

Acts

BEREAN STANDARD BIBLE

Chapter 1

PROLOGUE

¹In my first book, O Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach, ²until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. ³After His suffering, He presented Himself to them with many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a span of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴And while they were gathered together, He commanded them: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift the Father promised, which you have heard Me discuss. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

THE ASCENSION

⁶So when they came together, they asked Him, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷Jesus replied, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ⁹After He had said this, they watched as He was taken up, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. ¹⁰They were looking intently into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.”

MATTHIAS REPLACES JUDAS

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near the city, a Sabbath day’s journey away. ¹³When they arrived, they went to the upper room where they were staying: Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴With one accord they all continued in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. ¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (a gathering of about a hundred and twenty) and said, ¹⁶“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit foretold through the mouth of David con-

cerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷He was one of our number and shared in this ministry.” ¹⁸(Now with the reward for his wickedness Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong and burst open in the middle, and all his intestines spilled out. ¹⁹This became known to all who lived in Jerusalem, so they called that field in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰“For it is written in the book of Psalms: ‘May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,’ and, ‘May another take his position.’” ²¹Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have accompanied us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from John’s baptism until the day Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” ²³So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. ²⁴And they prayed, “Lord, You know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two You have chosen” ²⁵to take up this ministry and apostleship, which Judas abandoned to go to his rightful place.” ²⁶Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias. So he was added to the eleven apostles.

Chapter 2

THE HOLY SPIRIT AT PENTECOST

¹When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. ⁵Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶And when this sound rang out, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking his own language. ⁷Astounded and amazed, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸How is it then that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome, ¹¹both Jews and converts to Judaism; Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring

the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹²Astounded and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³But others mocked them and said, "They are drunk on new wine!"

PETER ADDRESSES THE CROWD

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, lifted up his voice, and addressed the crowd: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen carefully to my words. ¹⁵These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It is only the third hour of the day! ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸Even on My menservants and maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰The sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and glorious Day of the Lord. ²¹And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' ²²Men of Israel, listen to this message: Jesus of Nazareth was a man certified by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. ²³He was delivered up by God's set plan and foreknowledge, and you, by the hands of the lawless, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. ²⁴But God raised Him from the dead, releasing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep Him in its grip. ²⁵David says about Him: 'I saw the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will dwell in hope, ²⁷because You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor will You let Your Holy One see decay. ²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence.' ²⁹Brothers, I can tell you with confidence that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that He would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Foreseeing this, David spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did His body see decay. ³²God has raised this Jesus to life, to which we are all witnesses. ³³Exalted, then, to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴For David did not ascend into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand ³⁵until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'"

³⁶Therefore let all Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ!"

THREE THOUSAND BELIEVE

³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and asked Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹This promise belongs to you and your children and to all who are far off—to all whom the Lord our God will call to Himself." ⁴⁰With many other words he testified, and he urged them, "Be saved from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹Those who embraced his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to the believers that day.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF BELIEVERS

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need. ⁴⁶With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Chapter 3

A LAME MAN WALKS

¹One afternoon Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. ²And a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those entering the temple courts. ³When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴Peter looked directly at him, as did John. "Look at us!" said Peter. ⁵So the man gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶But Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" ⁷Taking him by the right hand, Peter helped him up, and at once the man's feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸He sprang to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰they rec-

ognized him as the man who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

PETER SPEAKS IN SOLOMON'S COLONNADE

¹¹While the man clung to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and ran to them in the walkway called Solomon's Colonnade. ¹²And when Peter saw this, he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why are you surprised by this? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus. You handed Him over and rejected Him before Pilate, even though he had decided to release Him. ¹⁴You rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵You killed the Author of life, but God raised Him from the dead, and we are witnesses of this fact. ¹⁶By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know has been made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through Him that has given him this complete healing in your presence. ¹⁷And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ¹⁸But in this way God has fulfilled what He foretold through all the prophets, saying that His Christ would suffer. ¹⁹Repent, then, and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped away, ²⁰that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus, the Christ, who has been appointed for you. ²¹Heaven must take Him in until the time comes for the restoration of all things, which God announced long ago through His holy prophets. ²²For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to Him in everything He tells you. ²³Everyone who does not listen to Him will be completely cut off from among his people.' ²⁴Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have proclaimed these days. ²⁵And you are sons of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers when He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed.' ²⁶When God raised up His Servant, He sent Him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

Chapter 4

PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

¹While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, ²greatly disturbed that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the res-

urrection of the dead. ³They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in custody until the next day. ⁴But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand. ⁵The next day the rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, ⁶along with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and many others from the high priest's family. ⁷They had Peter and John brought in and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹If we are being examined today about a kind service to a man who was lame, to determine how he was healed, ¹⁰then let this be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹This Jesus is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.' ¹²Salvation exists in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

THE NAME FORBIDDEN

¹³When they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they marveled and took note that these men had been with Jesus. ¹⁴And seeing the man who had been healed standing there with them, they had nothing to say in response. ¹⁵So they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶"What shall we do with these men?" they asked. "It is clear to everyone living in Jerusalem that a remarkable miracle has occurred through them, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷But to keep this message from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in this name." ¹⁸Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than God. ²⁰For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." ²¹After further threats they let them go. They could not find a way to punish them, because all the people were glorifying God for what had happened. ²²For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

THE BELIEVERS' PRAYER

²³On their release, Peter and John returned to their own people and reported everything that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴When the believers heard this, they lifted up their voices to God with one accord. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "You made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them. ²⁵You spoke by

the Holy Spirit through the mouth of Your servant, our father David: ‘Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His Anointed One.’ ²⁷In fact, this is the very city where Herod and Pontius Pilate conspired with the Gentiles and the people of Israel against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed. ²⁸They carried out what Your hand and will had decided beforehand would happen. ²⁹And now, Lord, consider their threats, and enable Your servants to speak Your word with complete boldness, ³⁰as You stretch out Your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹After they had prayed, their meeting place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

SHARING AMONG BELIEVERS

³²The multitude of believers was one in heart and soul. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they owned. ³³With great power the apostles continued to give their testimony about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And abundant grace was upon them all. ³⁴There were no needy ones among them, because those who owned lands or houses would sell their property, bring the proceeds from the sales, ³⁵and lay them at the apostles’ feet for distribution to anyone as he had need. ³⁶Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (meaning Son of Encouragement), ³⁷sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.

Chapter 5

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

¹Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ²With his wife’s full knowledge, he kept back some of the proceeds for himself, but brought a portion and laid it at the apostles’ feet. ³Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and withhold some of the proceeds from the land? ⁴Did it not belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How could you conceive such a deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God!” ⁵On hearing these words, Ananias fell down and died. And great fear came over all who heard what had happened. ⁶Then the young men stepped forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. ⁷About three hours later his wife also came in, unaware of what had happened. ⁸“Tell me,” said Peter, “is this the price you and your husband got for

the land?” “Yes,” she answered, “that is the price.” ⁹“How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord?” Peter replied. “Look, the feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.” ¹⁰At that instant she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹And great fear came over the whole church and all who heard about these events.

THE APOSTLES HEAL MANY

¹²The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people, and with one accord the believers gathered together in Solomon’s Colonnade. ¹³Although the people regarded them highly, no one else dared to join them. ¹⁴Yet more and more believers were brought to the Lord—large numbers of both men and women. ¹⁵As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. ¹⁶Crowds also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and all of them were healed.

THE APOSTLES ARRESTED AND FREED

¹⁷Then the high priest and all his associates, who belonged to the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They went out ¹⁸and arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. ¹⁹But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out, saying, ²⁰“Go, stand in the temple courts and tell the people the full message of this new life.” ²¹At daybreak the apostles entered the temple courts as they had been told and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they convened the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. ²²But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they returned with the report: ²³“We found the jail securely locked, with the guards posted at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.”

THE APOSTLES BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

²⁴When the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests heard this account, they were perplexed as to what was happening. ²⁵Then someone came in and announced, “Look, the men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people!” ²⁶At that point, the captain went with the officers and brought the apostles—but not by force, for fear the people would stone them. ²⁷They brought them in and made them stand before the Sanhedrin, where the high priest interrogated them. ²⁸“We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled

Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us responsible for this man's blood." ²⁹But Peter and the other apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging Him on a tree. ³¹God exalted Him to His right hand as Prince and Savior, in order to grant repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. ³²We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

GAMALIEL'S ADVICE

³³When the Council members heard this, they were enraged, and they resolved to put the apostles to death. ³⁴But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a short time. ³⁵"Men of Israel," he said, "consider carefully what you are about to do to these men. ³⁶Some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men joined him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. ³⁷After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and drew away people after him. He too perished, and all his followers were scattered. ³⁸So in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone. Let them go! For if their purpose or endeavor is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God." ⁴⁰At this, they yielded to Gamaliel. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and released them. ⁴¹The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. ⁴²Every day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

Chapter 6

THE CHOOSING OF THE SEVEN

¹In those days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Grecian Jews among them began to grumble against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ²So the Twelve summoned all the disciples and said, "It is unacceptable for us to neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men confirmed to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will assign this responsibility to them ⁴and will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of

faith and of the Holy Spirit, as well as Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶They presented these seven to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷So the word of God continued to spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem grew rapidly, and a great number of priests became obedient to the faith.

THE ARREST OF STEPHEN

⁸Now Stephen, who was full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹But resistance arose from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and men from the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. They disputed with Stephen, ¹⁰but they could not stand up to his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke. ¹¹Then they prompted some men to say, "We heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God." ¹²So they stirred up the people, elders, and scribes and confronted Stephen. They seized him and brought him before the Sanhedrin, ¹³where they presented false witnesses who said, "This man never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. ¹⁴For we have heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us." ¹⁵All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Chapter 7

STEPHEN'S ADDRESS: THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

¹Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these charges true?" ²And Stephen declared: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ³and told him, 'Leave your country and your kindred and go to the land I will show you.' ⁴So Abraham left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After his father died, God brought him out of that place and into this land where you are now living. ⁵He gave him no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But God promised to give possession of the land to Abraham and his descendants, even though he did not yet have a child. ⁶God told him that his descendants would be foreigners in a strange land, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. ⁷'But I will punish the nation that enslaves them,' God said, 'and afterward they will come forth and worship Me in this place.' ⁸Then God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision, and Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day. And Isaac

became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT

⁹Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him ¹⁰and rescued him from all his troubles. He granted Joseph favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt, who appointed him ruler over Egypt and all his household. ¹¹Then famine and great suffering swept across Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers could not find food. ¹²When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers on their first visit. ¹³On their second visit, Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, and his family became known to Pharaoh. ¹⁴Then Joseph sent for his father Jacob and all his relatives, seventy-five in all.

ISRAEL OPPRESSED IN EGYPT

¹⁵So Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our fathers died. ¹⁶Their bones were carried back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a price he paid in silver. ¹⁷As the time drew near for God to fulfill His promise to Abraham, our people in Egypt increased greatly in number. ¹⁸Then another king, who knew nothing of Joseph, arose over Egypt. ¹⁹He exploited our people and oppressed our fathers, forcing them to abandon their infants so they would die.

THE BIRTH AND ADOPTION OF MOSES

²⁰At that time Moses was born, and he was beautiful in the sight of God. For three months he was nurtured in his father's house. ²¹When he was set outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. ²²So Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

THE REJECTION AND FLIGHT OF MOSES

²³When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. ²⁴And when he saw one of them being mistreated, Moses went to his defense and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian who was oppressing him. ²⁵He assumed his brothers would understand that God was using him to deliver them, but they did not. ²⁶The next day he came upon two Israelites who were fighting, and he tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why are you mistreating each other?' ²⁷But the man who was abusing his neighbor pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us?' ²⁸Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹At

this remark, Moses fled to the land of Midian, where he lived as a foreigner and had two sons.

THE CALL OF MOSES

³⁰After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. ³¹When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight. As he approached to look more closely, the voice of the Lord came to him: ³²'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look. ³³Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. ³⁴I have indeed seen the oppression of My people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.' ³⁵This Moses, whom they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' is the one whom God sent to be their ruler and redeemer through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶He led them out and performed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, at the Red Sea, and for forty years in the wilderness. ³⁷This is the same Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers.' ³⁸He was in the assembly in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. And he received living words to pass on to us.

THE REBELLION OF ISRAEL

³⁹But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. ⁴⁰They said to Aaron, 'Make us gods who will go before us! As for this Moses who led us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.' ⁴¹At that time they made a calf and offered a sacrifice to the idol, rejoicing in the works of their hands. ⁴²But God turned away from them and gave them over to the worship of the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: 'Did you bring Me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? ⁴³You have taken along the tabernacle of Molech and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.'

THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY

⁴⁴Our fathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the wilderness. It was constructed exactly as God had directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. ⁴⁵And our fathers who received it brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations God drove out before them. It remained until the time of David, ⁴⁶who found favor in the sight of God and asked to provide a dwelling

place for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷But it was Solomon who built the house for Him. ⁴⁸However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says: ⁴⁹“Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. What kind of house will you build for Me, says the Lord, or where will My place of repose be? ⁵⁰Has not My hand made all these things?” ⁵¹You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit, just as your fathers did. ⁵²Which of the prophets did your fathers fail to persecute? They even killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One. And now you are His betrayers and murderers— ⁵³you who received the law ordained by angels, yet have not kept it.”

THE STONING OF STEPHEN

⁵⁴On hearing this, the members of the Sanhedrin were enraged, and they gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked intently into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷At this they covered their ears, cried out in a loud voice, and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸They dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile the witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹While they were stoning him, Stephen appealed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰Falling on his knees, he cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Chapter 8

SAUL PERSECUTES THE CHURCH

¹And Saul was there, giving approval to Stephen’s death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ²God-fearing men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him. ³But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

PHILIP IN SAMARIA

⁴Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. ⁵Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ to them. ⁶The crowds all paid close attention to Philip’s message and to the signs they saw him perform. ⁷With loud shrieks, unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, and many of the paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸So there was great joy in that city.

SIMON THE SORCERER

⁹Prior to that time, a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and astounded the people of Samaria. He claimed to be someone great, ¹⁰and all the people, from the least to the greatest, heeded his words and said, “This man is the divine power called the Great Power.” ¹¹They paid close attention to him because he had astounded them for a long time with his sorcery. ¹²But when they believed Philip as he preached the gospel of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³Even Simon himself believed and was baptized. He followed Philip closely and was astounded by the great signs and miracles he observed. ¹⁴When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵On their arrival, they prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶For the Holy Spirit had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money. ¹⁹“Give me this power as well,” he said, “so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” ²⁰But Peter replied, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! ²¹You have no part or share in our ministry, because your heart is not right before God. ²²Repent, therefore, of your wickedness, and pray to the Lord. Perhaps He will forgive you for the intent of your heart. ²³For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and captive to iniquity.” ²⁴Then Simon answered, “Pray to the Lord for me, so that nothing you have said may happen to me.” ²⁵And after Peter and John had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many of the Samaritan villages.

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

²⁶Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go south to the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” ²⁷So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official in charge of the entire treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸and on his return was sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹The Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to that chariot and stay by it.” ³⁰So Philip ran up and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. ³¹“How can I,” he said, “unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: “He was led

like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so He did not open His mouth. ³³In His humiliation He was deprived of justice. Who can recount His descendants? For His life was removed from the earth.” ³⁴“Tell me,” said the eunuch, “who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip began with this very Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they traveled along the road and came to some water, the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is there to prevent me from being baptized?” ³⁷³⁸And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip appeared at Azotus and traveled through that region, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Chapter 9

THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

¹Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord. He approached the high priest ²and requested letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any men or women belonging to the Way, he could bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³As Saul drew near to Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” ⁵“Who are You, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” He replied. ⁶“Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” ⁷The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless. They heard the voice but did not see anyone. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could not see a thing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was without sight, and he did not eat or drink anything.

ANANIAS BAPTIZES SAUL

¹⁰In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, “Ananias!” “Here I am, Lord,” he answered. ¹¹“Get up!” the Lord told him. “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹²In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.” ¹³But Ananias answered, “Lord, many people have told me about this man and all the harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴And now he is here with authority from the chief priests to ar-

rest all who call on Your name.” ¹⁵“Go!” said the Lord. “This man is My chosen instrument to carry My name before the Gentiles and their kings, and before the people of Israel. ¹⁶I will show him how much he must suffer for My name.” ¹⁷So Ananias went to the house, and when he arrived, he placed his hands on Saul. “Brother Saul,” he said, “the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸At that instant, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and his sight was restored. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹and after taking some food, he regained his strength. And he spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

SAUL PREACHES AT DAMASCUS

²⁰Saul promptly began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, declaring, “He is the Son of God.” ²¹All who heard him were astounded and asked, “Isn’t this the man who wreaked havoc in Jerusalem on those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” ²²But Saul was empowered all the more, and he confounded the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

THE ESCAPE FROM DAMASCUS

²³After many days had passed, the Jews conspired to kill him, ²⁴but Saul learned of their plot. Day and night they watched the city gates in order to kill him. ²⁵One night, however, his disciples took him and lowered him in a basket through a window in the wall.

SAUL IN JERUSALEM

²⁶When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. ²⁷Then Barnabas brought him to the apostles and described how Saul had seen the Lord, who had spoken to him on the road to Damascus, and how Saul had spoken boldly in that city in the name of Jesus. ²⁸So Saul stayed with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. ³⁰When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

THE HEALING OF AENEAS

³¹Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria experienced a time of peace. It grew in strength and numbers, living in the fear of the Lord and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit. ³²As Peter traveled throughout the area, he went to visit the saints in Lydda. ³³There he found a man named Aeneas who had been paralyzed and bedrid-

den for eight years. ³⁴“Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you! Get up and put away your mat.” Immediately Aeneas got up, ³⁵and all who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

THE RAISING OF TABITHA

³⁶In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which is translated as Dorcas), who was always occupied with works of kindness and charity. ³⁷At that time, however, she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upper room. ³⁸Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to urge him, “Come to us without delay.” ³⁹So Peter got up and went with them. On his arrival, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood around him, weeping and showing him the tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. ⁴⁰Then Peter sent them all out of the room. He knelt down and prayed, and turning toward her body, he said, “Tabitha, get up!” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹Peter took her by the hand and helped her up. Then he called the saints and widows and presented her to them alive. ⁴²This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. ⁴³And Peter stayed for several days in Joppa with a tanner named Simon.

Chapter 10

CORNELIUS SENDS FOR PETER

¹At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was called the Italian Regiment. ²He and all his household were devout and God-fearing. He gave generously to the people and prayed to God regularly. ³One day at about the ninth hour, he had a clear vision of an angel of God who came to him and said, “Cornelius!” ⁴Cornelius stared at him in fear and asked, “What is it, Lord?” The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have ascended as a memorial offering before God. ⁵Now send men to Joppa to call for a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.” ⁷When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among his attendants. ⁸He explained what had happened and sent them to Joppa.

PETER’S VISION

⁹The next day at about the sixth hour, as the men were approaching the city on their journey, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He saw heaven open and something like a large

sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹²It contained all kinds of four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth, as well as birds of the air. ¹³Then a voice said to him: “Get up, Peter, kill and eat!” ¹⁴“No, Lord!” Peter answered. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” ¹⁵The voice spoke to him a second time: “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” ¹⁶This happened three times, and all at once the sheet was taken back up into heaven.

PETER CALLED TO CAESAREA

¹⁷While Peter was puzzling over the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found Simon’s house and approached the gate. ¹⁸They called out to ask if Simon called Peter was staying there. ¹⁹As Peter continued to reflect on the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. ²⁰So get up! Go downstairs and accompany them without hesitation, because I have sent them.” ²¹So Peter went down to the men and said, “Here am I, the one you are looking for. Why have you come?” ²²“Cornelius the centurion has sent us,” they said. “He is a righteous and God-fearing man with a good reputation among the whole Jewish nation. A holy angel instructed him to request your presence in his home so he could hear a message from you.” ²³So Peter invited them in as his guests. And the next day he got ready and went with them, accompanied by some of the brothers from Joppa.

PETER VISITS CORNELIUS

²⁴The following day he arrived in Caesarea, where Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵As Peter was about to enter, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet to worship him. ²⁶But Peter helped him up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.” ²⁷As Peter talked with him, he went inside and found many people gathered together. ²⁸He said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with a foreigner or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. ²⁹So when I was invited, I came without objection. I ask, then, why have you sent for me?” ³⁰Cornelius answered: “Four days ago I was in my house praying at this, the ninth hour. Suddenly a man in radiant clothing stood before me ³¹and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your gifts to the poor have been remembered before God. ³²Therefore send to Joppa for Simon, who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, by the sea.’ ³³So I sent for you immediately, and you were kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has instructed you to tell us.”

GOOD NEWS FOR THE GENTILES

³⁴Then Peter began to speak: “I now truly understand that God does not show favoritism, ³⁵but welcomes those from every nation who fear Him and do what is right. ³⁶He has sent this message to the people of Israel, proclaiming the gospel of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷You yourselves know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee with the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him. ³⁹We are witnesses of all that He did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And although they put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree, ⁴⁰God raised Him up on the third day and caused Him to be seen— ⁴¹not by all the people, but by the witnesses God had chosen beforehand, by us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. ⁴²And He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the One appointed by God to judge the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.”

THE GENTILES RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard his message. ⁴⁵All the circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues and exalting God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“Can anyone withhold the water to baptize these people? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have!” ⁴⁸So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay for a few days.

Chapter 11

PETER’S REPORT AT JERUSALEM

¹The apostles and brothers throughout Judea soon heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers took issue with him ³and said, “You visited uncircumcised men and ate with them.” ⁴But Peter began and explained to them the whole sequence of events: ⁵“I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision of something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came right down to me. ⁶I looked at it closely and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air. ⁷Then I heard a voice

saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter, kill and eat.’ ⁸‘No, Lord,’ I said, ‘for nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ ⁹But the voice spoke from heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’ ¹⁰This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into heaven. ¹¹Just then three men sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. ¹²The Spirit told me to accompany them without hesitation. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s home. ¹³He told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. ¹⁴He will convey to you a message by which you and all your household will be saved.’ ¹⁵As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as He had fallen upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷So if God gave them the same gift He gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to hinder the work of God?” ¹⁸When they heard this, they had no further objections, and they glorified God, saying, “So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.”

THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

¹⁹Meanwhile those scattered by the persecution that began with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message only to Jews. ²⁰But some of them, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks as well, proclaiming the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. ²²When news of this reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to abide in the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. ²⁵Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶and when he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. So for a full year they met together with the church and taught large numbers of people. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. ²⁷In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted through the Spirit that a great famine would sweep across the whole world. (This happened under Claudius.) ²⁹So the disciples, each according to his ability, decided to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. ³⁰This they did, sending their gifts to the elders with Barnabas and Saul.

Chapter 12

JAMES KILLED, PETER IMPRISONED

¹About that time, King Herod reached out to harm some who belonged to the church. ²He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. ³And seeing that this pleased the Jews, Herod proceeded to seize Peter during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. ⁴He arrested him and put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out to the people after the Passover.

THE RESCUE OF PETER

⁵So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was fervently praying to God for him. ⁶On the night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, with sentries standing guard at the entrance to the prison. ⁷Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his wrists. ⁸"Get dressed and put on your sandals," said the angel. Peter did so, and the angel told him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." ⁹So Peter followed him out, but he was unaware that what the angel was doing was real. He thought he was only seeing a vision. ¹⁰They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city, which opened for them by itself. When they had gone outside and walked the length of one block, the angel suddenly left him. ¹¹Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent His angel and rescued me from Herod's grasp and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating." ¹²And when he had realized this, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered together and were praying. ¹³He knocked at the outer gate, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that she forgot to open the gate, but ran inside and announced, "Peter is standing at the gate!" ¹⁵"You are out of your mind," they told her. But when she kept insisting it was so, they said, "It must be his angel." ¹⁶But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astounded. ¹⁷Peter motioned with his hand for silence, and he described how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. "Send word to James and to the brothers," he said, and he left for another place. ¹⁸At daybreak there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. ¹⁹After Herod had searched for him unsuccessfully, he examined the guards

and ordered that they be executed. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent some time there.

THE DEATH OF HEROD

²⁰Now Herod was in a furious dispute with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they convened before him. Having secured the support of Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their region depended on the king's country for food. ²¹On the appointed day, Herod donned his royal robes, sat on his throne, and addressed the people. ²²And they began to shout, "This is the voice of a god, not a man!" ²³Immediately, because Herod did not give glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. ²⁴But the word of God continued to spread and multiply. ²⁵When Barnabas and Saul had fulfilled their mission to Jerusalem, they returned, bringing with them John, also called Mark.

Chapter 13

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY BEGINS

¹Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch), and Saul. ²While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³And after they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

ON CYPRUS

⁴So Barnabas and Saul, sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. ⁵When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. And John was with them as their helper. ⁶They traveled through the whole island as far as Paphos, where they found a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, ⁷an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, a man of intelligence, summoned Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. ⁸But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. ⁹Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked directly at Elymas ¹⁰and said, "O child of the devil and enemy of all righteousness, you are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery! Will you never stop perverting the straight ways of the Lord?" ¹¹Now look, the hand of the Lord is against you, and for a time you will be blind and unable to see the light of the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

¹²When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.

IN PISIDIAN ANTIOCH

¹³After setting sail from Paphos, Paul and his companions came to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. ¹⁴And from Perga, they traveled inland to Pisidian Antioch, where they entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and sat down. ¹⁵After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue leaders sent word to them: “Brothers, if you have a word of encouragement for the people, please speak.” ¹⁶Paul stood up, motioned with his hand, and began to speak: “Men of Israel and you Gentiles who fear God, listen to me! ¹⁷The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers. He made them into a great people during their stay in Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out of that land. ¹⁸He endured their conduct for about forty years in the wilderness. ¹⁹And having vanquished seven nations in Canaan, He gave their land to His people as an inheritance. ²⁰All this took about 450 years. After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. ²¹Then the people asked for a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, from the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. ²²After removing Saul, He raised up David as their king and testified about him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse a man after My own heart; he will carry out My will in its entirety.’ ²³From the descendants of this man, God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as He promised. ²⁴Before the arrival of Jesus, John preached a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵As John was completing his course, he said, ‘Who do you suppose I am? I am not that One. But there is One coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.’ ²⁶Brothers, children of Abraham, and you Gentiles who fear God, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. ²⁷The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning Him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. ²⁸And though they found no ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have Him executed. ²⁹When they had carried out all that was written about Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised Him from the dead, ³¹and for many days He was seen by those who had accompanied Him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now His witnesses to our people. ³²And now we proclaim to you the good news: What God promised our fathers ³³He has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son; today I have become Your Father.’ ³⁴In fact, God raised Him from the

dead, never to see decay. As He has said: ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’ ³⁵So also, He says in another Psalm: ‘You will not let Your Holy One see decay.’ ³⁶For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep. His body was buried with his fathers and saw decay. ³⁷But the One whom God raised from the dead did not see decay. ³⁸Therefore let it be known to you, brothers, that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹Through Him everyone who believes is justified from everything from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰Watch out, then, that what was spoken by the prophets does not happen to you: ⁴¹“Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish! For I am doing a work in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you.”

A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES

⁴²As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people urged them to continue this message on the next Sabbath. ⁴³After the synagogue was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. ⁴⁴On the following Sabbath, nearly the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, and they blasphemously contradicted what Paul was saying. ⁴⁶Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “It was necessary to speak the word of God to you first. But since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷For this is what the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’” ⁴⁸When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord, and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. ⁴⁹And the word of the Lord spread throughout that region. ⁵⁰The Jews, however, incited the religious women of prominence and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of their district. ⁵¹So they shook the dust off their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. ⁵²And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 14

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT ICONIUM

¹At Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue, where they spoke so well that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. ²But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds

against the brothers. ³So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who affirmed the message of His grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. ⁴The people of the city were divided. Some sided with the Jews, and others with the apostles. ⁵But when the Gentiles and Jews, together with their rulers, set out to mistreat and stone them, ⁶they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding region, ⁷where they continued to preach the gospel.

THE VISIT TO LYSTRA AND DERBE

⁸In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. ⁹This man was listening to the words of Paul, who looked intently at him and saw that he had faith to be healed. ¹⁰In a loud voice Paul called out, “Stand up on your feet!” And the man jumped up and began to walk. ¹¹When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices in the Lycaonian language: “The gods have come down to us in human form!” ¹²Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. ¹³The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates, hoping to offer a sacrifice along with the crowds. ¹⁴But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul found out about this, they tore their clothes and rushed into the crowd, shouting, ¹⁵“Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. ¹⁶In past generations, He let all nations go their own way. ¹⁷Yet He has not left Himself without testimony to His goodness: He gives you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness.” ¹⁸Even with these words, Paul and Barnabas could hardly stop the crowds from sacrificing to them. ¹⁹Then some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, presuming he was dead. ²⁰But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. And the next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe.

STRENGTHENING THE DISCIPLES

²¹They preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ²²strengthening the souls of the disciples and encouraging them to continue in the faith. “We must endure many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said. ²³Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church, praying and fasting as they entrusted them to the Lord, in

whom they had believed. ²⁴After passing through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. ²⁵And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. ²⁶From Attalia they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had just completed. ²⁷When they arrived, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. ²⁸And they spent a long time there with the disciples.

Chapter 15

THE DISPUTE OVER CIRCUMCISION

¹Then some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” ²And after engaging these men in sharp debate, Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. ³Sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, recounting the conversion of the Gentiles and bringing great joy to all the brothers. ⁴On their arrival in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and apostles and elders, to whom they reported all that God had done through them.

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

⁵But some believers from the party of the Pharisees stood up and declared, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.” ⁶So the apostles and elders met to look into this matter. ⁷After much discussion, Peter got up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you that the Gentiles would hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸And God, who knows the heart, showed His approval by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as He did to us. ⁹He made no distinction between us and them, for He cleansed their hearts by faith. ¹⁰Now then, why do you test God by placing on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? ¹¹On the contrary, we believe it is through the grace of the Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.” ¹²The whole assembly fell silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul describing the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. ¹³When they had finished speaking, James declared, “Brothers, listen to me! ¹⁴Simon has told us how God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people to be His own. ¹⁵The words of the prophets agree with this, as it is written: ¹⁶After this I will return and rebuild the fallen tent of David. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I

will restore it, ¹⁷so that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does these things ¹⁸that have been known for ages.’ ¹⁹It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not cause trouble for the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰Instead, we should write and tell them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals, and from blood. ²¹For Moses has been proclaimed in every city from ancient times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

THE LETTER TO THE GENTILE BELIEVERS

²²Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to select men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, two leaders among the brothers, ²³and sent them with this letter: The apostles and the elders, your brothers, To the brothers among the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. ²⁴It has come to our attention that some went out from us without our authorization and unsettled you, troubling your minds by what they said. ²⁵So we all agreed to choose men to send to you along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to tell you in person the same things we are writing. ²⁸It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond these essential requirements: ²⁹You must abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.

THE BELIEVERS AT ANTIOCH REJOICE

³⁰So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they assembled the congregation and delivered the letter. ³¹When the people read it, they rejoiced at its encouraging message. ³²Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. ³³After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers in peace to return to those who had sent them. ³⁴ ³⁵But Paul and Barnabas remained at Antioch, along with many others, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord.

PAUL’S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY BEGINS

³⁶Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the brothers in every town where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, to see how they are doing.” ³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark. ³⁸But Paul thought it best not to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in

the work. ³⁹Their disagreement was so sharp that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹And he traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Chapter 16

TIMOTHY JOINS PAUL AND SILAS

¹Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where he found a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman and a Greek father. ²The brothers in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, so he took him and circumcised him on account of the Jews in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴As they went from town to town, they delivered the decisions handed down by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

PAUL’S VISION OF THE MACEDONIAN

⁶After the Holy Spirit had prevented them from speaking the word in the province of Asia, they traveled through the region of Phrygia and Galatia. ⁷And when they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not permit them. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹During the night, Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and pleading with him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰As soon as Paul had seen the vision, we got ready to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

LYDIA’S CONVERSION IN PHILIPPI

¹¹We sailed from Troas straight to Samothrace, and the following day on to Neapolis. ¹²From there we went to the Roman colony of Philippi, the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. ¹³On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate along the river, where it was customary to find a place of prayer. After sitting down, we spoke to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴Among those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. ¹⁵And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, “If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

PAUL AND SILAS IMPRISONED

¹⁶One day as we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl with a spirit of divination, who earned a large income for her masters by fortune-telling. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation!” ¹⁸She continued this for many days. Eventually Paul grew so aggravated that he turned and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” And the spirit left her at that very moment. ¹⁹When the girl’s owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities in the marketplace. ²⁰They brought them to the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews and are throwing our city into turmoil ²¹by promoting customs that are unlawful for us Romans to adopt or practice.” ²²The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered that they be stripped and beaten with rods. ²³And after striking them with many blows, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to guard them securely. ²⁴On receiving this order, he placed them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

THE CONVERSION OF THE JAILER

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly a strong earthquake shook the foundations of the prison. At once all the doors flew open and everyone’s chains came loose. ²⁷When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, presuming that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul called out in a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself! We are all here!” ²⁹Calling for lights, the jailer rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³²Then Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to him and to everyone in his house. ³³At that hour of the night, the jailer took them and washed their wounds. And without delay, he and all his household were baptized. ³⁴Then he brought them into his home and set a meal before them. So he and all his household rejoiced that they had come to believe in God.

AN OFFICIAL APOLOGY

³⁵When daylight came, the magistrates sent their officers with the order: “Release those men.” ³⁶The jailer informed Paul: “The magistrates have sent orders to release you. Now you may go on your way in peace.” ³⁷But Paul said to the officers, “They beat us publicly without a trial and

threw us into prison, even though we are Roman citizens. And now do they want to send us away secretly? Absolutely not! Let them come themselves and escort us out!” ³⁸So the officers relayed this message to the magistrates, who were alarmed to hear that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. ³⁹They came to appease them and led them out, requesting that they leave the city. ⁴⁰After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house to see the brothers and encourage them. Then they left the city.

Chapter 17**THE UPROAR IN THESSALONICA**

¹When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ²As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbaths he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,” he declared. ⁴Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few leading women. ⁵The Jews, however, became jealous. So they brought in some troublemakers from the marketplace, formed a mob, and sent the city into an uproar. They raided Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas, hoping to bring them out to the people. ⁶But when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have now come here, ⁷and Jason has welcomed them into his home. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, named Jesus!” ⁸On hearing this, the crowd and city officials were greatly disturbed. ⁹And they collected bond from Jason and the others and then released them.

THE CHARACTER OF THE BEREANS

¹⁰As soon as night had fallen, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went into the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹Now the Bereans were more noble-minded than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if these teachings were true. ¹²As a result, many of them believed, along with quite a few prominent Greek women and men. ¹³But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that Paul was also proclaiming the word of God in Berea, they went there themselves to incite and agitate the crowds. ¹⁴The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy remained in Berea. ¹⁵Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then

returned with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

PAUL IN ATHENS

¹⁶While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply disturbed in his spirit to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles, and in the marketplace with those he met each day. ¹⁸Some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also began to debate with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others said, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was proclaiming the good news of Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹So they took Paul and brought him to the Areopagus, where they asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?" ²⁰For you are bringing some strange notions to our ears, and we want to know what they mean." ²¹Now all the Athenians and foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing more than hearing and articulating new ideas.

PAUL'S ADDRESS IN THE AREOPAGUS

²²Then Paul stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³For as I walked around and examined your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore what you worship as something unknown, I now proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made by human hands. ²⁵Nor is He served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷God intended that they would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. ²⁸'For in Him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are His offspring.' ²⁹Therefore, being offspring of God, we should not think that the Divine Being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by man's skill and imagination. ³⁰Although God overlooked the ignorance of earlier times, He now commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead." ³²When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some began to mock him, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this topic." ³³At that, Paul left the Areopagus. ³⁴But some joined him and believed, including

Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others who were with them.

Chapter 18

PAUL MINISTERS IN CORINTH

¹After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to visit them, ³and he stayed and worked with them because they were tentmakers by trade, just as he was. ⁴Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks alike. ⁵And when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself fully to the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. ⁶But when they opposed and insulted him, he shook out his garments and told them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷So Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titus Justus, a worshiper of God. ⁸Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his whole household believed in the Lord. And many of the Corinthians who heard the message believed and were baptized. ⁹One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking; do not be silent. ¹⁰For I am with you and no one will lay a hand on you, because I have many people in this city." ¹¹So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching the word of God among the Corinthians.

PAUL BEFORE GALLIO

¹²While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews coordinated an attack on Paul and brought him before the judgment seat. ¹³"This man is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law," they said. ¹⁴But just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio told the Jews, "If this matter involved a wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to hear your complaint. ¹⁵But since it is a dispute about words and names and your own law, settle it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of such things." ¹⁶And he drove them away from the judgment seat. ¹⁷At this, the crowd seized Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the judgment seat. But none of this was of concern to Gallio.

PAUL RETURNS TO ANTIOCH

¹⁸Paul remained in Corinth for quite some time before saying goodbye to the brothers. He had his head shaved in Cenchrea to keep a vow he had made, and then he sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. ¹⁹When they reached Ephesus, Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He

himself went into the synagogue there and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰When they asked him to stay for a while longer, he declined. ²¹But as he left, he said, “I will come back to you if God is willing.” And he set sail from Ephesus. ²²When Paul had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church at Jerusalem. Then he went down to Antioch.

PAUL’S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY BEGINS

²³After Paul had spent some time in Antioch, he traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. ²⁴Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord and was fervent in spirit. He spoke and taught accurately about Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷When Apollos resolved to cross over to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On his arrival, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. ²⁸For he powerfully refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Chapter 19

THE HOLY SPIRIT RECEIVED AT EPHEBUS

¹While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the interior and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples ²and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” “No,” they answered, “we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” ³“Into what, then, were you baptized?” Paul asked. “The baptism of John,” they replied. ⁴Paul explained: “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the One coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷There were about twelve men in all.

PAUL MINISTERS IN EPHEBUS

⁸Then Paul went into the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹But when some of them stubbornly refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way, Paul took his disciples and left the synagogue to conduct daily discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰This continued for two years, so that everyone who lived in the province of Asia,

Jews and Greeks alike, heard the word of the Lord. ¹¹God did extraordinary miracles through the hands of Paul, ¹²so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and the diseases and evil spirits left them.

SEVEN SONS OF SCEVA

¹³Now there were some itinerant Jewish exorcists who tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those with evil spirits. They would say, “I command you by Jesus, whom Paul proclaims.” ¹⁴Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵But one day the evil spirit responded, “Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?” ¹⁶Then the man with the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. The attack was so violent that they ran out of the house naked and wounded. ¹⁷This became known to all the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, and fear came over all of them. So the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. ¹⁸Many who had believed now came forward, confessing and disclosing their deeds. ¹⁹And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books and burned them in front of everyone. When the value of the books was calculated, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. ²⁰So the word of the Lord powerfully continued to spread and prevail.

THE RIOT IN EPHEBUS

²¹After these things had happened, Paul resolved in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must see Rome as well.” ²²He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed for a time in the province of Asia. ²³About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. ²⁴It began with a silversmith named Demetrius who made silver shrines of Artemis, bringing much business to the craftsmen. ²⁵Demetrius assembled the craftsmen, along with the workmen in related trades. “Men,” he said, “you know that this business is our source of prosperity. ²⁶And you can see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in nearly the whole province of Asia, this Paul has persuaded a great number of people to turn away. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. ²⁷There is danger not only that our business will fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited and her majesty deposed—she who is worshiped by all the province of Asia and the whole world.” ²⁸When the men heard this, they were enraged and began shouting, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” ²⁹Soon the whole city was in disarray. They rushed together into the theatre, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia.

³⁰Paul wanted to go before the assembly, but the disciples would not allow him. ³¹Even some of Paul's friends who were officials of the province of Asia sent word to him, begging him not to venture into the theatre. ³²Meanwhile the assembly was in turmoil. Some were shouting one thing and some another, and most of them did not even know why they were there. ³³The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander forward to explain himself, and he motioned for silence so he could make his defense to the people. ³⁴But when they realized that he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ³⁵Finally the city clerk quieted the crowd and declared, "Men of Ephesus, doesn't everyone know that the city of Ephesus is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? ³⁶Since these things are undeniable, you ought to be calm and not do anything rash. ³⁷For you have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed our temple nor blasphemed our goddess. ³⁸So if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open and proconsuls are available. Let them bring charges against one another there. ³⁹But if you are seeking anything beyond this, it must be settled in a legal assembly. ⁴⁰For we are in jeopardy of being charged with rioting for today's events, and we have no justification to account for this commotion." ⁴¹After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

Chapter 20

PAUL IN MACEDONIA AND GREECE

¹When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples. And after encouraging them, he said goodbye to them and left for Macedonia. ²After traveling through that area and speaking many words of encouragement, he arrived in Greece, ³where he stayed three months. And when the Jews formed a plot against him as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. ⁴Paul was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. ⁵These men went on ahead and waited for us in Troas. ⁶And after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we sailed from Philippi, and five days later we rejoined them in Troas, where we stayed seven days.

EUTYCHUS REVIVED AT TROAS

⁷On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Since Paul was ready to leave the next day, he talked to them and kept on speaking until midnight. ⁸Now there

were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. ⁹And a certain young man named Eutychus, seated in the window, was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell from the third story and was picked up dead. ¹⁰But Paul went down, threw himself on the young man, and embraced him. "Do not be alarmed!" he said. "He is still alive!" ¹¹Then Paul went back upstairs, broke bread, and ate. And after speaking until daybreak, he departed. ¹²And the people were greatly relieved to take the boy home alive.

FROM TROAS TO MILETUS

¹³We went on ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, where we were to take Paul aboard. He had arranged this because he was going there on foot. ¹⁴And when he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. ¹⁵Sailing on from there, we arrived the next day opposite Chios. The day after that we arrived at Samos, and on the following day we came to Miletus. ¹⁶Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, because he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

PAUL'S FAREWELL TO THE EPHESIANS

¹⁷From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. ¹⁸When they came to him, he said, "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I arrived in the province of Asia. ¹⁹I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, especially in the trials that came upon me through the plots of the Jews. ²⁰I did not shrink back from declaring anything that was helpful to you as I taught you publicly and from house to house, ²¹testifying to Jews and Greeks alike about repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. ²²And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. ²³I only know that in town after town the Holy Spirit warns me that chains and afflictions await me. ²⁴But I consider my life of no value to me, if only I may finish my course and complete the ministry I have received from the Lord Jesus—the ministry of testifying to the good news of God's grace. ²⁵Now I know that none of you among whom I have preached the kingdom will see my face again. ²⁶Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷For I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole will of God. ²⁸Keep watch over yourselves and the entire flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰Even from your own number, men will rise up and distort the truth to draw

away disciples after them. ³¹Therefore be alert and remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. ³²And now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all who are sanctified. ³³I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴You yourselves know that these hands of mine have ministered to my own needs and those of my companions. ³⁵In everything, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus Himself: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" ³⁶When Paul had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. ³⁷They all wept openly as they embraced Paul and kissed him. ³⁸They were especially grieved by his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

Chapter 21

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

¹After we had torn ourselves away from them, we sailed directly to Cos, and the next day on to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. ²Finding a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we boarded it and set sail. ³After sighting Cyprus and passing south of it, we sailed on to Syria and landed at Tyre, where the ship was to unload its cargo. ⁴We sought out the disciples in Tyre and stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they kept telling Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. ⁵But when our time there had ended, we set out on our journey. All the disciples, with their wives and children, accompanied us out of the city and knelt down on the beach to pray with us. ⁶And after we had said our farewells, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home. ⁷When we had finished our voyage from Tyre, we landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day.

PAUL VISITS PHILIP THE EVANGELIST

⁸Leaving the next day, we went on to Caesarea and stayed at the home of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the Seven. ⁹He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. ¹⁰After we had been there several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own feet and hands, and said, "The Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and hand him over to the Gentiles.'" ¹²When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem

for the name of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴When he would not be dissuaded, we quieted down and said, "The Lord's will be done." ¹⁵After these days, we packed up and went on to Jerusalem. ¹⁶Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us, and they took us to stay at the home of Mnason the Cypriot, an early disciple.

PAUL'S ARRIVAL AT JERUSALEM

¹⁷When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us joyfully. ¹⁸The next day Paul went in with us to see James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹Paul greeted them and recounted one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰When they heard this, they glorified God. Then they said to Paul, "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. ²¹But they are under the impression that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or observe our customs. ²²What then should we do? They will certainly hear that you have come. ²³Therefore do what we advise you. There are four men with us who have taken a vow. ²⁴Take these men, purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know that there is no truth to these rumors about you, but that you also live in obedience to the law. ²⁵As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they must abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality." ²⁶So the next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he entered the temple to give notice of the date when their purification would be complete and the offering would be made for each of them.

PAUL SEIZED AT THE TEMPLE

²⁷When the seven days were almost over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, ²⁸crying out, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and against our law and against this place. Furthermore, he has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place." ²⁹For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple. ³⁰The whole city was stirred up, and the people rushed together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. ³¹While they were trying to kill him, the commander of the Roman regiment received a report that all Jerusalem was in turmoil. ³²Immediately he took some soldiers and centurions and ran down to the crowd. When the people saw the comman-

der and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³³The commander came up and arrested Paul, ordering that he be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. ³⁴Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, and some another. And since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be brought into the barracks. ³⁵When Paul reached the steps, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. ³⁶For the crowd that followed him kept shouting, "Away with him!"

PAUL ADDRESSES THE CROWD

³⁷As they were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?" "Do you speak Greek?" he replied. ³⁸"Aren't you the Egyptian who incited a rebellion some time ago and led four thousand members of the Assassins into the wilderness?" ³⁹But Paul answered, "I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Now I beg you to allow me to speak to the people." ⁴⁰Having received permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. A great hush came over the crowd, and he addressed them in Hebrew:

Chapter 22

PAUL'S DEFENSE TO THE CROWD

¹"Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense before you." ²When they heard him speak to them in Hebrew, they became even more quiet. Then Paul declared, ³"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but raised in this city. I was educated at the feet of Gamaliel in strict conformity to the law of our fathers. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. ⁴I persecuted this Way even to the death, detaining both men and women and throwing them into prison, ⁵as the high priest and the whole Council can testify about me. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and I was on my way to apprehend these people and bring them to Jerusalem to be punished. ⁶About noon as I was approaching Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. ⁷I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?' ⁸'Who are You, Lord?' I asked. 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' He replied. ⁹My companions saw the light, but they could not understand the voice of the One speaking to me. ¹⁰Then I asked, 'What should I do, Lord?' 'Get up and go into Damascus,' He told me. 'There you will be told all that you have been appointed to do.' ¹¹Because the brilliance of the light had blinded me, my companions led me by the hand into Damascus. ¹²There a man named Ananias, a devout observer of the law

who was highly regarded by all the Jews living there, ¹³came and stood beside me. 'Brother Saul,' he said, 'receive your sight.' And at that moment I could see him. ¹⁴Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear His voice. ¹⁵You will be His witness to everyone of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and wash your sins away, calling on His name.' ¹⁷Later, when I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸and saw the Lord saying to me, 'Hurry! Leave Jerusalem quickly, because the people here will not accept your testimony about Me.' ¹⁹'Lord,' I answered, 'they know very well that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in You. ²⁰And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and watching over the garments of those who killed him.' ²¹Then He said to me, 'Go! I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

PAUL THE ROMAN CITIZEN

²²The crowd listened to Paul until he made this statement. Then they lifted up their voices and shouted, "Rid the earth of him! He is not fit to live!" ²³As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air, ²⁴the commander ordered that Paul be brought into the barracks. He directed that Paul be flogged and interrogated to determine the reason for this outcry against him. ²⁵But as they stretched him out to strap him down, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it lawful for you to flog a Roman citizen without a trial?" ²⁶On hearing this, the centurion went and reported it to the commander. "What are you going to do?" he said. "This man is a Roman citizen." ²⁷The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" "Yes," he answered. ²⁸"I paid a high price for my citizenship," said the commander. "But I was born a citizen," Paul replied. ²⁹At once those who were about to interrogate Paul stepped back, and the commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put a Roman citizen in chains. ³⁰The next day the commander, wanting to learn the real reason Paul was accused by the Jews, released him and ordered the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul down and had him stand before them.

Chapter 23

PAUL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

¹Paul looked directly at the Sanhedrin and said, "Brothers, I have conducted myself before God in all good conscience

to this day.” ²At this, the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. ³Then Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit here to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck.” ⁴But those standing nearby said, “How dare you insult the high priest of God!” ⁵“Brothers,” Paul replied, “I was not aware that he was the high priest, for it is written: ‘Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.’” ⁶Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. It is because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.” ⁷As soon as he had said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸For the Sadducees say that there is neither a resurrection nor angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. ⁹A great clamor arose, and some scribes from the party of the Pharisees got up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” ¹⁰The dispute grew so violent that the commander was afraid they would tear Paul to pieces. He ordered the soldiers to go down and remove him by force and bring him into the barracks. ¹¹The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, “Take courage! As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so also you must testify in Rome.”

THE PLOT TO KILL PAUL

¹²When daylight came, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. ¹³More than forty of them were involved in this plot. ¹⁴They went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have bound ourselves with a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him down to you on the pretext of examining his case more carefully. We are ready to kill him on the way.” ¹⁶But when the son of Paul’s sister heard about the plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul. ¹⁷Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him.” ¹⁸So the centurion took him to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner sent and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to tell you.” ¹⁹The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside, and asked, “What do you need to tell me?” ²⁰He answered, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul to the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of acquiring more information about him. ²¹Do not let them persuade you, because more than forty men are

waiting to ambush him. They have bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him; they are ready now, awaiting your consent.” ²²So the commander dismissed the young man and instructed him, “Do not tell anyone that you have reported this to me.”

PAUL SENT TO FELIX

²³Then he called two of his centurions and said, “Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea in the third hour of the night. ²⁴Provide mounts for Paul to take him safely to Governor Felix.” ²⁵And he wrote the following letter: ²⁶Claudius Lysias, To His Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings. ²⁷This man was seized by the Jews, and they were about to kill him when I came with my troops to rescue him. For I had learned that he is a Roman citizen, ²⁸and since I wanted to understand their charges against him, I brought him down to their Sanhedrin. ²⁹I found that the accusation involved questions about their own law, but there was no charge worthy of death or imprisonment. ³⁰When I was informed that there was a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also instructed his accusers to present their case against him before you. ³¹So the soldiers followed their orders and brought Paul by night to Antipatris. ³²The next day they returned to the barracks and let the horsemen go on with him. ³³When the horsemen arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and presented Paul to him. ³⁴The governor read the letter and asked what province Paul was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵he said, “I will hear your case when your accusers arrive.” Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod’s Praetorium.

Chapter 24

TERTULLUS PROSECUTES PAUL

¹Five days later the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, who presented to the governor their case against Paul. ²When Paul had been called in, Tertullus opened the prosecution: “Because of you, we have enjoyed a lasting peace, and your foresight has brought improvements to this nation. ³In every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with all gratitude. ⁴But in order not to delay you any further, I beg your indulgence to hear us briefly. ⁵We have found this man to be a pestilence, stirring up dissension among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, ⁶and he even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. ⁷ ⁸By examining him yourself, you will be able to learn the truth about all our charges

against him.” ⁹The Jews concurred, asserting that these charges were true.

PAUL’S DEFENSE TO FELIX

¹⁰When the governor motioned for Paul to speak, he began his response: “Knowing that you have been a judge over this nation for many years, I gladly make my defense. ¹¹You can verify for yourself that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. ¹²Yet my accusers did not find me debating with anyone in the temple or riling up a crowd in the synagogues or in the city. ¹³Nor can they prove to you any of their charges against me. ¹⁴I do confess to you, however, that I worship the God of our fathers according to the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that is laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, ¹⁵and I have the same hope in God that they themselves cherish, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. ¹⁶In this hope, I strive always to maintain a clear conscience before God and man. ¹⁷After several years, then, I returned to Jerusalem to bring alms to my people and to present offerings. ¹⁸At the time they found me in the temple, I was ceremonially clean and was not inciting a crowd or an uproar. But there are some Jews from the province of Asia ¹⁹who ought to appear before you and bring charges, if they have anything against me. ²⁰Otherwise, let these men state for themselves any crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin, ²¹unless it was this one thing I called out as I stood in their presence: ‘It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.’”

THE VERDICT POSTPONED

²²Then Felix, who was well informed about the Way, adjourned the hearing and said, “When Lysias the commander comes, I will decide your case.” ²³He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard, but to allow him some freedom and permit his friends to minister to his needs. ²⁴After several days, Felix returned with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁵As Paul expounded on righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened and said, “You may go for now. When I find the time, I will call for you.” ²⁶At the same time, he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe. So he sent for Paul frequently and talked with him. ²⁷After two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And wishing to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

Chapter 25

PAUL’S TRIAL BEFORE FESTUS

¹Three days after his arrival in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, ²where the chief priests and Jewish leaders presented their case against Paul. They urged Festus ³to grant them a concession against Paul by summoning him to Jerusalem, because they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. ⁴But Festus replied, “Paul is being held in Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon. ⁵So if this man has done anything wrong, let some of your leaders come down with me and accuse him there.” ⁶After spending no more than eight or ten days with them, Festus went down to Caesarea. The next day he sat on the judgment seat and ordered that Paul be brought in. ⁷When Paul arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges that they could not prove. ⁸Then Paul made his defense: “I have committed no offense against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar.” ⁹But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem to stand trial before me on these charges?”

PAUL APPEALS TO CAESAR

¹⁰Paul replied, “I am standing before the judgment seat of Caesar, where I ought to be tried. I have done nothing wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. ¹¹If, however, I am guilty of anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die. But if there is no truth to their accusations against me, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!” ¹²Then Festus conferred with his council and replied, “You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!”

FESTUS CONSULTS AGRIPPA

¹³After several days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice came down to Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. ¹⁴Since they were staying several days, Festus laid out Paul’s case before the king: “There is a certain man whom Felix left in prison. ¹⁵While I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews presented their case and requested a judgment against him. ¹⁶I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand a man over before he has had an opportunity to face his accusers and defend himself against their charges. ¹⁷So when they came here with me, I did not delay. The next day I sat on the judgment seat and ordered that the man be brought in. ¹⁸But when his accusers rose to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. ¹⁹They only had some contentions with him regarding their own religion and a cer-

tain Jesus who had died, but whom Paul affirmed to be alive. ²⁰Since I was at a loss as to how to investigate these matters, I asked if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried there on these charges. ²¹But when Paul appealed to be held over for the decision of the Emperor, I ordered that he be held until I could send him to Caesar.” ²²Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear this man myself.” “Tomorrow you will hear him,” Festus declared.

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA AND BERNICE

²³The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the auditorium, along with the commanders and leading men of the city. And Festus ordered that Paul be brought in. ²⁴Then Festus said, “King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this man. The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him, both here and in Jerusalem, crying out that he ought not to live any longer. ²⁵But I found he had done nothing worthy of death, and since he has now appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send him. ²⁶I have nothing definite to write to our sovereign about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after this inquiry I may have something to write. ²⁷For it seems unreasonable to me to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him.”

Chapter 26

PAUL’S TESTIMONY TO AGRIPPA

¹Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and began his defense: ²“King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today to defend myself against all the accusations of the Jews, ³especially since you are acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. I beg you, therefore, to listen to me patiently. ⁴Surely all the Jews know how I have lived from my earliest childhood among my own people, and also in Jerusalem. ⁵They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that I lived as a Pharisee, adhering to the strictest sect of our religion. ⁶And now I stand on trial because of my hope in the promise that God made to our fathers, ⁷the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. It is because of this hope, O king, that I am accused by the Jews. ⁸Why would any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead? ⁹So then, I too was convinced that I ought to do all I could to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰And that is what I did in Jerusalem. With authority from the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were con-

demned to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹I frequently had them punished in the synagogues, and I tried to make them blaspheme. In my raging fury against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. ¹²In this pursuit I was on my way to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. ¹⁴We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice say to me in Hebrew, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ ¹⁵‘Who are You, Lord?’ I asked. ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ¹⁶‘But get up and stand on your feet. For I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen from Me and what I will show you. ¹⁷I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those sanctified by faith in Me.’ ¹⁹So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. ²⁰First to those in Damascus and Jerusalem, then to everyone in the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I declared that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds worthy of their repentance. ²¹For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. ²²But I have had God’s help to this day, and I stand here to testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen: ²³that the Christ would suffer, and as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles.”

FESTUS INTERRUPTS PAUL’S DEFENSE

²⁴At this stage of Paul’s defense, Festus exclaimed in a loud voice, “You are insane, Paul! Your great learning is driving you to madness!” ²⁵But Paul answered, “I am not insane, most excellent Festus; I am speaking words of truth and sobriety. ²⁶For the king knows about these matters, and I can speak freely to him. I am confident that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.” ²⁸Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Can you persuade me in such a short time to become a Christian?” ²⁹“Short time or long,” Paul replied, “I wish to God that not only you but all who hear me this day may become what I am, except for these chains.” ³⁰Then the king and the governor rose, along with Bernice and those seated with them. ³¹On their way out, they said to one another, “This man has done nothing worthy of death or imprisonment.” ³²And Agrippa said to

Festus, "This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar."

Chapter 27

PAUL SAILS FOR ROME

¹When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. ²We boarded an Adramyttian ship about to sail for ports along the coast of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us. ³The next day we landed at Sidon, and Julius treated Paul with consideration, allowing him to visit his friends and receive their care. ⁴After putting out from there, we sailed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. ⁵And when we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. ⁶There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. ⁷After sailing slowly for many days, we arrived off Cnidus. When the wind impeded us, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. ⁸After we had moved along the coast with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. ⁹By now much time had passed, and the voyage had already become dangerous because it was after the Fast. So Paul advised them, ¹⁰"Men, I can see that our voyage will be filled with disaster and great loss, not only to ship and cargo, but to our own lives as well." ¹¹But contrary to Paul's advice, the centurion was persuaded by the pilot and by the owner of the ship. ¹²Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided to sail on, hoping that somehow they could reach Phoenix to winter there. Phoenix was a harbor in Crete facing both southwest and northwest.

THE STORM AT SEA

¹³When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had their opportunity. So they weighed anchor and sailed along, hugging the coast of Crete. ¹⁴But it was not long before a cyclone called the Northeaster swept down across the island. ¹⁵Unable to head into the wind, the ship was caught up. So we gave way and let ourselves be driven along. ¹⁶Passing to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we barely managed to secure the lifeboat. ¹⁷After hoisting it up, the crew used ropes to undergird the ship. And fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and were driven along. ¹⁸We were tossed so violently that the next day the men began to jettison the cargo. ¹⁹On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. ²⁰When neither

sun nor stars appeared for many days and the great storm continued to batter us, we abandoned all hope of being saved. ²¹After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have followed my advice not to sail from Crete. Then you would have averted this disaster and loss. ²²But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because you will not experience any loss of life, but only of the ship. ²³For just last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me ²⁴and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And look, God has granted you the lives of all who sail with you.' ²⁵So take courage, men, for I believe God that it will happen just as He told me. ²⁶However, we must run aground on some island."

THE SHIPWRECK

²⁷On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea. About midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. ²⁸They took soundings and found that the water was twenty fathoms deep. Going a little farther, they took another set of soundings that read fifteen fathoms. ²⁹Fearing that we would run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daybreak. ³⁰Meanwhile, the sailors attempted to escape from the ship. Pretending to lower anchors from the bow, they let the lifeboat down into the sea. ³¹But Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men remain with the ship, you cannot be saved." ³²So the soldiers cut the ropes to the lifeboat and set it adrift. ³³Right up to daybreak, Paul kept urging them all to eat: "Today is your fourteenth day in constant suspense, without taking any food. ³⁴So for your own preservation, I urge you to eat something, because not a single hair of your head will be lost." ³⁵After he had said this, Paul took bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. ³⁶They were all encouraged and took some food themselves. ³⁷In all, there were 276 of us on board. ³⁸After the men had eaten their fill, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea. ³⁹When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they sighted a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. ⁴⁰Cutting away the anchors, they left them in the sea as they loosened the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. ⁴¹But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was being broken up by the pounding of the waves. ⁴²The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners so none of them could swim to freedom. ⁴³But the centurion, wanting to spare Paul's life, thwarted their plan. He commanded those who

could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. ⁴⁴The rest were to follow on planks and various parts of the ship. In this way everyone was brought safely to land.

Chapter 28

ASHORE ON MALTA

¹Once we were safely ashore, we learned that the island was called Malta. ²The islanders showed us extraordinary kindness. They kindled a fire and welcomed all of us because it was raining and cold. ³Paul gathered a bundle of sticks, and as he laid them on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself to his hand. ⁴When the islanders saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “Surely this man is a murderer. Although he was saved from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.” ⁵But Paul shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. ⁶The islanders were expecting him to swell up or suddenly drop dead. But after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. ⁷Nearby stood an estate belonging to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us and entertained us hospitably for three days. ⁸The father of Publius was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him, and after praying and placing his hands on him, he healed the man. ⁹After this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured as well. ¹⁰The islanders honored us in many ways and supplied our needs when we were ready to sail.

PAUL ARRIVES IN ITALY

¹¹After three months we set sail in an Alexandrian ship that had wintered in the island. It had the Twin Brothers as a figurehead. ¹²Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there three days. ¹³From there we weighed anchor and came to Rhegium. After one day, a south wind came up, and on the second day we arrived at Puteoli. ¹⁴There we found some brothers who invited us to spend the week with them. And so we came to Rome. ¹⁵The brothers there had heard about us and traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the

Three Taverns to meet us. When Paul saw them, he was encouraged and gave thanks to God.

PAUL PREACHES AT ROME

¹⁶When we arrived in Rome, Paul was permitted to stay by himself, with a soldier to guard him. ¹⁷After three days, he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had gathered, he said to them, “Brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, I was taken prisoner in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. ¹⁸They examined me and wanted to release me, because there was no basis for a death sentence against me. ¹⁹But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, even though I have no charge to bring against my nation. ²⁰So for this reason I have called to see you and speak with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.” ²¹The leaders replied, “We have not received any letters about you from Judea, nor have any of the brothers from there reported or even mentioned anything bad about you. ²²But we consider your views worth hearing, because we know that people everywhere are speaking against this sect.” ²³So they set a day to meet with Paul, and many people came to the place he was staying. He expounded to them from morning to evening, testifying about the kingdom of God and persuading them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and the Prophets. ²⁴Some of them were convinced by what he said, but others refused to believe. ²⁵They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit was right when He spoke to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: ²⁶‘Go to this people and say, “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.”’ ²⁷For this people’s heart has grown callous; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn, and I would heal them.’ ²⁸Be advised, therefore, that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” ²⁹ ³⁰Paul stayed there two full years in his own rented house, welcoming all who came to visit him. ³¹Boldly and freely he proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.