then they gave them the letter. ³¹ Those Christians read that letter and they were very happy. ³² Judas and Silas were men that told God's messages to people, and they talked a lot to those Christians, helping them to be happy and to believe strongly in Jesus. ³³ After that Judas and Silas got up to go back to the church in Jerusalem. The Antioch Christians

said to them, “We are happy for you to go back, and we pray you will have a good trip.”

³⁴⁻³⁵ But Paul and Barnabas stayed there in Antioch, and they taught the people and told them the message from God about Jesus. A lot of other Christians helped them to do that.

Paul and Barnabas stopped working with each other

³⁶ Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “You know all those towns we went to before, where we told the people the message from God about Jesus, well, let’s go back and find out if the Christians are all right.”

³⁷ Barnabas said, “Yes. And let’s take John Mark with us.”

³⁸ But Paul didn’t think that was a good idea. He said, “John Mark went with us before, but he didn’t stay with us. In Pamphylia country he left us and went home.”

³⁹ Paul and Barnabas didn’t agree with each other about Mark, and they had a big argument. They got very upset with each other, so they each went a different way. Barnabas and John Mark got on a ship and went to the island called Cyprus. ⁴⁰⁻⁴¹ But Paul picked Silas to go with him. The Antioch Christians asked God to look after Paul and Silas, then those 2 men left there and went through Syria and Cilicia countries. In every place Paul talked to the Christians and helped them to be strong for Jesus.

16

Paul and Silas went to tell people about Jesus

¹ Paul kept going, and he came to the towns called Derbe and Lystra. A Christian man called Timothy lived there. Timothy’s mother was a Jew and she believed in Jesus too, but Timothy’s father was a Greek. ² All the Christians in Lystra and Iconium said that Timothy was

a good man. ³ But the Jewish people in those places knew that Timothy's father was Greek, and they knew that the Greek people don't do a young man's operation on their boys, like the Jewish people do. Paul wanted Timothy to go around with him to a lot of places, and he wanted the Jewish mob in every place to be happy with Timothy, so he got them to do a young man's operation on Timothy.

⁴ Then Paul, Silas and Timothy went to the towns in that country, and they told the Christians the things the leaders in Jerusalem talked about, and they told them to do everything those leaders said in their letter. ⁵ So the people in the churches in those places trusted Jesus more strongly, and every day other people joined them and trusted in Jesus too.

Paul had like a dream and saw a man from Macedonia country

⁶ Paul and his friends wanted to tell the message about Jesus to the people in the country called Asia, but the Holy Spirit told them, "No, don't do that." So they went through the countries called Phrygia and Galatia. ⁷ Then they came to the country called Mysia, and they tried to go on into the next country, called Bithynia. But the Holy Spirit said again, "No, don't do that." ⁸ So they went past Mysia and came to the town called Troas.

⁹ They stayed at Troas, and that night Paul had something like a dream, but he was not asleep, he was still awake. He saw a man from Macedonia country. That man stood there and kept telling Paul, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

¹⁰ I, Luke, joined with Paul and Silas there at Troas. Paul told us what he saw, and then we knew that God wanted us to tell the good news to the people in Macedonia, and we got ready to go there.

A woman called Lydia believed in Jesus

¹¹ We got on a ship and went straight to the town called Samothrace, and the next day we came to the town called Neapolis. ¹² We left the ship there and we went by road to the town called Philippi, and we stayed there for a few days. Philippi was the main town in that part of Macedonia, and a lot of Roman people lived there.

¹³ On the next Saturday we went outside the town to a place near the river. We thought we might see some Jewish people meeting there to pray. Some women were there, and we sat down and talked with them. ¹⁴ One woman was from the town called Thyatira, and her name was Lydia. She was a woman that respected God. Her job was to sell purple cloth. She listened carefully to the things Paul talked about, and Jesus helped her to believe in him. ¹⁵ Then we baptised Lydia and her family. After that Lydia asked us to come and stay at her house. She said, “You mob know that I really believe now in Jesus, our leader, so please come and stay at my place.” She kept asking us until we agreed, so we stayed at her place.

Paul threw a bad spirit out of a young woman

¹⁶ Another day we started to go to another place to meet with people and pray to God. There was a young woman on that road that had a bad spirit in her. That spirit showed her things that were going to happen to people. Some men made this young woman work for them with no pay. People used to pay a lot of money to her bosses, then she told those people things that will happen to them.

¹⁷ That young woman saw Paul and the rest of us going on that road, and she followed us, and she kept on shouting, “Hey, these men serve the God that is the

greatest of all gods. They can tell you what to do so that God will save you and not punish you.”

¹⁸ She kept doing that for a lot of days. In the end Paul got upset. He turned around to the young woman and said to that bad spirit, “My boss, Jesus Christ, says, ‘Get out of her.’ ” Then the bad spirit came out of that young woman.

¹⁹ Her bosses saw this happen and they thought, “Oh, no. Now she will not be able to tell anybody what will happen to them, and she will not get us any more money.” And her bosses were angry with Paul and Silas. They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the Roman judges in the middle of that town.

²⁰ Her bosses said to the judges, “These men are making a lot of trouble for everyone in our town. They are Jews,²¹ and they are telling people to do things that our Roman law says are wrong.”

²² A lot of other people there joined those bosses and started blaming Paul and Silas. Then the Roman bosses told their soldiers, “Rip the shirts off Paul and Silas and hit them with sticks.”

²³ The soldiers hit Paul and Silas really hard with sticks and then they put them in the jail. They told the boss of that jail, “Make sure Paul and Silas don’t get away.”²⁴ So the boss of that jail put them in a room that was right in the middle of that jail, and he made them sit down on the ground, then he locked their ankles between 2 big logs so that Paul and Silas couldn’t move their legs.

Paul told the jail boss that God can save him

²⁵ Later, in the middle of the night, Paul and Silas were praying aloud to God and saying that he is really good, and they were singing songs to God. The other prisoners were listening to them.²⁶ Suddenly there was

a very big earthquake. It shook the jail, and even the cement underneath it, and all the doors of the jail swung open, and all the chains fell off the arms and legs of the prisoners.

²⁷ The jail boss woke up and saw that the doors of the jail were open, and he thought, “Those prisoners have all run away. I’m in big trouble.” So he got his big knife to kill himself. ²⁸ Paul saw the jail boss and shouted to him, “Don’t hurt yourself. We are all here.”

²⁹ The jail boss told somebody to bring some lights, then he ran into the jail and got down in front of Paul and Silas, to show them respect. He was very afraid. He was shaking. ³⁰ Then he took Paul and Silas out of the jail and asked, “Sirs, what can I do so that God will save me?”

³¹ They said, “Believe in Jesus, and God will save you. And he will do the same for your family too.”

³²⁻³⁴ Then the jail boss took Paul and Silas into his house, and washed the sores on their backs, and gave them some food to eat. And Paul and Silas told the message about Jesus to the jail boss and to his family. They all believed in Jesus, and Paul and Silas baptised them. They were all very happy.

Paul and Silas left Philippi

³⁵ The next morning the Roman town bosses said to some policemen, “Go and tell the jail boss, ‘You can let those 2 prisoners go now.’” Then the policemen told that message to the jail boss. ³⁶ So the jail boss told Paul, “The town bosses have sent a message telling me to let you and Silas go free. So you can go quietly out of the jail now.”

³⁷ But Paul said to them, “No. Yesterday those bosses didn’t take us to court to find out if we did anything wrong, or not. They just told men to hit us in front of the crowd. Then they put us in jail. But, you see, we are

Jews, but we are Romans too. Our names are in the books in the Roman offices. So those bosses broke the Roman law yesterday. And now they want to send us away while nobody is looking. No way. Those Roman bosses have to get up and come to us and tell us that they are sorry, and take us out of this jail.”

³⁸ So the policemen went and told Paul’s words to the town bosses. As soon as those bosses heard that Paul and Silas were not just Jews, but they were Romans too, they got frightened. Those bosses knew they broke the Roman law. ³⁹ So the town bosses came and talked easy to Paul and Silas. They said, “We are sorry about what happened yesterday.” Then they took Paul and Silas out of that jail, and kept on asking them to leave that town soon.

⁴⁰ After that Paul and Silas left the jail and went to Lydia’s place. They met with her and with the other Christians there, and they told them to keep on trusting our leader Jesus. Then Paul and Silas left Philippi.

17

Paul told people in Thessalonica about Jesus

¹ Paul and Silas went through the towns called Amphipolis and Apollonia and they came to a town called Thessalonica. There was a Jewish meeting house there, ² and Paul went to that meeting house every Saturday. He used to always do that. On each of the next 3 Saturdays he talked to the people there and showed them from God’s book ³ that Jesus is the one that God sent to save people. Paul told them all about Jesus and showed them everything that God got his men to write in his book. Those words said that God will send a man to save us, but that man has to die, and then come alive again. He said, “I’m telling you about Jesus. He is the one God sent to

save us.”⁴ A lot of people there believed that message about Jesus, and they joined Paul and Silas. Some of those people were Jews, and some were not Jews but they respected God, and a lot of them were important women.

Some Jews made trouble for Paul and Silas

⁵ But some Jews there were jealous of Paul, and they went to the middle of the town, to where a lot of people were hanging around, and they found some trouble makers there. They told those trouble makers that Paul and Silas were bad people, and got them to be a big noisy mob, shouting and saying bad things about Paul and Silas. Some of them went into the house that belonged to a Christian called Jason. They were looking for Paul and Silas, to drag them outside so that the mob could beat them up. ⁶ They couldn't find Paul and Silas in that house so they grabbed Jason, and some of the other Christians, and dragged them to the town bosses, and they shouted, “Those 2 men, Paul and Silas, they make trouble everywhere, and now they have come to our town to make trouble here too. ⁷ All this Christian mob are against everything that our big boss in Rome tells us to do. They reckon a man called Jesus is really the biggest boss. And this man here, Jason, he is letting them stay at his house.”

⁸ All the people and the town bosses heard that story, and they got very upset. ⁹ The town bosses made Jason and the other Christians pay some money, and told them, “You can only get your money back if Paul and Silas don't make any more trouble.” Then the bosses let Jason and those other Christians go.

Paul told people in Berea about Jesus

¹⁰ Then, that same night, the Thessalonica Christians sent Paul and Silas out of their town, to another town called Berea. As soon as they got to that town Paul and Silas went to the Jewish meeting house to talk to the people there. ¹¹ The Jews that lived in Berea were happy to listen to the message about Jesus and they thought about it carefully, not like the Jews in Thessalonica. The Berea people read God's book every day to find out if Paul's message was true. ¹² So a lot of those Jewish people believed in Jesus, and some of the important women and men that were not Jews believed in Jesus too.

Jews from Thessalonica made trouble for Paul

¹³ But the Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul was in Berea telling people God's message about Jesus. Then they got up and went to Berea and made trouble for Paul, and got a lot of other people to make trouble too. ¹⁴ So some of the Christian men in Berea took Paul out of that town. They went down to the sea, and they all got on a ship and went to the town called Athens. But Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. ¹⁵ Then Paul said to the men that took him to Athens, "As soon as you get back to Berea tell Silas and Timothy to come to me here. Tell them to hurry and come here as soon as they can." Then those men left Athens and went back to Berea.

Paul was upset by all the statues in Athens

¹⁶ Paul was in Athens waiting for Silas and Timothy to come, and he walked around in that town. He saw a lot of statues everywhere, and he saw that people thought they were gods. They respected them and prayed to them. This upset Paul a lot. ¹⁷ So every day he went to the Jewish meeting house and talked with the people there about Jesus. Some of those people were Jews, and some were Greeks that believed in God. And Paul went to the place

in the middle of the town where there were a lot of people, and he talked about Jesus to the people that he met there.

Paul talked to the Athens people about Jesus

¹⁸ Some of that Athens mob always thought about the best way for people to live. Some of them were called Epicureans, and some were called Stoics. They talked to Paul, and he told them about Jesus. Paul said that Jesus died, and God made him alive again. Some of that mob said, “This man is just talking rubbish.” Other people said, “We think he is talking about gods from other countries.”

¹⁹ So they took Paul to a meeting of the town council, and they asked him, “What are you telling everyone? Tell us what this new message is all about. ²⁰ You are saying things that shock us, and we want to understand what you mean.” ²¹ You see, the Athens people, and the people from other places that lived there, they liked to talk about new ideas all the time, and they liked to hear anything new that other people told them.

Paul told the Athens council about the God that they didn't know

²² Then Paul stood up and talked to the council mob at Athens. He said, “I can see that you Athens mob think a lot about gods. ²³ I walked around this town and I saw a lot of statues that you set up, to show respect to a lot of gods. And I saw another stone that you set up, and you wrote on it, ‘This is for that god that we don't know.’ Hey, you show respect to him even though you don't know him. But I do know him, so now I want to tell you all about him. I'll tell you about that God that you don't know.

²⁴ He is the God that made all the world, and he made everything in the world. He is the boss of everybody everywhere. He is boss up in the sky and he is boss

down here on the ground. So nobody can build a house big enough for him to live in. ²⁵ And he doesn't need us to do anything for him. You see, he is the one that makes us alive, and he gives us our breath, and he gives us everything we need.

²⁶ At first he just made one man, then later we all came from that man, all of us in every tribe everywhere came from that man. God gave each tribe their own country, and he said where they can live and how long they can live there.

²⁷ He did this so that we can look around for him and try to find him. But really, he is not very far away from any of us. ²⁸ That old story is true that says, 'He is with us all the time. He is the one that makes us alive, so that we can walk about and do things.' And even one of your own Athens people wrote this about him, 'We are his kids.'

²⁹ So, if it is true that we are God's kids, we shouldn't just dream up something and say, 'My god looks like this,' and then make a statue like that from gold or silver or stone. Nobody can make any kind of statue that is anything like God.

³⁰ You know, people didn't know about God at first, but he didn't worry about it at that time. But now it is different. Now he says to all of us that we have to turn around and stop doing bad things, ³¹ and if we don't, he will give us big trouble. He is going to have a big court and all of us will have to stand in front of the judge. He has already set the date for this. It will be a fair court and he has picked one man to be the judge. That man died, but God made him alive again. God did that to show everybody he picked that man to be the big judge."

Some council people believed in Jesus

³² The council men heard Paul say that a man died and then came alive again, and some of those council men laughed at Paul, and others said, “You can tell us more about this at some other time.” ³³ Then Paul left that council meeting. ³⁴ But some of the people there joined with Paul and believed in Jesus. One of them was a council man called Dionysius. And another was an important woman called Damaris. And there were some other people too that believed in Jesus.

18

Paul went to the town called Corinth

¹⁻² After that Paul left Athens and he went to a town called Corinth.

Before that time there was a big boss in the city called Rome. His name was Claudius. He told all the Jewish people to get out of Rome. So a Jewish man called Aquila left Rome and went to live in Corinth. (Aquila was born in a country called Pontus.) He took his wife with him. Her name was Priscilla. Those 2 made tents for people, that was their work. Paul met Aquila and Priscilla there in Corinth. ³ Paul made tents too, so he stayed with them in Corinth and they worked together.

⁴ Every Saturday the Jews and some Greeks met together in the Jewish meeting house. Paul met with them too. He talked with them a lot, trying to get them to believe in Jesus.

⁵ Then Silas and Timothy came to Corinth from Macedonia country, and after that Paul spent all his time telling God’s good news to the Jews. He told them, “Jesus is the man God promised to send.” ⁶ But the Jews wouldn’t listen to Paul and they said bad things about him. So Paul shook the dust from his clothes to show them they

were wrong, and he said to them, “You can’t blame me for anything that happens to you now. You can only blame yourselves. From now on I will go and tell God’s word to the people that are not Jews.”

⁷ So Paul stopped going to the Jewish meeting house. He went next door to a man called Titius Justus, and lived in his house. Titius Justus was not a Jew but he respected God. ⁸ A man called Crispus was the boss of the Jewish meeting house. Crispus and everyone in his family believed in Jesus. And a lot of other people in Corinth heard Paul talk about Jesus and they believed in him too. The Christians baptised them all in water.

⁹ One night Paul had like a dream, and our leader said to him, “Don’t be afraid but keep on telling people about me, Jesus. Don’t stop talking about me. ¹⁰ I am with you, and nobody will attack you and hurt you. I’ve got a lot of people in this town.” ¹¹ So Paul stayed in Corinth for one and a half years, teaching God’s word to people.

A Roman boss didn’t judge Paul

¹² Later a man called Gallio became the new Roman boss of that country called Achaia. The Jewish leaders agreed together about what they wanted to do, then they grabbed Paul and took him to the courtroom of that new boss. They blamed Paul, ¹³ and told the boss, “This man is teaching people wrong. He is telling them to break our Jewish law. He is telling them the wrong way to show respect for God.”

¹⁴ Then Paul got up to talk, but Gallio said, “Wait.” And he said to the Jews, “I will not listen to you mob. If this man did something bad, or if he broke our Roman law, then I will listen to you. ¹⁵ But you are only arguing about words, and names, and your own Jewish laws, so I will not listen to you. I will not judge these Jewish things.

You mob look after that yourselves.” ¹⁶ Then Gallio threw those Jewish leaders out of the courtroom.

¹⁷ Then the people there grabbed the leader of the Jewish meeting house, called Sosthenes, and they beat him up right there in front of the courthouse. Gallio saw them hitting him, but he didn't do anything to stop them.

Priscilla and Aquila went to Ephesus with Paul

¹⁸ Paul kept on living with the Christians in Corinth for some time, then he said goodbye to them and went to the town called Cenchrea. Priscilla and Aquila went with Paul. Then Paul cut all the hair off his head. You see, Paul made a strong promise to God, and in their culture, after they do that they cut their hair off. ¹⁹⁻²¹ Then Paul and Priscilla and Aquila got on a ship and went to a town called Ephesus. They got off that ship there.

Paul went into the Jewish meeting house in Ephesus and talked to the Jews there. They asked him to stay there longer, but he said, “No, sorry, I've got to say goodbye and keep going. But I will come back here one day, if God wants me to.” Then, he got on a ship and sailed away from that town. But Priscilla and Aquila stayed in Ephesus.

Paul went to Jerusalem, then to other places

²² Paul came to the town called Caesarea, then he left that ship and went on by road to Jerusalem city, and he said hello to the Christians there. Then he went north to Antioch, a town in Syria country.

²³ Paul spent some time with the Christians in Antioch, then he left and went again to Galatia and Phrygia countries. He taught the Christians in those places more about Jesus, to make them strong for him.

Priscilla and Aquila told Apollos the whole story about Jesus

²⁴⁻²⁵ At that time there was a Jewish man called Apollos living in a town called Alexandria. Somebody there taught him some things about Jesus. Then he got up and went to Ephesus. He could talk really good and he knew God's book properly, and he was happy to teach people about Jesus. He taught them the things he knew, but he didn't know the whole story about Jesus. He only knew the message John the Baptist taught to people.

²⁶ After Apollos got to Ephesus he went to the Jewish meeting house, and he talked strongly to everyone, and he told them all the things that he knew about Jesus. Priscilla and Aquila heard him talk, and they said to him, "Come with us and we will tell you more." So he went with them and they told him the rest of the story about Jesus, and they told him the way God saves people.

Apollos helped the Christians in Achaia country

²⁷ After that Apollos said, "I want to go to Achaia country."

The Christians in Ephesus said, "That's good. You go there." And they wrote a letter to the Christians in Achaia, and told them, "Be friendly to Apollos."

Before that time God was good to some of the Corinth people, and he helped them believe in Jesus. After Apollos got to Corinth he really helped those new Christians there. ²⁸ But some of the Jewish leaders didn't believe in Jesus, so Apollos argued strongly with them all the time. And he talked to everyone, showing them that God's book tells about the man God promised to send, and he showed them that Jesus is that man.

¹ Apollos was at Corinth, and at the same time Paul was visiting places in Phrygia country and Galatia country. Then Paul left those places and went through Asia country, then he went on to the big town called Ephesus. He met some men there that reckoned they were Christians. ² Paul asked them, “Did the Holy Spirit come into you when you believed God’s message?”

They said, “No, he didn’t. We don’t know anything about the Holy Spirit. We’ve never heard of him.”

³ So Paul asked them, “Who baptised you, and why did he do it?”

They said, “John the Baptist is the one that baptised us, and he did it to show we were sorry for doing wrong.”

⁴ Paul said, “John baptised people that turned away from doing bad things. But he also told the people to believe in the man that was coming after him. That man is Jesus.”

⁵ After those men heard that story they believed in Jesus too, and the Christians baptised them to show that they were following our leader Jesus. ⁶ Then Paul put his hands on their heads, and the Holy Spirit came into each one of them. The Holy Spirit gave them the power to talk in different languages, and they also told everyone the messages that the Holy Spirit gave them. ⁷ There were about 12 men in that mob.

People in Asia country heard about Jesus

⁸ For the next 3 months, on every Saturday Paul went to the Jewish meeting house in Ephesus, and he talked strongly to the people there. He tried to get them to believe in Jesus and understand the way God takes people into his family. ⁹ A few of those people believed the message about Jesus. But some of them didn’t believe it, and they didn’t want to keep hearing it, so they stood

up in front of everybody and said bad things about the Christian people. (Another name for the Christians was the Jesus Way mob.)

After that Paul left the Jewish meeting house and he took the Christians with him. They didn't go the Jewish meeting house any more, but they had their meetings in a house called Tyrannus Hall. Every day Paul talked with people there about Jesus. ¹⁰He kept doing that for 2 years, so a lot of people heard God's message about Jesus. Both Jewish people and Greek people heard that message about Jesus. They came from all over that country called Asia.

God gave Paul a lot of power

¹¹ And God gave Paul the power to do great things that nobody else can do. ¹² Even if sick people couldn't come to Paul, their friends got things that Paul touched, like handkerchiefs or aprons, and they took them and put them on those sick people. Then those sick people got better, and bad spirits came out of them.

Some men that were not Christians tried to use the name of Jesus

¹³⁻¹⁴ There were also some Jews there that were not Christians. They went around to a lot of places, and in each place they tried to get bad spirits to come out of people. There were 7 men that were doing that. They were sons of a big boss of the Jewish ceremonies, called Sceva. They went into a house and said to a man that had a bad spirit, "I'm using the name of Jesus, the man that Paul talks about, and I'm telling you to come out of this man."

¹⁵ But the bad spirit didn't come out. He said to those men, "I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but I don't know you mob." ¹⁶ Then the man that had the bad spirit jumped

on those 7 men and knocked all of them down, and tore their clothes off, and beat them up. They all ran out of the house to get away from him.

¹⁷ All the people that lived in Ephesus heard that story about those 7 men. Jewish people heard that story, and Greek people heard it too, and they all got really frightened, and they really respected Jesus and said good things about him.

Christians burned their books about bad magic

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ At that time, some of the Christians in Ephesus were still doing bad things, and some of them used to sing people and curse people. They had a lot of books that showed them the way to do that bad magic. Those Christians heard about those 7 men, and then they said they were sorry for the bad things that they were doing, and they gathered up all of those books and burned them. Everybody saw them burn those books. Those books about magic cost a lot of money. They reckoned all of those books together cost about 5 million dollars. ²⁰ That is the way the message about Jesus got very powerful, and a lot of people heard that message.

Some workmen got money from the people that respected a woman god

²¹ After those things happened, Paul wanted to visit the Christians in Macedonia country and Achaia country again, and after that he wanted to go on to Jerusalem. And he said, "After I go to Jerusalem, I have to go to Rome too." ²² He sent his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, ahead of him to Macedonia country. But Paul stayed a little while longer in Asia country.

²³ Soon after that, some of the people in Ephesus tried to make a lot of trouble for the Christians, that people

called the Jesus Way mob. ²⁴ There was a man there called Demetrius. His job was making little statues out of silver. They were models of the special house of a woman god called Artemis. There were other men too that made those little statues. They sold them to people that respected Artemis, and they got a lot of money from that business.

Demetrius got a lot of people to go wild

²⁵ Demetrius called a meeting of his workers and other men that made things for that god Artemis. Demetrius said to them, “Men, you know that we make these statues and sell them for a lot of money. ²⁶ But that man Paul tells big mobs of people, ‘Don’t buy those statues. They are not gods at all.’ He talks like that here in Ephesus, and now even the people from other towns in this Asia country don’t want to buy the things we make. Paul tells people that these statues we make are not gods, and people shouldn’t show respect to them. ²⁷ If people keep listening to him, we’ll soon go broke. And not only that, but people will reckon they don’t have to come to the special house of Artemis to show respect to her. People all over our Asia country and everywhere show respect to our great woman god Artemis, but soon people might not think that Artemis is great.”

²⁸ All the men there heard Demetrius say that, and then they were very angry with Paul. They started to shout, “Artemis is very great. She is the god of us Ephesus mob.”

²⁹ A lot of the other people in the town heard them shouting and they went and joined those men and started shouting too. They got angry with Paul, and they grabbed the 2 men from Macedonia that used to go around with Paul. Their names were Gaius and Aristarchus. They

dragged those 2 men to the sports oval of that town. ³⁰ Paul wanted to go there too, to talk to the people, but the other Christians wouldn't let him do that. ³¹ There were some government officials of that country that were friends of Paul. They heard that those people went wild, so they sent him a message to tell him strongly, "Don't go to that sports oval. It's too dangerous. They might kill you."

The wild mob kept shouting for 2 hours

³² That big mob of people were a bit mixed up. Some of them shouted one thing, and some of them shouted something else. But most of them didn't even know what the meeting was about. ³³ One of the Jews there was called Alexander. Some people there pushed him to the front so that he could talk to the crowd of people. So Alexander held up his hand, to get the mob to be quiet.

³⁴ But some people knew that Alexander was a Jew, and that the Jews didn't show respect to Artemis, so they shouted, "Artemis is very great. She is the god of us Ephesus mob." Then the whole mob kept on shouting like that for about 2 hours.

The town clerk got the mob to settle down

³⁵ Then the town clerk got the mob to stop shouting, and he said to them, "Listen, Ephesus people, everyone knows that we Ephesus people look after the special house for Artemis, the great woman god. And everyone knows that we look after the statue of her that fell down from the sky. ³⁶ Nobody can say that these things are not true. So you have to be quiet now. Don't do anything that will make trouble for us. ³⁷ Why did you bring these 2 men here? They didn't do anything bad. They didn't go into the special houses for our gods and take things from

there. And they didn't say anything bad about our woman god. ³⁸ If Demetrius and his mates want to blame anyone about anything bad, they have to do it the right way. They have to go to the judges in the courts. If anybody wants to blame somebody else, those judges are ready to listen. That's their job. ³⁹ Or if anybody wants to complain about something else, there are other government bosses that can meet together and think about their problem. ⁴⁰ You see, you mob now are not a proper meeting, and if the big Roman bosses hear about all this trouble, they might say that we Ephesus people are trying to start a fight against the Roman government. If they ask me about all this trouble, I will not know what to tell them."

⁴¹ Then the town clerk told the mob, "You can all go home now." And they all went away from that sports oval.

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Paul went to Macedonia country and to the country called Greece

¹ The mob went home, then Paul asked all the Christians to meet together with him. He said to them, "Be strong for Jesus. Keep on believing in him. I'm going to Macedonia country now. Goodbye."

Then Paul got up and went to Macedonia country. ² He visited all the Christians in the towns in Macedonia, and he told them a lot of things to help them be strong for Jesus.

Then he kept going and went to Achaia country. Another name for that country is Greece. ³ Paul stayed in Greece for 3 months. Then he got ready to go back to Syria on a ship. But he heard that some Jews were going to try to kill him, so he changed his mind and didn't go on that ship. Instead, he went by road through Macedonia country again. ⁴⁻⁵ Paul had some friends that went with

him, but they didn't go with him by road. They got on to that ship and went to the town called Troas and waited there. Those men were,

- Sopater. His father was called Pyrrhus. He grew up in the town called Berea.
- Aristarchus and Secundus, 2 men from Thessalonica.
- Gaius, from Derbe.
- Timothy, from Galatia country.
- Tychicus and Trophimus, 2 men from Asia country.

These men waited for Paul in Troas.

Paul went to the town called Troas

⁶ But as for me, Luke, I went with Paul by road to the town called Philippi, and we stayed there. Then the time came for the Jewish people to have their flat damper ceremony, and after that we got on a ship and kept sailing for 5 days. Then we came to the town called Troas, and we met the other men that were waiting for us there. We all stayed in Troas for 7 days.

⁷ On the Sunday the Christians at Troas gathered together after the sun went down, to have the special meal to remember that Jesus died for us. And we met together with them. Paul started talking to the Christians, and he kept on talking for a long time, right up until the middle of the night. You see, he was going to leave Troas the next day. ⁸ We were meeting in an upstairs room. It was 3 floors high. There were a lot of oil lamps burning in that room, and the smoke made some people get sleepy. ⁹ A young man called Eutychus was sitting at an open window. Paul kept talking for a long time, and Eutychus got very sleepy. Then he went properly to sleep, and he fell out of that window, all the way down 3 floors, to the ground. Some people went down to pick him up, but he was dead. ¹⁰ Paul went down too, and he lay down and

put his arms around the young man, and pressed himself against him. Then he said, “Don’t worry, he is alive.” And that was true. He came alive again.

¹¹ Then Paul and the others went back upstairs again, and we all ate the special meal together to remember Jesus died for us. Then Paul talked with the Christians until the sun started to come up. Then he left them and went to the ship. ¹² The other people took the young man home. He was alive again, and everyone was happy.

Paul went from Troas to Miletus

¹³ Then we went back to the ship, but Paul didn’t get on the ship with us. He wanted to go by road to the town called Assos. The rest of us got on the ship and sailed to Assos. ¹⁴ We met Paul there, and he got on the ship with us, then we all sailed to the town called Mitylene. ¹⁵ The next day we kept going, and we sailed to a place near Kios Island, and the next day we sailed to Samos Island. The next day we left Samos and sailed to the town called Miletus. ¹⁶ Miletus is not very far from the town called Ephesus. It was nearly time for the Jewish ceremony called Pentecost, and Paul wanted to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost time, so he was in a hurry. He didn’t want to spend time in Asia country, so he didn’t want to go to Ephesus.

Paul talked to the Christian leaders of Ephesus

¹⁷ So after the ship arrived at Miletus, Paul sent a message to Ephesus to get the church leaders to come to talk with him at the ship.

¹⁸ After they got there, Paul talked to them. He said, “Each one of you knows the good way I lived, all the time that I was here with you in Asia country, from the first day that I was here until the day I left. ¹⁹ You know the way I

worked for our leader, Jesus. I didn't try to make myself important, and I sometimes cried about people. You know that some of the Jews here tried to hurt me. ²⁰ And you know that I told you all of God's message, everything that will help you. I didn't keep anything secret. I taught you God's message in places where everyone heard me, and I taught you in your homes too. ²¹ I talked to everyone. I talked to Jewish people and to people that are not Jews. I told all of them, 'You have to turn to God and stop doing bad things, and believe in our leader Jesus.'

Paul told those Christians, "You will not see me again"

²² Paul kept talking to them He said, "And now I want to tell you this. God's spirit clearly showed me that I have to go to Jerusalem, so I'm going there. I don't know what will happen to me at Jerusalem. ²³ But I do know that in each town I went to, the Holy Spirit told me that the people in Jerusalem will hurt me and put me in prison. ²⁴ But I will keep going to Jerusalem. I want to finish the work that our leader Jesus told me to do. I have to tell people the good news that God is good to us, and he saves us. I really don't care about myself, even if they kill me, so long as I can tell them that good news.

²⁵ I went all around your country and told you how to join God's family. And now I know that none of you will see me again. ²⁶ So I want you all to understand that if any of you doesn't end up in God's family, you can't blame me. ²⁷ I told all of you everything that God wants to do for you. ²⁸ Now you leaders have to watch out for yourselves, and watch out for God's people here too. Make sure you keep on following Jesus properly, and help all God's people to follow him properly too. The Holy Spirit picked you to

be their leaders, so look after them properly. Remember, God bought his people with the blood of his own son.

²⁹⁻³⁰ I know that after I go away from here, other people will come to you and they will teach you lies. They will try to trick all of God's people. They will be like cheeky dingoes that kill sheep. Even in your own group of Christians, some men will get up and trick other Christians. They will change the true story and tell it wrong, so they can get people to follow them. ³¹ So watch out. Make sure each one of you keeps on believing the true story about Jesus. Remember, I was here with you for 3 years, and for all that time I always told you not to believe a different message. And if I thought you were going wrong, I even cried about you."

Paul asked God to look after the Christian leaders

³² Paul kept on talking. He said, "Now I'm asking God to keep you safe, and to keep you believing the true message that God is very good to you and will save you. If you keep on believing that message you will grow strong spiritually. You will know you are in God's family, and God will give you the good things he is keeping for his own people.

³³⁻³⁴ Listen, you mob know me. Do you remember that way I lived with you? I showed you the right way for a Christian to live. I never wanted to get anyone's money or good clothes. I always worked with my hands to get the money that I needed, and to get money for my friends, too. ³⁵ I did everything in a way that showed you that we all have to work hard to get enough money, not just for ourselves, but to give some to people that are short of the things they need. We have to remember that our leader is Jesus, and he said, 'If people give things to you, that

can make you a bit happy. But if you give things to other people you will be properly happy.’ ”

The leaders were very sad as they said goodbye to Paul

³⁶ Paul finished talking, then he got down on his knees with all of those Christian leaders, to show respect to God, and he prayed with them. ³⁷ They all cried a lot, and they hugged Paul and kissed him. ³⁸ They heard Paul say that they wouldn't see him again, and this made them very sad.

Then they all went with him to the ship.

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Paul went from Miletus to Tyre

¹ We were very sad, but we had to say goodbye to the leaders from Ephesus, then we got on the ship with Paul and went to the island called Cos. The next day we came to the island called Rhodes, and the next day we came to the town called Patara. That ship was going to stay there, ² so we got off it and got on to another ship that was going to Phoenicia country. ³ We sailed on that ship until we could see the island called Cyprus, and we went past it on its south side, and we kept sailing until we came to Syria country. The ship stopped at a town called Tyre, and they started to unload it there.

Christians told Paul not to go to Jerusalem, but he kept going anyway

⁴ We went ashore at Tyre and found the Christians there, and stayed with them for 7 days. God's Holy Spirit told those Christians to tell Paul, "Don't go to Jerusalem."
⁵ The ship workers finished unloading the ship, and then it was time for it to leave, so we went back to the sea shore. All the Christian men and their wives and kids went with

us to the ship. We all got down on our knees there on the sand, to show respect to God, and we prayed. ⁶ After that we all said goodbye, then Paul and his friends got on the ship, and the other Christians went back to their homes.

Paul went from Tyre to Caesarea

⁷ We left Tyre on that ship and went to a town called Ptolemais. There were Christians in that town too, so we went and said hello to them, and we stayed with them that night. ⁸ The next day we left Ptolemais and sailed to the town called Caesarea. We left the ship there and went to Philip's place, and we stayed with him. He was a man that was always telling other people the way to become followers of Jesus. (A few years before this the Christians in Jerusalem picked 7 men to take care of the Christian widows, and Philip was one of those men. ⁹ He had 4 daughters that were not married. Each of them had power from the Holy Spirit to tell God's special messages to people.)

The Christians couldn't stop Paul going to Jerusalem

¹⁰ A few days later, a Christian called Agabus came to Caesarea from Judea country. He had power from the Holy Spirit to tell God's special messages to people. ¹¹ He came to us, and he took off Paul's belt. Then he tied his own feet and hands with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says this, 'See this man that owns this belt. The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will tie him up, just like this, and they will give him as a prisoner to the people that are not Jews.'"

¹² The rest of us heard him say that, then we all talked really strongly to Paul. We said, "Please don't go to Jerusalem." ¹³ But Paul said, "Hey, stop crying and trying to make me change my mind. Stop telling me not to go to Jerusalem. I work for our leader Jesus, so I'm happy

for people to put me in prison in Jerusalem, and I'm even happy for them to kill me."

¹⁴ We tried to tell Paul not to go to Jerusalem, but he wouldn't listen to us, so we stopped trying to tell him. We just said, "All right, we will be happy for our leader, Jesus, to do whatever he wants to do."

Paul and other Christians went on to Jerusalem

¹⁵ After a few days we got ready and left Caesarea, and we went to Jerusalem. ¹⁶ Some of the Christians from Caesarea went with us too. They took us to stay in the house of a man called Mnason. He was from Cyprus Island. He was a Christian for a long time. He became a Christian when people were first starting to hear the message about Jesus.

¹⁷ After we arrived in Jerusalem the Christians there were happy to see us and say hello to us.

Paul agreed to do a Jewish ceremony

¹⁸ The next day Paul went to talk with a Christian leader called James, and we went with him. All of the other Christian leaders in Jerusalem were there too. ¹⁹ Paul said hello to them, and then he told them about all of the things that God helped him do in the countries of the people that are not Jews. ²⁰ After they heard his story, James and the other leaders said, "Thank you God. You are great."

Then they said to Paul, "Listen, Brother, there are thousands of Jewish people here that believe in Jesus, and they are very careful to do everything in the law that Moses gave us. ²¹ But we have heard people say that you tell the Jewish Christians in those other countries to stop following our law. Those people reckon you tell Jewish people not to do a young man operation on their

sons, and they reckon you tell Jewish people to stop doing other things from our culture. We know their story isn't true,²² but some of the other Jewish people here believe that story about you. They will hear that you came here, and they might be upset with you. So, you need to do something to show everyone that the story they heard about you is not true.

²³ So listen. Do this to show everyone that the story they tell about you is not true. You see, there are 4 men among us that have promised something to God, so they have to buy things to do a ceremony to make themselves clean.²⁴ So you join those men and go with them to God's ceremony house, and do that ceremony with them, and pay for the things they buy. Then they can shave their heads. That's our culture to show that they have done everything they promised to do. And the people will see you do all that with those men at the temple, and they will know that the things people told them about you are not true, and they will know that you do everything in our Jewish law and culture.²⁵ We leaders know that the Christians that are not Jews don't have to do everything in our Jewish law, and we wrote them a letter, and we told them,

- Don't eat meat that people gave to a statue they reckoned was a god.
- And don't eat blood.
- And if somebody held an animal's neck to kill it, don't eat meat from that animal.
- And don't sleep with people that you are not married to, as if they are they are your wives or husbands.

That's what we wrote in our letter.”

²⁶ Paul listened to everything they said, and he agreed to do that ceremony with those 4 men. The next day he

got them together and they started to do the ceremony to make themselves clean. After that, Paul went to God's ceremony house, and he told the leader of the Jewish ceremonies the date they will finish that ceremony and give animals to God for each of them, the way they do in Jewish culture.

Some Jews grabbed Paul

²⁷⁻²⁹ Paul and the other 4 men had to do that ceremony for 7 days to make themselves clean. Just before it finished, Paul walked along the road with a man that was not a Jew. His name was Trophimus. Some Jews from Asia country saw them together, and they thought that Paul took Trophimus into God's ceremony house, and that was against their Jewish law. The next day Paul went back to the temple and those Asia Jews saw him there. They called out to the other Jews there, they shouted, "Hey, you Israel men, come and help us punish this man. This is the man that teaches people everywhere to rubbish us Jewish people, and our law, and he tells them not to respect this place, the temple. He even brought a man that is not a Jew into the temple, so now it is not clean any more." Then all those Jewish people got angry with Paul.

³⁰ A lot of people everywhere in that city heard that there was trouble in God's ceremony house, and they got up and ran there. They all grabbed Paul and dragged him outside. Then straight away the guards shut the gates of the temple.

Roman soldiers stopped the mob from killing Paul

³¹ That mob started hitting Paul, trying to kill him. Somebody went to the big Roman boss and said, "Hey, the people in Jerusalem are going wild." ³² So he quickly got a big mob of soldiers, and some of their bosses too, and they

all ran to the mob that was hitting Paul. The mob saw the Roman soldiers and their big boss, so they stopped hitting Paul.

They took Paul to the big house where the soldiers lived

³³ Then the big boss told his soldiers to grab Paul and tie him up with 2 chains. Then he asked that mob, “What did this man do?” ³⁴ Some of the people there started shouting one thing, and some started shouting something else, and they kept shouting really loud. There was too much noise and the big boss couldn’t understand them. So he told the soldiers, “Take him into your big house.”

³⁵ Then the soldiers took Paul away, and a lot of people followed them. Those people were trying to hit Paul all the time. They came to the steps of their big house and the boss told the soldiers to carry Paul up the steps into their house. ³⁶ The mob kept shouting, “Kill him. Kill him.”

³⁷ The soldiers started to take him into their house, but Paul talked to the boss in the Greek language. He said, “Can I talk to you?”

The boss said, “Can you talk Greek? ³⁸ I thought you were that man from Egypt country that wants to fight against us Romans. He was the man that took 4,000 murderers out into the desert with him, so we couldn’t catch him. You are that man, aren’t you?”

³⁹ Paul said, “I’m not that man. I am a Jew. I was born in Tarsus, which is an important town in Cilicia country. Please, can I talk to these people?”

⁴⁰ The boss said, “All right. You can talk to them.”

So Paul stood on the steps and held up his hand to get everyone to be quiet, and after they all stopped shouting, Paul talked to them in their own language, called Hebrew.

22

Paul told the mob his story

¹ Paul said, “You Jewish people, you are my brothers and my fathers. Please listen to me now while I tell you that I haven’t done anything wrong.”

² All those people heard Paul talking to them in their own Hebrew language, so they got quiet and listened to him.

Then Paul said to them, ³ “I am a Jew, just like you. I was born in Tarsus, in Cilicia country, but I grew up here in Jerusalem. I was a young man here, and I learned all our laws. You know that really good teacher called Gamaliel? Well, he taught me all the laws that Moses gave to our grand-fathers. And I wanted to always do everything God says, so I never broke any of those laws. I’m sure that all you mob properly follow those laws too. ⁴ And I used to hurt anyone that followed Jesus, the people called the Jesus Way mob. Whenever I found them I grabbed them and put them in jail. I did that to men and to women too. I wanted to kill those people.

⁵ The big boss of our Jewish ceremonies knows this, and so do the other men that belong to our Jewish council. They gave me letters to take to our Jewish brothers in Damascus. Those letters said I could grab the Christians there, and tie them up, and bring them to Jerusalem, and our leaders here will punish them.

So I got some other men to join me and we were going along the road to Damascus. ⁶ We were getting close to Damascus, about the middle of the day, then suddenly a bright light from the sky shone all around me. ⁷ The light was so bright that I fell down to the ground. Then I heard the voice of somebody talking to me from the sky. He

said, 'Saul. Saul. Why are you making trouble for me and hurting me?'

⁸ I asked him, 'Who are you, boss?'

He said, 'I am Jesus, from Nazareth. You are making trouble for me and hurting me.'

⁹ The men that were with me saw that very bright light, and they heard that voice, but they didn't understand anything the voice said to me. ¹⁰ Then I said, 'What do you want me to do, boss?'

That boss said, 'Get up and go into Damascus. A man there will tell you everything that I want you to do.'

¹¹ That light was so bright it made me blind. I could not see, so the men with me held my hand and took me into Damascus. ¹² A man called Ananias lived in that town. He respected God, and he properly followed our Jewish laws. All the Jews living in Damascus said he was a good man. ¹³ He came to me and stood beside me, and he said to me, 'My friend Saul, you can see again now.' Then I could see again. I looked up and saw him standing there beside me. ¹⁴ Then he said, 'The God that we respect, and the one our grand-fathers respected, he picked you, and he will show you everything he wants you to do. You will see that properly good man, and you will hear him talking to you. ¹⁵ He wants you to tell everyone everywhere that you saw him and heard him. ¹⁶ So now you can stop waiting. Stand up, and pray to our leader, Jesus, and ask God not to punish you for all the bad things you did. After that I will baptise you.' That's what Ananias said to me."

Paul said he had to go to people that are not Jews

¹⁷ Paul kept talking to that mob. He said, "After that I went back to Jerusalem. One day I went to God's ceremony house. While I was praying there, I had like a dream. ¹⁸ I saw our leader, Jesus, and he was talking to

me. He said, ‘Don’t stay here. Leave Jerusalem now. The people here will not believe anything you tell them about me.’

¹⁹ I said to him, ‘But Sir, they know me. They know I went to a lot of our meeting houses looking for people that believe in you. I grabbed anyone that believed in you and I beat them up and put them in jail. ²⁰ The people here know about Stephen too. He told people about you, and they killed him. And I stood there watching them kill him, and I agreed with them. I even looked after the coats of the men that were killing him. So I reckon these Jerusalem people will not make trouble for me.’

²¹ But Jesus said to me, ‘No, don’t stay here. Leave Jerusalem. You see, I’m sending you a long way from here. I’m sending you to people that are not Jews.’”

²² The mob listened quietly to Paul until he said that. You see, they didn’t like people that were not Jews, so they got very angry with Paul and they started shouting, “Kill him. Don’t let this kind of man stay alive on this earth.”

Paul told the soldiers he was a Roman, so they didn’t whip him

²³ The mob kept on shouting, “Kill him.” And they took off their coats, and they threw dust into the air, to show that they were very angry. ²⁴ So the boss told his soldiers, “Take Paul into your big house and hit him with a whip so he will tell us why that mob are shouting at him.”

The soldiers took Paul into their house, ²⁵ then they stretched his arms out and tied them so that they could whip his back. But Paul talked to the boss of the soldiers that was standing there. He said, “Wait. I’m a Jew, but I’m a Roman too. My name is in the book in a Roman office. But you didn’t try me in a court, and no judge said that I’m

guilty, so if you whip me you will be breaking the Roman law.”

²⁶ That boss heard Paul’s words, then he went to the big boss and told him about Paul. He said, “This man is not just a Jew, he is a Roman too. Do you really want us to whip him?”

²⁷ The big boss heard that story and he was shocked. He went to Paul and said, “Tell me, are you really a Roman?”

Paul said, “Yes, I am.”

²⁸ Then the big boss said, “I’m a Roman too. I paid a lot of money for them to write my name in the book in a Roman office, so now I’m a Roman.”

Paul said, “I’ve been a Roman all my life. They wrote my name in that book as soon as I was born.”

²⁹ Those soldiers were going to whip Paul, but they heard him say he was a Roman, so they left him. The big boss was frightened too. He remembered that he told the soldiers to tie Paul’s arms and whip him, and it was against the law for him to do that to a Roman.

The big boss took Paul to the Jewish council

³⁰ The big boss of the soldiers still wanted to know why the Jews were blaming Paul, so the next day he told the bosses of the Jewish ceremonies, and the other Jewish council men, to have a meeting. Then he took Paul to that meeting and took his chains off, and told him to stand up in front of them, to listen to what they say, and to tell his story to answer them.

23

Paul said something that upset a Jewish boss

¹⁻² Paul stood up in front of the Jewish council men. One of them was the big boss of the Jewish ceremonies, called Ananias. Paul looked straight at them, and said,

“My brothers, I have respected our God all my life, and I have always done whatever I reckoned was right.”

As soon as Paul said that, Ananias said to the men that were near Paul, “Hit him on the mouth.”

³ Then Paul said to Ananias, “God will punish you for that. You reckon you are a good man but you are not a good man. You sit there to judge me using our law, but you don’t follow that law yourself. Nobody showed you that I did anything wrong, but you told these men to hit me.”

⁴ The men that were standing near Paul said, “You are saying something bad to God’s man, the big boss of our Jewish ceremonies. You shouldn’t do that.”

⁵ Paul said, “Oh, my bothers, I’m sorry. I didn’t know that he is the big boss of our Jewish ceremonies. I know that Moses wrote in our Jewish law, ‘Don’t say bad things about any of your bosses.’ ”

The soldiers got Paul out of the Jewish council

⁶⁻⁸ Some of the Jewish council men there belonged to the mob called Sadducees, and others belonged to the mob called Pharisees. The Sadducee mob believe that after people die, they will never become alive again. And they believe that there are no spirits, not even God’s spirit messengers called angels. But the Pharisees believe that all of those things are true. Paul worked out that some of those council men were Sadducees, and some were Pharisees, so he called out loudly to them. He said, “My friends, I’m a Pharisee, like my father was. I believe that after people die, one day God will make them alive again. That’s why I’m here in this court.”

As soon as Paul said that, the Pharisees and Sadducees started to argue with each other. ⁹ The council split into 2 mobs and started shouting at each other. Some

of the teachers of the law were Pharisees. They stood up and said, “We reckon this man hasn’t done anything wrong. Maybe an angel or some other spirit talked to him. That’s all right.” ¹⁰ Then those 2 mobs argued with each other and got really wild, and the big boss of the soldiers thought, “They are going to tear Paul to bits.” So he told his soldiers, “Go and save Paul from those council men, and take him back to your big house.” So the soldiers did that.

Jesus told Paul that he will go to Rome

¹¹ That night, Paul saw Jesus come and stand near him, and Jesus said to him, “Be brave, Paul. You told people here in Jerusalem about me, and you have to tell people in Rome about me, too.”

Some men said, “We will kill Paul”

¹² The next morning some of those Jews met together secretly and thought about a way to kill Paul. Then they promised God, “We will not eat or drink anything until we kill Paul. If we break this promise and don’t kill Paul, then, God, you can kill us.” ¹³ There were more than 40 men in that mob.

¹⁴ They went to the leaders of the Jewish ceremonies and the other Jewish leaders and told them, “We promised God that we will not eat or drink anything until we kill Paul. ¹⁵ So we want you to go to the big boss of the soldiers and say to him, ‘The Jewish council wants to ask Paul some more questions. Can you bring him to our meeting place?’ But we will hide beside the road, and when they bring Paul along it we will jump up and kill him.”

A young man talked to the boss soldier

¹⁶ But the son of Paul's sister heard what those Jews were going to do, so he went into the big house of the soldiers and told Paul about it. ¹⁷ Then Paul called to one of the bosses of the soldiers and said, "Please take this young man to your big boss. He has some news to tell him."

¹⁸ So that soldier took him to his big boss and said, "That prisoner, Paul, called me and asked me to take this young man to you. He has some news to tell you."

¹⁹ The big boss held the young man's hand and took him away from the other people, and then he asked him, "What is the news you have for me?"

²⁰ The young man said, "The Jewish leaders will ask you to take Paul to their council place tomorrow. They will tell you they want to ask him some more questions. But that is not true. ²¹ Don't do what they will ask you to do. There are more than 40 men that will hide beside that road and wait for Paul to come along, so they can grab him and kill him. They even promised God that they will not eat or drink anything until they kill Paul. They are ready right now. They are just waiting for you to agree to do what they want."

²² The big boss of the soldiers said to the young man, "You can go home now, but don't tell anyone that you told me this news."

A lot of soldiers took Paul to a safe place

²³ Then the big boss got 2 other bosses of soldiers and told them, "Get 200 soldiers ready to go north to Caesarea. And get ready 70 soldiers that ride horses to go there with you, and get another 200 soldiers ready, those soldiers that use spears, and they can go with you too. All of you have to be ready to leave at 9 o'clock tonight. ²⁴ And get horses for Paul to ride, and take him to Felix, the governor

of this country. He is in the town called Caesarea. Make sure you keep Paul safe.”

²⁵ Then that big boss of the soldiers wrote a letter for them to take with them to that governor of the country. He wrote,

²⁶ “Dear Felix

I am Claudius Lysias. I’m writing to your honour, Felix, the governor of this country. I hope you are good and happy.

²⁷ I’m sending this man, Paul, to you. Some Jews grabbed him and they were starting to kill him, but somebody told me that he is a Roman, so I got my soldiers and we saved him. ²⁸ Then I wanted to know about the bad thing those Jews blamed him for, so I took him to their Jewish council. ²⁹ I found out that they only blamed him for things in their Jewish law. He has not broken any of our Roman laws, so it is not right for us to kill him or put him in jail.

³⁰ And right now somebody told me that some Jews are secretly thinking about a way to kill Paul, so I’m sending him to you. I reckon you can judge him properly there. And I told the Jews that want to blame him, ‘Go and do that in the court at Caesarea.’ ”

That is the letter that the big boss of the soldiers wrote.

³¹ So the soldiers did everything their big boss told them to do. They got Paul and took him with them that night, and they went to the town called Antipatris. ³² The next day, the soldiers that didn’t ride horses went back to their big house in Jerusalem, and the soldiers on horses kept going with Paul. ³³ After they got to Caesarea on their horses, they gave Paul to the governor, and they gave him the letter too.

³⁴ The governor read the letter and then he asked Paul, “What country do you come from?”

Paul said, “I’m from Cilicia country.”

³⁵ Then the governor said, “The people that are blaming you will come here and I will listen to them, then I will listen to you too, and then I will say if you are guilty or not.” And he told the soldiers, “Put Paul in the jail in the big house called Herod’s House.”

24

The Jewish bosses blamed Paul in court

¹ Then, 5 days later, the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem got up and went to Caesarea. One of them was the big boss of the Jewish ceremonies, called Ananias, and another was a lawyer called Tertullus. And there were some other Jewish leaders too. They wanted to blame Paul, and tell the governor that Paul did bad things. ²⁻³ So the governor told a soldier, “Bring Paul into the court room.”

Then Tertullus started to blame Paul. He said, “Your honour, Felix, you have been our governor for a long time, and you have been a good boss for us. You have made a lot of things in this country better, and we have been happy and quiet all the time, with no trouble. So we just want to thank you for everything that you do for us all the time.

⁴ But now, I don’t want to take up too much of your time, so I ask you to listen to me for a little while. ⁵ You see, this man is a trouble maker. He makes trouble everywhere he goes. He gets the Jews upset everywhere and they go wild. He is the leader of that mob called the Nazarene mob. ⁶ He even tried to make God’s ceremony house bad, so we grabbed him. ⁸ If you ask him questions you will find out for yourself that everything we are telling you is true.”

⁹ The other Jewish leaders blamed Paul too, and they reckoned that everything Tertullus said was true.

Paul said the Jews were wrong, and he told the he was a Christian

¹⁰ Then the governor waved with his hand to Paul to let him know that it was his turn to talk.

So Paul said, “I know that you have been a judge in this country for a long time, so I’m happy to tell you the true story.

¹¹ You see, just 12 days ago I went to Jerusalem to show respect to God. You can check on this yourself and you will find that it is true. That is not enough time for me to make a lot of trouble. ¹² This mob didn’t see me arguing with anyone at God’s ceremony house, and they didn’t see me upsetting anybody, or making them go wild, not in any Jewish meeting house, and nowhere else in Jerusalem. I never did that anywhere. ¹³ They can’t show you that the things they say are true.

¹⁴ But I can tell you this, I do show respect to the God that our Jewish tribe always respected. It is true that I’m with the mob called the Jesus Way. The Jewish leaders say that our mob are wrong, but that is not true. And I believe everything in God’s book. I keep our law and I believe everything that God got his men to write in his book. ¹⁵ And I’m sure that one day God will make all the dead people come alive again, both the people that were good and the people that were bad. These Jewish leaders here agree with me about that, too. ¹⁶ I always try to do whatever God wants, and I always try to do whatever other people want too, so I always feel good about the things I do.

¹⁷ Let me tell you what happened. A few years ago I went to some other countries, and then a few days ago I got back to Jerusalem. I brought some money with me to give to poor people there, and I wanted to show respect

to God by giving things to him at his ceremony house. ¹⁸ And I did the ceremony to make myself clean. But some Jews saw me there at God's ceremony house. I was by myself. There was no mob of people with me, and I was not upsetting anybody or getting them to go wild. ¹⁹ But it was some other Jews from Asia country that made the people go wild. If those Asia Jews really thought I did something wrong, why didn't they come here to blame me in front of you? I reckon they know their story isn't true. ²⁰ And this mob here, they had me in their Jewish court in Jerusalem. But can they tell you that they found me guilty of something? No. I told them my story and they didn't say that I was guilty of anything. ²¹ But there is one thing I did in that court that upset them. I shouted, 'You are judging me today because I believe that God will make all the dead people become alive again.' That's all I said."

Felix stopped the court to wait till another day

²² Then Felix stopped the court. You see, he already knew a lot about the Jesus Way. He said to them all, "That boss of the soldiers in Jerusalem, called Lysias, he will come here later, and I will listen to his story too, and then I will say if Paul is guilty or not."

²³ Then he told the boss of his soldiers, "Take Paul back to the jail and make sure that he stays there, but don't tie him up. And let his friends come to visit him and look after him."

Felix wanted Paul to give him money to let him go free

²⁴ A few days later Felix came back with his wife. She was a Jewish woman called Drusilla. Felix told a soldier to bring Paul to them, and they listened to him talk. Paul told them, "We have to believe in Jesus. He is the one

God sent to us.”²⁵ And Paul told them about the way God wants people to live, and that he wants us to do what is right, and he wants us to control ourselves. And Paul told them that God will judge everybody one day.

Felix heard Paul talking about those things and he got frightened. He said, “Stop, Paul, that’s enough. You can go back to the jail now. Maybe there will be a better time, and then I will get you to come and talk to me again.”

²⁶ And Felix hoped that Paul might give him some money to let him get out of jail, so he often sent somebody to get Paul, and he talked with him. But Paul didn’t give Felix any money, so Felix didn’t let him go.

²⁷ Felix kept Paul in jail there for 2 years. Then the time came for them to change the boss of that country, and another big boss called Porcius Festus came to take over from him. Felix wanted to keep the Jewish leaders happy, so he didn’t let Paul go out of that jail. Paul was still in jail there when Porcius Festus took over.

25

Festus told the Jewish leaders to go to Caesarea to blame Paul

¹ Festus started to be the new governor of that country, then 3 days later, he got up and went from Caesarea to Jerusalem. ² The leaders of the Jewish ceremonies and the other Jewish leaders talked to him there in Jerusalem. They blamed Paul and reckoned he did bad things. ³ Then they asked Festus, “Can you tell your soldiers to bring Paul to Jerusalem right now, and judge him here?” You see, they were going to secretly hide near the road and wait for Paul to come along, then jump up and kill him.

⁴ But Festus said, “Paul is in Caesarea, and my soldiers are guarding him there. I’ll be going back to Caesarea in a

few days, ⁵ so you pick some of your leaders to come with me. They can blame Paul in my court there.”

Paul asked for the biggest boss to judge him

⁶ About 8 or 10 days later the Jewish leaders went with Festus back to Caesarea, and the next day Festus had his court. He sat there as the judge. He told his soldiers, “Bring Paul in now.”

⁷ After they brought Paul into the court room the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem stood up and blamed him. They told Festus, “Paul did a lot of bad things.” But they couldn’t show the judge that their story was true. ⁸ Then Paul talked to them to say that he was not guilty. He said, “I haven’t done anything wrong. I didn’t break the Jewish law and I didn’t break the rules about God’s ceremony house, and I didn’t break your Roman laws.”

⁹ But Festus wanted the Jewish leaders to be happy, so he asked Paul, “How about this. I can send you to Jerusalem and I can judge you there. Will that be all right?”

¹⁰ Paul said, “No, I’m not happy to go to Jerusalem. Look, the biggest Roman boss is Caesar, and he made you the judge here, so this is the right place for you to judge me. You know I didn’t do anything wrong to the Jewish people. ¹¹ If I did something bad, like something that the law says to kill people for, I will let them kill me. I will not ask them to let me go free. But I didn’t do anything bad like that. So nobody can give me to this mob and let them kill me. No. Instead of that, I ask you to send me to the biggest Roman boss, called Caesar. I’m asking you to let him judge me in his big city, Rome.”

¹² Festus talked with his friends there. They were the men that helped him think about things. Then Festus said

to Paul, “All right. You want me to send you to Caesar, and I will do that. I’ll send you to Caesar, and he can judge you there in Rome.”

Festus told a big boss called Agrippa about Paul

¹³ After a few days, the big boss of another country came to Caesarea. He was called Agrippa. His young sister, called Bernice, came with him. They came to say hello to Festus, and to say, “We are happy for you to be the new governor of this country.”

¹⁴ While they were there at Caesarea, Festus told that big boss about Paul. He said, “Felix left a prisoner in jail here. He’s a different kind of man. ¹⁵ You see, I went to Jerusalem and the leaders of the Jewish ceremonies, and the other Jewish leaders there, told me that this man did a lot of bad things. They asked me to say he is guilty, and to tell my soldiers to kill him.

¹⁶ But I told them, “That’s not the way we Romans judge people. If somebody blames another person, we don’t say he is guilty until after we get him, and the people that are blaming him, all into a court room together. And we give him a chance to say why he reckons he is not guilty.’

¹⁷ So those Jewish leaders came here to Caesarea with me. I didn’t waste any time. The next day I sat down in the court room, I told some soldiers to bring Paul in.

¹⁸ The Jewish leaders stood up and blamed him, but they didn’t blame him for anything really bad, like I thought they would. ¹⁹ They only talked about things that some Jews believe and other Jews don’t believe. They argued about a dead man called Jesus, and Paul kept saying, ‘Jesus is alive.’

²⁰ I really didn’t know the right way to handle this court. I didn’t know any questions to ask Paul, so I said to

him, 'Are you happy to go to Jerusalem and let me judge you there?'

²¹ But Paul said, 'No, I'm not happy to go to Jerusalem. I want that biggest boss called Caesar, to judge me.' So I told my soldiers to guard Paul here, until I can send him to Caesar, in Rome."

²² Then Agrippa said to Festus, "Look, I'd like to hear that man myself."

Festus said, "All right, I'll let you hear him tomorrow."

Festus wanted Agrippa to help him write a letter about Paul

²³ The next day Agrippa and his young sister Bernice came into the court room. Some bosses of soldiers came with them, and the leaders of Caesarea came with them too. There was a lot of ceremony for them as they came in.

Then Festus told his soldiers, "Bring Paul into the court room." So they brought him in. ²⁴ Then Festus said, "Big boss Agrippa, and all of you that are here now, look at this man. A lot of Jews in Jerusalem, and the Jews here in Caesarea too, they want me to say this man is guilty. They really shouted at me. They said, 'You have to kill him now.'

²⁵ So I asked them, 'What did he do?' And I found out that he didn't do anything bad, so we can't kill him. But then he asked me to send him to Rome, for our biggest boss to judge him, so now I reckon I will send him to Rome.

²⁶ But I can't think of anything to write about him, to tell our big boss about any bad things he did. So I brought him here. I want you all to hear him tell his story, and I especially want you, Agrippa, to hear him. Then we can ask him some questions, and maybe I will find out something to write about him. ²⁷ You see, I reckon it's not right to send a prisoner to Rome without telling them about something bad that people are blaming him for."

26

Paul talked to the big bosses

¹ Then Agrippa said to Paul, “All right, you can talk to us now and tell us your story.”

Paul held out his hand and started to tell them why he was not guilty. He said, ²⁻³ “Big boss Agrippa, I reckon I’m lucky. You know all about the culture of us Jews, and you know the things we argue about, and today you are hearing me talk. I reckon you will understand me. You see, the Jewish leaders are blaming me for a lot of things. So I ask you, please wait and listen to me now.”

Paul said he used to be a Pharisee

⁴ Then Paul said, “A lot of Jewish people know the way I used to live, from the time I was a young man. They know the way I lived in my home country, and also in Jerusalem. ⁵ They know that I joined the mob called the Pharisees, and I kept our law properly, like all the Pharisees do. Those Jews that are blaming me know this, and they can tell you this about me if they want to.

⁶⁻⁷ You see, boss, I believe that God will do everything that he promised to our grand-fathers of long ago. All of us Jews, in all of our 12 tribes, we are all waiting for God to do the thing he promised, and we show respect to him all the time. We know he will do it. And I really believe that too. But now those Jewish leaders are blaming me for believing it. ⁸ You see, you mob don’t believe that God can make dead people alive again. But he can. Why can’t you believe it?”

Paul said he used to hurt Christians

⁹ Paul kept talking, he said, “You know, at one time I thought I had to stop people from following Jesus, the man from Nazareth. I did a lot of things to try to stop

them. ¹⁰ I started in Jerusalem. I put a lot of Christians in jail. The bosses of the Jewish ceremonies told me to do that. And if they judged any of those Christians and said, 'Kill them,' I agreed with them, and I said that too. ¹¹ I often punished the Christians that were in the Jewish meeting houses. I tried to get them to say bad things about Jesus.

I was so angry with Jesus's followers that I even went to other towns to get them."

Paul told them that he met Jesus

¹² Paul kept telling his story. He said, "The bosses of the Jewish ceremonies in Jerusalem said I can go to Damascus to grab the Christians there, so I started to go to Damascus to look for the Christians. ¹³ And then, boss, while I was going along the road, about the middle of the day, I saw a bright light in the sky. It was even brighter than the sun. It shone all around me, and the men that were with me. ¹⁴ We all fell down on to the ground. Then I heard the voice of somebody talking to me in the Hebrew language, he said, 'Saul, Saul, why are you making trouble for me and hurting me? You are hurting yourself too, you know.'

¹⁵ Then I asked, 'Who are you, boss?'

That boss said to me, 'I am Jesus. You are making trouble for me and hurting me. Whenever you hurt my followers, you are hurting me too. ¹⁶ But stop doing that and get up, and stand on your feet. Listen, I came to you like this now to pick you to be my worker. I want you to tell everyone everywhere about the things you have seen, and tell them about the things that I will show you later. ¹⁷ And if anyone tries to kill you, I will save you from them. I will save you from your own Jewish people, and I will save you from people that are not Jewish. You see, I will send you to other countries, to people that are not Jews,

¹⁸ and you will tell them the true message about me. It will be like you will open their eyes to see things properly. They will come to God. Satan will not control them any more with his power, like they will not be in the dark any more, but they will be in the light. They will believe in me, and they will stop believing lies. And then God will say they are not guilty of the bad things they did, and they will be God's people.' Jesus said that to me."

Paul said he did everything Jesus told him to do

¹⁹ Paul kept talking to them, he said, "It happened like that, Boss Agrippa. Jesus talked to me from heaven, and I did everything he told me to do. ²⁰ I told a lot of people to stop doing bad things and turn to God, and to start doing good things to show that they are following God now. At first I told that message to the Jews in Damascus, then I told it to the Jews in Jerusalem, and I told it to the Jews in Judea country. After that, I told it to people that are not Jews."

Paul's message is the same as the message in God's book

²¹ And Paul said, "I told everyone this message, but some of the Jewish people didn't like it, so they grabbed me and they tried to kill me. They did that in God's ceremony house. ²²⁻²³ But God helped me. You see, God helps me all the time, and he is still helping me now. So I'm standing here now telling you mob about Jesus. I'm telling this message to you big bosses, and I'm telling it to all you other people too. I'm telling you that Jesus is the special person that God sent to us. That message is already in God's book. I'm saying things that Moses and God's other men wrote, a long time ago, about something that was going to happen, that people will hurt God's special person and kill him, but then he will be the first

person that God will make alive again. Then he will tell everyone that God can save them. In this way he will be like a light for them. He will be a light for both Jewish people, and people that are not Jews.”

Paul wanted them all to become Christians

²⁴ While Paul was talking Festus suddenly shouted, “Paul, you are mad. You have been reading too much, and now you are mad.”

²⁵ But Paul said, “No, Festus Sir, I’m not mad. I’m talking in a true and sensible way. ²⁶ The big boss here knows about these things, so I can talk to him and I know he will understand. You see, people everywhere have heard about Jesus.”

²⁷ Then Paul said, “Boss Agrippa, do you believe the message God’s men wrote in his book? Yes, I know you believe it.”

²⁸ Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You have just been talking to me for a little while. Don’t think you can get me to become a Christian so quick.”

²⁹ Paul said, “It doesn’t matter if it is quick, or if it takes a long time. I’m asking God that you and everyone that is listening to me will believe in Jesus, like I do. I want you to be just like I am now. But I don’t want you to be a prisoner like I am now.”

Agrippa said that Paul has to go to Rome

³⁰ Then those 2 big bosses stood up, and Bernice, and all the others there, they all got up, ³¹ and they all went out of that room. While they were going out they said to each other, “This man didn’t do anything bad. We don’t have to kill him, or even keep him in jail.”

³² Then Agrippa said to Festus, “Maybe you could let this man go free, but there is a problem. He asked us to send him to Rome for the biggest boss, called Caesar, to

judge him. So you can't let him go free. You have to send him to Caesar, the biggest boss in Rome."

27

The Romans started to take Paul to their biggest boss

¹ Later the governor reckoned it was time for Paul to go to Rome, in Italy country, so he took him and some other prisoners to a boss of soldiers, called Julius, and told him, "Take all these prisoners to Rome." Julius was the boss of a mob of soldiers called the Augustus Mob. They let me, Luke, go with them.

² So we got on a ship that came from a town called Adramyttium. It was going to sail to some of the towns along the coast of Asia country. Aristarchus and I went with Paul. Aristarchus comes from Thessalonica, in Macedonia country. We all started sailing on that ship, and ³ the next day we stopped at the town called Sidon. Julius was good to Paul and let him go and see his friends there, so they could give him anything he needed. Then he came back on to the ship.

⁴ After that the ship left Sidon, but the wind was blowing against us, so the ship went along the north side of Cyprus Island, to get away from the wind. ⁵ Then we crossed over the sea close to the coast of Cilicia country and Pamphylia country, and we came to a town called Myra, in Lycia country. Then we got off the ship there and looked for another ship to take us to Rome.

⁶ In Myra, people told Julius, "There is another ship here that came from the town called Alexandria, and it is going to sail to Italy country." So Julius took us to that other ship, and we got on it, and we left Myra.

⁷ We sailed slowly for a few days and then we came close to the coast of Asia country, near a town called

Cnidus. After that the wind got very strong. It didn't let the ship sail straight ahead toward the west, so we sailed toward the south. We sailed along the south side of Crete Island to get away from the wind. We went past Cape Salmone. ⁸ The wind was still strong, so the ship couldn't sail properly, and we went slowly along the coast of Crete Island until we came to a place called Fair Havens Harbour, near a town called Lasea.

Paul told them to wait, but they kept going

⁹ It took us a long time to get to Fair Havens Harbour. It was already October, and the bad weather was coming soon. If we kept going we might get big trouble from storms. So Paul said to the men in charge of the ship, ¹⁰ "Listen, men, I reckon that if we keep going we will get big trouble. I reckon a storm will wreck this ship and you will lose everything in it, and we might drown too."

¹¹ But the boss of the soldiers didn't listen to Paul. He listened to the captain and the owner of the ship. ¹² That place, Fair Havens Harbour, was not a good place to stay in the cold weather time, so most of the people on the ship reckoned we had to leave there and go on a bit further, to a town called Phoenix, and stay there for the cold weather time. The harbour at Phoenix was all right. It was open to the sea in 2 directions, but the strong winds didn't blow in those directions in the cold weather time.

¹³ We waited at Fair Havens Harbour till the strong wind stopped. Then a little wind started to blow from the south, and the sailors thought that they could sail the ship to Phoenix, so they lifted the anchor, and sailed west along the southern shore of Crete Island. ¹⁴ But after a little while, the wind changed, and a big strong wind blew across the island from the north side, and it pushed the ship to the south, away from the land. (That wind was

called the Northeaster.) ¹⁵ The sailors couldn't steer the ship the right way. The wind kept blowing it the wrong way. So they just let the wind take the ship anywhere.

¹⁶ The ship was towing a little boat behind it. After a little while we went beside a little island called Cauda. That little island blocked the wind a bit, so we could lift the little boat up out of the water and tie it on to the deck of the ship. The strong wind made that a really hard job for us.

¹⁷ After that the sailors tied ropes around the middle of the ship to make it stronger, so the waves wouldn't break it. The wind was pushing the ship very fast, and the sailors reckoned we might run on to the sandbanks near Libya country, and get stuck there, so they got a big bag on a rope, and they threw it out behind the ship and let it drag in the water. This made the ship slow down a bit, but the wind kept blowing it along. ¹⁸ The wind and the waves kept throwing the ship about. It was very rough. So the next day the sailors wanted to make the ship lighter and they started to throw things overboard. They threw away all the load that the ship was carrying. ¹⁹ On the 3rd day of the storm the sailors even threw overboard a lot of the ship's own things, like its sails, and poles.

²⁰ The wind kept blowing really hard, and the sky was full of dark clouds all day and all night. We couldn't see the sun or the stars for a long time, so we didn't know where we were. And the wind and the waves kept throwing us about, and after some time we thought we were going to drown in the sea.

Paul told them they will not drown

²¹ None of us on the ship wanted to eat any food. We didn't eat anything for a long time. Then one day, Paul stood up in front of us and said, "Listen, men, you

didn't listen to me in Crete but you sailed out of that little harbour. So now you are in trouble, and you lost all the things this ship was carrying. ²² But listen. Don't be frightened. I'm telling you that none of us will die. But the wind and waves will wreck this ship. ²³ You see, I work for God, and last night he sent one of his angel messengers to me. He came and stood beside me, ²⁴ and he said, 'Paul, don't be frightened. You have to go to Rome and stand in front of the big boss called Caesar. And God will be good to all the others, too, that are with you on this ship. None of them will die.'

²⁵ Listen friends, I believe that God will help us, just like that angel told me. ²⁶ But the ship will crash on to an island, and we will all go ashore there."

Paul stopped the sailors from leaving the ship

²⁷ We were in that storm for 2 weeks. The wind was still blowing the ship across the water called the Adriatic Sea. Then, about the middle of the night, the sailors thought the ship was getting close to land. ²⁸ So they got a rope with a stone on the end of it and dropped it into the water to find out how deep it was. That stone went down 37 meters into the water, so they knew the water was 37 metres deep. We went a little further and then they threw the stone out again. This time it only went down 28 metres, so they knew the water was not so deep there. ²⁹ In that way they knew for sure that the ship was getting close to land. Then they got frightened. They thought the ship might smash on to some rocks, so they threw out 4 anchors on ropes from the back, to stop the ship, and they hoped for daylight to come so they could see the land.

³⁰ The sailors wanted to leave the ship in the little boat, so they lied to everyone, they said, "We are going to drop

some anchors from the front of the ship.” Then they started to lower the little boat into the sea.

³¹ But Paul told the soldiers, and their boss, “If these sailors don’t stay on the ship, you will all drown.” ³² So the soldiers cut the ropes of the little boat and let it fall down into the water and go away.

Paul got them all to eat some food to stay alive

³³ Just before daylight came, Paul tried to get everyone to eat some food. He said, “For the past 14 days you were too worried, and you didn’t eat anything. ³⁴ So now I’m telling you, you’ve got to eat some food, so you will get stronger and stay alive. I know that none of you will drown.”

³⁵ After he said that, while everyone was looking at him, Paul picked up some bread and thanked God for it. Then he broke the bread and started to eat it. ³⁶ Then the rest of us felt better, so we all ate some food. ³⁷ There were 276 of us on the ship altogether.

³⁸ Everyone ate as much as they wanted, then they threw the rest of the seed food out of the ship into the sea, and this made the ship a bit lighter.

The ship started to break up

³⁹ Then the daylight came, and we saw the land. The sailors didn’t know that place, but they could see a bay with a beach, and they reckoned, “Maybe we can steer the ship on to that beach.” ⁴⁰ So they cut the anchor ropes and let the anchors stay in the sea, and at the same time, they untied the rudders, so they could steer the ship again. Then they raised the sail at the front of the ship so the wind could blow the ship towards the land. ⁴¹ The ship started to go towards the beach, but half way there it hit a sandbank. The front of the ship got stuck there and didn’t

go any further, and the big waves kept hitting the back of the ship and started to break it up.

The boss of the soldiers saved Paul, and everyone got to the shore

⁴² The soldiers said to their boss, “Let’s kill all the prisoners so they can’t swim to the beach and run away.”

⁴³ But their boss wanted to save Paul, so he said, “No.”

Then he told everybody, “If you can swim, jump into the water now and swim to the land. You mob go first.”

⁴⁴ After they did that, the others that couldn’t swim grabbed things that float, like bits of broken wood from the back of the ship, and they held on to those things in the water until the waves washed them to the beach. So we all got to that land. None of us drowned.

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A cheeky snake bit Paul

¹ After we got to the land all right we found out that it was an island called Malta. ² The people that lived there were good to us. It was raining and it was cold, so those people lit a fire and told us, “Come and get warm at this fire.”

³ Paul walked around and picked up some sticks and put them on the fire. But a cheeky snake jumped out from those sticks to get away from the fire, and it bit Paul’s hand and just hung on there. ⁴ The people saw it hanging from Paul’s hand, and they knew that it was a cheeky one, so they said to each other, “I reckon that prisoner murdered somebody. He has was lucky in the sea and didn’t drown, but the god that punishes people will not let him live. The snake will kill him.”

⁵ But Paul just shook the snake until it fell off into the fire, and nothing happened to him. ⁶ The people watched

Paul. They thought, “His body will swell up, or he will fall down dead.” But after they waited a long time they saw that he was still all right. Nothing bad happened to him. So then they changed their minds and said, “This man is a god.”

Paul made a lot of people better at Malta

⁷ The Roman boss of that island was called Publius. He owned some gardens near that beach. He asked us to come and stay at his place, and he took care of us for 3 days.

⁸ At that time father of Publius was very sick. He was just lying in his bed all the time. He was hot with fever, and he had diarrhoea. So Paul went to see him. Then he put his hands on him, and prayed for him, and made him better.

⁹ After Paul did that, all the other sick people on the island came to him, and he made them better too. ¹⁰ Then the people there did a lot of things to show they thought we were great. And when the time came for us to get ready to sail away on another ship, those people gave us food and other things that we needed.

We all sailed to Puteoli, then kept going by road

¹¹ There was another ship there that had statues of the twin gods called Castor and Pollux on the front of it. That ship came from the town called Alexandria before the bad weather started and it stayed at Malta until the bad weather was finished. We stayed at Malta in that bad weather time too, for about 3 months. Then that other ship got ready to go on to Italy country, so we all got on that ship to go to Rome, in Italy country.

¹² We sailed away from Malta and we came to an island called Sicily, and we stopped at a town called Syracuse. We stayed there for 3 days. ¹³ Then we kept going and we

came to a town called Rhegium, in Italy country. The next day the wind was blowing from behind us and pushing us fast, and the day after that we came to the town called Puteoli. Then we got off there and left that ship. ¹⁴ We met some Christians in Puteoli, and they asked us to stay with them, so we stayed there for a week. Then we left Puteoli and started to go along the road to Rome.

Christians came from Rome to meet Paul

¹⁵ Some Christians that lived in Rome heard that we were coming, so they came out from Rome to meet us half way. Some of them met us at the place called Appius, and others met us at the place called the 3 Pubs. Paul saw them and he felt really good and happy, and he thanked God for them.

¹⁶ Then we all came to Rome. The Roman boss that was in charge of the prisoners there let Paul live in a house by himself, but he always had a soldier there to guard him.

The Jewish leaders asked Paul to talk to them

¹⁷ After Paul was in Rome for 3 days, he sent a message to the Jewish leaders to come and talk with him. So they came, and Paul said to them, “My brothers, I didn’t do anything bad to our people, and I didn’t say anything bad about our Jewish culture. But our leaders in Jerusalem grabbed me, and they started to kill me. Then the boss of the Roman soldiers came and got me, and made me his prisoner. ¹⁸ The Roman bosses asked me questions in their court, and they listened to what I said to answer them, and they reckoned that I didn’t do anything bad. So they wanted to let me go. ¹⁹ But the Jewish leaders didn’t agree, so I had to ask those bosses to send me to Rome, for the big boss called Caesar to judge me. But I

don't want to make any trouble for my own Jewish people, about anything.

²⁰ So I asked you to come here now. I want to meet you and tell you my story. You see, I believe in the man that we are all waiting for. He is the one that God promised to send to us Israel people. But our leaders of Israel didn't agree with me, and that is why I'm a prisoner now, tied up with this chain."

²¹ Then the Jewish leaders said, "We didn't get any letters about you from our Jewish friends in Judea country. And some people came here from Judea, but none of them said anything bad about you. ²² But we know that people in a lot of places don't agree with the Christians, so we want to hear what you have to say."

²³ Then they talked together and agreed to come back on another day to hear Paul.

Paul said, "People that are not Jews will believe God's message."

When that day came a lot of Jews came to Paul's house. He started talking with them in the morning, and he kept going until the sun went down. He told them about the way God wants to bring people into his family, and he showed them that God's book says that Jesus is the man that God sent to save people. He talked to them about the words in God's book that Moses wrote, and the words that God's other men wrote. He showed them that they all told that message about Jesus.

²⁴ Some of them believed Paul's words, but others didn't believe him. ²⁵ So they started to argue with each other, and then they got up to go home. Then Paul told those that didn't believe his message, "The Holy Spirit said a true word to your grand-fathers of long ago. He

got his man, called Isaiah, to write it in God's book. He wrote,
²⁶⁻²⁷ 'Go to these Jewish people and say,
"You keep hearing God's words with your ears,
but you don't understand them properly.
It's like your ears are going deaf.
You keep looking with your eyes and you see God doing things,
but you don't understand it all.
It's like you closed your eyes.
Your problem is that you don't want to know God's message.
If you do understand God's message properly you will turn around and come back to him,
and then God will not say you are guilty for the bad things you did.
But you mob don't want to come back to God." '

That's what Isaiah wrote."

²⁸ Paul kept talking to them, he said, "You Jews have to understand this. God sent his message to you, but you didn't listen to it. So he is sending that message to the people that are not Jews, and they will listen to it, and believe it."

³⁰ For the next 2 years Paul was a prisoner in Rome, but he wasn't in jail. They let him stay in the house that he rented. A lot of people came to him, and he was happy to see them and talk with them. ³¹ He taught them the way that God takes people into his family, and he taught them all about our leader Jesus Christ. He wasn't frightened of anyone, and nobody tried to stop him talking to people.

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