

The followers of Jesus did great things

**The book from the Holy Bible
called *Acts***

Plain English Version

The followers of Jesus did great things (Plain English Version)

Translated for speakers of Australian Indigenous languages

Illustrations by David C. Cook are marked as such on the relevant pages

© David C Cook, 1996.

Illustrations on pages 53 and 159 by Louise Bass © The British & Foreign Bible Society, 1994.

Illustrations on pages 68 and 74 © Global Recordings Network. Used with permission.

Maps on pages 72, 91, 107 and 154 by Gordon Thompson © 2010, 2015, 2018 & 2020

Wycliffe Bible Translators International Inc. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International License.

Illustrations on pages 5, 9, 14, 16, 26, 31, 34, 50, 58, 60, 95, 112, 113, 137 and 162 by Graham Wade

© United Bible Societies, 1989.

Illustration on page 155 used with permission of New Tribes Mission, 1987.

Published by The Bible League Inc.



PO Box 714, Penrith NSW 2751

1800 800 937

info@bl.org.au | bl.org.au

© 2022, 2024 Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia

70 Graham Road, Kangaroo Ground VIC 3097

03 9712 2777

info@wycliffe.org.au | wycliffe.org.au

Up to 1,000 verses of this work may be quoted in non-saleable media such as church bulletins, newsletters, orders of service and teaching material without the need for written permission. For other uses please contact Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia. To use pictures included in this book, please contact the respective copyright holders.

The followers of Jesus did great things

(The book in the Holy Bible called Acts)

About this book

Luke wrote this book. He was a doctor. This is the 2nd book he wrote. His 1st book is about the things that Jesus did when he was here on the earth. We have translated some of that book, see *Some important parts of the good news about Jesus that Luke wrote*. This 2nd book is about the things that Jesus's followers did after Jesus went back to heaven. Luke wrote both of these books for a man called Thiofilus, but we can learn a lot from them too.

Luke was a friend of Paul, one of Jesus's special workers, and he went with Paul to a lot of countries and helped him as he told people the good news about Jesus.

Some of the things that Luke wrote about in this book, are things he saw happen, and the rest are things that Paul and Jesus's other followers told him about.

Luke wrote this book about 2,000 years ago, about 30 years after Jesus went back to heaven. It is now part of the Holy Bible, and it is important for us today. It tells us about how the first Christians lived for Jesus, and how they started the first churches in the towns where they lived. And it tells us how

God's Holy Spirit worked in them, and how they told everyone about Jesus, so that a lot more people believed in him. We can learn a lot today from this book that Luke wrote a long time ago.

Chapter 1

¹I'm writing to you again, my friend Thiofilus. I wrote to you before, about all the things that Jesus did, and the things that he taught people. * ²He kept on doing those things, and the Holy Spirit helped him tell his special workers the things they had to do. After that, God took Jesus up to heaven.

³You see, before God took Jesus up to heaven, when he was on the earth, people killed him. Then he came alive again, and his followers saw him a lot of times in the next 40 days. Jesus showed them that he really was alive, so they are really sure that it is true. And he told them a lot of things about God's family.

⁴One day, Jesus was eating some food with his followers in Jerusalem city, and he said to them, "Don't leave Jerusalem yet. I already told you that my father promised to give you the Holy Spirit. Well, wait here until God does that. *

⁵Remember John the Baptiser. He baptised people with water. That means, he took them through a special washing ceremony. But in a few days time, God will baptise you with the Holy Spirit. That means, he will put his spirit in you."*

* 1:1 Luke 1:1-4 * 1:4 Luke 24:49 * 1:5 Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33

God took Jesus up into heaven

⁶You know, at that time, the Roman government people were the bosses over all the people there. So when Jesus's followers met together with him, they asked him, "Sir, are you going to fight the Romans at this time, and beat them, and give us back our own country, with our own boss for us Israel people?"

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

⁹⁻¹⁰After Jesus told them that, God lifted him up to heaven. His followers were looking at him as he was going up. Then a cloud came in front of Jesus, and his followers couldn't see him any more. They kept on looking up into the sky, and suddenly 2 men wearing white clothes stood next to them.* ¹¹They said, "You men from Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the sky? God



God lifted Jesus up into heaven

* 1:8 Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-48 * 1:9-10 Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-51

took Jesus up into heaven, but he will come back again one day. You saw him go up into heaven just now, and he will come back in the same way that you saw him go.”

¹²That happened at Olive Trees Hill.

They found a man to take the place of Judas

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

These are the names of Jesus’s 11 special workers,

- Peter
- John
- James
- Andrew
- Philip
- Thomas
- Bartholomew
- Matthew
- James. His father’s name was Alfius.
- Simon. He used to be one of the mob that wanted to fight the Roman government bosses.
- Judas. His father’s name was James. *

¹⁴All those men met every day to pray together. Jesus’s brothers and some women met with them too. One of those women was Mary, the mother of Jesus.

¹⁵After a few days, the people that believed in Jesus had a meeting. There were about 120 people at that meeting.

* 1:13 Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16

Peter stood up and talked to them. ¹⁶⁻¹⁷He said, “Listen, friends, a long time ago the Holy Spirit told David about Judas, the son of Iscariot, and David wrote that story in God’s book. Now it has happened. You know, Judas used to be with us, and he worked with us. He was one of Jesus’s special workers. But the Jewish leaders paid Judas to take a mob of bad men to catch Jesus. ¹⁸After that, the Jewish leaders used that same money to buy some farm land. And Judas died in that place. His belly split open, and all his guts fell out. ¹⁹Everybody that lived in Jerusalem heard about that, so they called that place *Akeldama* in their language. That means *the farm land of blood.*”*

²⁰Peter kept on talking. He said, “God also told David to write about Judas in the part of God’s book called Psalms. He wrote,

‘Empty out his house, God, and don’t let anybody else live in it.’

And he also wrote,

‘Let somebody else have his job.’”*

²¹⁻²²And Peter said, “So now we have to pick somebody else to have Judas’s job and be one of Jesus’s 12 special workers. He will help us tell people the true story, that Jesus is alive. Yes, Jesus died, but then God made him alive again. The man that we pick has to be one of the men that went around with our leader Jesus. He has to be somebody that was with us from the time that John

* 1:18-19 Matthew 27:3-8 * 1:20 Psalm 69:25; 109:8

baptised Jesus, right up to the time that God took Jesus up into heaven.”*

²³So they all talked together, and they found 2 men that were with them all that time. One man was Joseph Barsabbas. He also had another name, Justus. The other man was called Matthias. ²⁴⁻²⁵Then Jesus’s special workers prayed. They said, “Judas left his job, and went his own way, and now he is dead. He went to that bad place. And God, you know everyone properly, and you know the way they think. Please show us the man that you want to take Judas’s place, and to do his job, and to be a special worker of Jesus.”

²⁶So they put the names of those 2 men into a jar, and one man shook it. Then one of them closed his eyes and took one of those names out of the jar. That name was Matthias. So Matthias joined Jesus’s 11 special workers, to work with them.

Chapter 2

The Holy Spirit came

¹The special day came for the Jewish ceremony called Pentecost, and all Jesus’s followers met together in one place.* ²Suddenly there was a noise that came from the sky, like a strong wind blowing. Everyone in the house heard that noise. ³Then they saw something like flames

* 1:21-22 Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:9; 16:19; Luke 3:21; 24:51 * 2:1 Leviticus 23:15-21; Deuteronomy 16:9-11

of fire that spread out and touched each person there. ⁴The Holy Spirit went into all of them, and they all started to talk in different languages. The Holy Spirit gave them power to talk in those languages.



Something like flames of fire touched Jesus's followers, and the Holy Spirit went into them

⁵There were some Jewish people from a lot of different countries that were staying in Jerusalem at that time. Those people really respected God. ⁶They heard the noise, and they crowded around that house. They heard Jesus's followers talking in the languages of all their different countries, and they were really surprised. ⁷They said, "These men are from Galilee, ⁸so how come we can hear them talking in our own languages?" ⁹⁻¹¹Some of us were born Jews, and some of us became Jews later. We are from a lot of different countries, and we can hear them talking in the languages of those countries. Some of us are from Parthia, and some from Media, and some from Elam, and some from Mesopotamia, and some from Judea, and some from Capadoshia, and some from Pontus, and some from Asia, and some from Frigia, and some from Pamfilia, and some from Egypt, and some from places in Libya near Cyrene, and some of us are

from Crete, and some of us are from Arabia, and some of us are visiting from Rome. But all of us can hear these people talking in our own languages. They are talking about the wonderful things that God does.”

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

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

Peter talked to the people at Jerusalem

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

¹⁶But I’ll tell you what’s happening. You know, a long time ago, God told his man, Joel, to write about what is happening here now, and it is in God’s book. Joel wrote,

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁹⁻²¹ And I will do powerful things in the sky that will
shock everyone.

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

And I will do powerful things on the earth too.

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

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

But God will save everybody that calls to him for help
and asks him to save them.’

Joel wrote that in God’s book.”*

²²⁻²³ Peter kept on talking. He said, “All you mob, listen,
and I’ll tell you about Jesus, the man from Nazareth.
He was a very special man. God helped him to do
great and powerful things, to show you that he is really
special. You mob saw Jesus doing those things right
here in front of your eyes. But you grabbed him, and
you gave him to bad men that don’t know God, and they
killed him on a cross. But you see, God already knew
that was going to happen. God planned those things a

* 2:17-21 Joel 2:28-32

long time ago.* ²⁴Yes, those bad men killed Jesus. They hurt him a lot, so that he died. But God didn't let him stay dead. God made him alive again. Nobody could make Jesus stay dead.*

²⁵⁻²⁸A long time ago, God told his man, David, to write about Jesus, and it is in God's book. David wrote,

'God, I know that you are always right here with me. You are close by my side and you look after me, so nobody can frighten me.

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

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

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

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

You are right here with me, and you make me very happy.'

David wrote that in God's book."*

²⁹Peter kept on talking. He said, "My friends, I can tell you, for sure, that our grand-father, David, was not talking about himself. You see, he died, and people buried him. His grave is still here, and we can see it today. So we know he didn't come alive again. ³⁰But David was one of God's men, and he wrote God's messages for people. And

* 2:22-23 Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:33; John 19:18

* 2:24 Matthew 28:5-6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:5 * 2:25-28 Psalm 16:8-11

God promised David that one day, some time later, a man from David's own family will become the big boss over his people. * ³¹You see, God told David something that will happen later, so David wrote that message for us. That message was about the Christ, the special man that God was going to send, and it tells us that God was going to make him alive again. It tells us that God was not going to leave him in the grave, or let his body rot away. ³²And now, all of us mob here can tell you, that message is all about Jesus. He died, but then God made him alive again, and we all saw him alive again. ³³Then God took him up into heaven. He is there now, sitting right next to God, on God's right-hand side, the place where the most important person sits. And God gave Jesus the Holy Spirit, and today Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit, just like God promised. That's the reason why you are seeing and hearing us talk in lots of languages today.

³⁴You see, David didn't go up into heaven, but Jesus did, so we know David didn't write those words about himself, but he wrote them about Jesus. And David wrote some more words about Jesus too. He wrote,

‘God told my leader,

“Sit with me, on my right-hand side, ³⁵and sit there until I beat all your enemies,

and then you can put your feet on them to show that you are their boss.” ’*

That's in God's book too.”

* 2:30 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Psalm 132:11 * 2:34-35 Psalm 110:1



Peter told all the people there to follow Jesus

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

³⁷All the people heard the things that Peter said, and they felt a lot of shame. So they said to Peter, and to Jesus’s other special workers, “Friends, what can we do?”

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

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

⁴¹Then a lot of people believed the things that Peter said. So Jesus's special workers baptised them. They baptised about 3,000 people that day, and those people joined Jesus's other followers. ⁴²They all kept on meeting together, and they listened to everything Jesus's special workers taught them. They were like a big family. They ate food together and remembered that Jesus died for them, and they prayed together to God.

Jesus's followers shared everything together

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

* 2:44 Acts 4:32-35

Chapter 3

A man couldn't walk, but Peter got Jesus to make him better

¹⁻³There was a man that couldn't walk. He was crippled all his life. Every day, somebody brought him to sit near one of the gates at God's ceremony house. Everyone called that gate *the beautiful gate*. As people went in through that gate, the crippled man asked them for money. One day, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Peter and John went to pray at God's ceremony house. They were going in through that Beautiful Gate, and that crippled man saw them and asked them for money. ⁴Peter and John looked straight at that man, and Peter said, "Look at us."

⁵So the man looked at them. He thought, "I reckon these 2 men will give me some money."

⁶But Peter said, "I haven't got any money. But I have got something really good for you. Jesus Christ, the man from Nazareth, has the power to make you better, so I'm talking to you with his power, and I tell you, get up and walk."

⁷Then Peter held the man's right hand and helped him to stand up. Straight away the man's feet and ankles got strong. ⁸He jumped up and started to walk



Peter got Jesus to make a crippled man better

around, and he went with Peter and John into the yard of the ceremony house. That man was walking, and jumping around, and he was telling everyone that God is really great and really good.

⁹All the people that were there saw him walking, and they heard him saying that God is really great. ¹⁰They knew he was the man that used to sit near the Beautiful Gate and ask them for money, and they were really surprised. They thought, “How did this happen to him?” ¹¹All the people there were really surprised, and they ran to Peter and John. They were at a place in God’s ceremony house called Solomon’s veranda. And the man kept holding on to Peter and John.

Peter told the people about Jesus

¹²Peter saw all those people and said to them, “All you Israel people, why are you surprised like this? Why are you looking at us? Do you think that we are really powerful, and that we made this man walk? Do you think that we are so good that we can do that? No. We are not. ¹³⁻¹⁴God made this man better, so that everyone will know that Jesus is really great. But you mob grabbed Jesus and gave him to the soldiers, for them to kill him. Pilate, the judge, wanted to let Jesus go free, but all you mob kept on shouting, ‘No, don’t let Jesus go. You have to kill him. You have to let another man go free instead, even though the other man is a murderer.’ Jesus was a properly good man that lived God’s way, but you said that he was not good.

But Jesus worked for God, and after they killed him, God made him come alive again, and God made him really powerful. This is the same God that our grandfathers respected a long time ago. They were Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. * ¹⁵Yes, you killed Jesus, the one that gives life to people. But God made him alive again. And both of us saw him with our own eyes, he was really alive again.

¹⁶Now you are looking at this man here, and you know he used to be crippled. But we believed that Jesus can make him better, so Jesus did make him better. You mob saw that with your own eyes.”

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

¹⁹So listen. You mob have to change the way you live, and you have to turn back to God, so that he will not blame you or do payback to you for the bad things you did. ²⁰⁻²¹Then God will make your spirits happy and strong. You see, God picked Jesus and sent him to you.

* **3:13-14** Exodus 3:6, 15; Matthew 27:15-23; Mark 15:6-14; Luke 23:13-23; John 19:12-15

He is the Christ, God's special man. Jesus will stay in heaven until the right time comes for God to make everything new and right again. Then God will send Jesus to you again.

God told everyone about that a long time ago, and he got his men to write about it in his book. ²²One of those men was Moses. He wrote,

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

²⁴Samuel was another of God's men a long time ago. He also told people that all these things were going to happen. And all God's other men that came later, they told people the same story. ²⁵God promised all these things to our grand-fathers that lived a long time ago, and he promised them to you too. A long time ago, God said to our grand-father Abraham,

'I will use your family to do good things for all the nations in the world.'*

²⁶So, you see, first of all, God made Jesus alive again. After that, he sent him to do good things for you. Yes, God sent Jesus to help you Israel mob turn around and stop doing bad things, and live the right way."

* 3:22-23 Leviticus 23:29; Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19 * 3:25 Genesis 22:18; 26:4

Chapter 4

Soldiers grabbed Peter and John

¹Peter and John were still talking to the people there, then some Jewish boss men came to them. Those bosses were the men that look after the Jewish ceremonies, and the boss over the soldiers that looked after God's ceremony house, and some men called Sadducees, that didn't believe that anyone will ever come alive again. They all came to Peter and John. ²They heard Peter and John teaching the people and saying that God will make people alive, just like he made Jesus alive. And those boss men were really angry, ³so they grabbed Peter and John. Those boss men wanted to take them to court, but it was already late in the afternoon, so the soldiers locked up Peter and John in jail, to wait until the next day.

⁴Some people already heard Peter and John's message, and a lot of them believed it, so they started to follow Jesus. More and more people started to follow Jesus. There were about 5,000 men following him at that time.

⁵The next day, all the Jewish leaders met together in Jerusalem city to judge Peter and John in court. They were the Jewish bosses, and the elders, and the men that taught the Jewish law. ⁶The big boss of all the Jewish ceremonies was there. His name was Annas. And 3 men of his family were there. Their names were Cayafas, and John, and Alexander. And there were some other people from his family there too.

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

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

¹¹You know, a long time ago, one of God’s men told a picture story about you boss mob, and about Jesus too. They said that some work-men built a house out of big stones, but those work-men thought one of those stones was rubbish, so they chucked it away. But they were wrong. That stone was properly good, and now God made it the most important stone of all. You are like those work-men, and Jesus is like that stone. You did not want him.*

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

¹³The leaders knew that Peter and John were ordinary men that never went to Jewish school to learn about

* 4:11 Psalm 118:22

God's book, but Peter and John were not frightened to talk back to them. So those leaders were shocked. Then they remembered that Peter and John were Jesus's friends and often listened to him. ¹⁴Those leaders saw the man that used to be crippled. He stood right there next to Peter and John. So those leaders couldn't say anything bad about Peter and John.

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

¹⁸So those leaders called Peter and John back to the court. They told them, "Don't talk to any other people about Jesus. Don't teach anyone about him, or we'll give you big trouble."

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

²¹⁻²²The leaders couldn't think of any way to punish Peter and John. They knew that all the people were saying that God made that man better. That man was

already more than 40 years old, so all the people were saying that God is really great and really good for making him better. So again those bosses told Peter and John, “Don’t talk about Jesus any more, or we’ll give you big trouble.” Then they let them go free.

The Christians prayed together

²³Peter and John left that court and went back to the other people that believed in Jesus. They told them everything that the bosses of the Jewish ceremonies and the other Jewish leaders said. ²⁴The other followers listened to Peter and John, and then they all prayed to God together. They said to him, “God, you are the boss over everything. You made the sky, and the earth, and the sea, and everything in them.” * ²⁵The Holy Spirit talked to your man, David, our grand-father that lived a long time ago, and the Holy Spirit told him to write this in God’s book. David wrote,

‘The people from different countries are really angry, and they are talking about doing something stupid, something that will not work.

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

²⁷⁻²⁸And now that has happened, just like David wrote. Herod and Pontius Pilate are both bosses from different

* 4:24 Exodus 20:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 146:6 * 4:25-26 Psalm 2:1-2

countries. They, and some of their countrymen, they all met together in this city. And they met with Jewish people too. They all tried to work out a way to get rid of Jesus. He was your worker, the special one that you sent to us. You, God, are the one with power, and you knew everything they were going to do, and you let them do it.* ²⁹And now, God, you heard the bad things they reckon they will do to us. We are your workers. Please help us to not be frightened, and help us to keep on telling everyone about Jesus. ³⁰Show everyone your great power. Make sick people better. Let us do powerful things with the power of Jesus, your special man that works for you. Then everyone will know that we are telling them the true story.”

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

The Christians shared all their things

³²All those people that believed in Jesus agreed with each other and felt the same way about things. They shared everything they owned with each other. They never said, “Those things are mine, you can’t have them.” No, they reckoned everything belonged to everyone.*

* 4:27-28 Matthew 27:1-2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1, 7-11; John 18:28-29

* 4:32 Acts 2:44-45

³³At the same time, Jesus's special workers talked in a powerful way and told everyone, "Our leader Jesus is alive again." And God was good to his followers, and he gave them everything they needed.

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

³⁶One of the Christians that sold their land was Joseph. Jesus's special workers called him *Barnabas*. That name means *helper*. He was from the island called Cyprus, and he belonged to the Levi tribe. ³⁷Barnabas sold his farm land, then he gave the money to Jesus's special workers, for them to share it with the other Christians.

Chapter 5

A man and his wife tried to trick the Holy Spirit

¹There was a man called Ananias, and his wife was called Safira. They sold some land too, ²but they kept some of the money for themselves. Ananias only gave some of it to Peter and to Jesus's other special workers, for them to share it with the other Christians. Ananias lied to them. He said, "This is all the money we got for our land." His wife knew what he was doing, and she agreed to it.

³Then Peter said to him, “Ananias, why did you listen to Satan, the boss over the bad spirits? Why did you let him be your boss? He even got you to lie to the Holy Spirit. You kept some of that money for yourself, the money you got for that land. ⁴Look, that land was yours, and you didn’t have



Ananias lied to Jesus’s special workers and to the Holy Spirit

to sell it. But you sold it, and you got some money. Then you could do anything you liked with that money. You didn’t have to bring it to us. So why did you think you could trick us, and tell us that this little bit of money was all you got for that land? You lied to us. But you didn’t only lie to people, you lied to God too.”

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

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

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

⁹So Peter said to her, “Why did you and your husband agree with each other to try to trick the Holy Spirit?”

Listen. Your husband is dead, and the men that buried him are near the door right now, and they will carry you out too.”

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

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

Jesus's followers got Jesus to make a lot of people better

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

An angel messenger opened the jail doors

¹⁷There were some people that didn't believe that anyone will ever come alive again. They were called *Sadducees*. The big boss of the Jewish ceremonies was a Sadducee. He and all the other Sadducees were really jealous of Jesus's special workers. ¹⁸So those Sadducees got some soldiers to grab Jesus's special workers, and lock them up in the jail. ¹⁹But that night, God sent an angel messenger to Jesus's special workers, and he opened the jail doors and let them out. ²⁰That angel said to them, "Go and stand in God's ceremony house, and tell all the people there everything about this new life that Jesus gives."

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

At the same time, the big boss of the Jewish ceremonies and his friends, they called together all the men of the Jewish Leaders Council, for a meeting. Then they sent the soldiers to the jail to get Jesus's special workers. ²²Those soldiers went to the jail, but they couldn't find those men there. So they went back to the meeting, and they said, ²³"We got to the jail, and the guards were standing there, near the locked doors. We opened the doors and went inside, but we couldn't find anyone in there."

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

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

²⁷The soldiers brought Jesus’s special workers to the Jewish Leaders Council, to talk to them. Then the big boss of the Jewish ceremonies got angry with them and said, ²⁸“We told you not to teach people about Jesus. But you didn’t listen to us. You told everyone in Jerusalem about him. You want people to think that we killed him. You are blaming us.”*

²⁹Peter stood there with Jesus’s other special workers, and he said, “We’ve got to listen to God and do whatever he says, and not listen to people. ³⁰You got men to kill Jesus by nailing him to a cross. But God made him alive again. We Jewish people respect God, and so did our grand-fathers that lived a long time ago. That same God made Jesus alive again. ³¹And he gave Jesus the best place in heaven, right next to God himself, on his right-hand side, the place where the most important person sits. So now Jesus is our leader, and he is the one that

* 5:28 Matthew 27:25

can save us. God did that so that all the Israel people can turn back to him, and they can stop doing bad things, and then he will not punish them. ³²We saw everything that Jesus did, so we tell everyone all about it. And God gave his Holy Spirit to the people that follow Jesus, and that Holy Spirit does powerful things, to show everyone that what we say is true.”

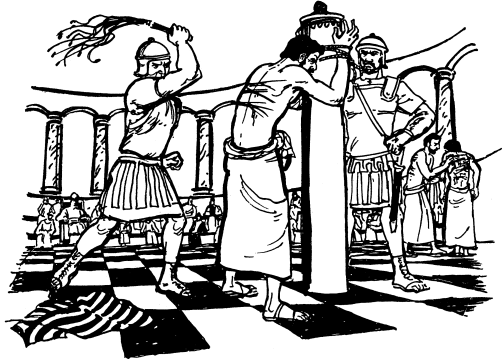
³³The Jewish council men heard Peter talking like that, and they were really angry. They wanted to kill Jesus’s special workers. ³⁴But one of them stood up in the meeting. His name was Gamaliyel. He was one of the Pharisee mob, that were strong for the Jewish law. All the people knew that he was a good man, and they respected him. Gamaliyel told the soldiers, “Take Jesus’s followers outside for a while.”

³⁵Then he said to the council men, “Listen, you Israel mob. We have to think carefully now. You want to kill those men, but listen to this. ³⁶A while ago there was a man called Thoodas. He wanted to fight the Roman government. He told everyone that he was great, and about 400 men listened to him and followed him to fight the Romans. But he died in that fight, and his followers all ran away. So in the end nothing happened. ³⁷After that, at the time when the Romans were counting our people, there was another man, called Judas. He was from Galilee country. He led a mob of men to fight the Romans, but the Romans killed him too, and chased all his followers away.

³⁸So I’m telling you now, don’t kill these followers of Jesus. Let them go. You see, if it was men that told

them to do these things, and to tell people about Jesus, nothing will happen. ³⁹But if God told them to do these things, you can't stop them. If you try to stop them, you might find yourselves fighting against God."

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



The Jewish council men got soldiers to hit Jesus's special workers with whips

⁴¹So Jesus's special workers left that meeting, and they were very happy. They knew that God reckoned they were good enough to feel pain for Jesus, and to be shamed for following him, so they were happy, even though the soldiers hit them.

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

Chapter 6

The Christians picked 7 men to be church workers

¹At that time, a lot of people believed in Jesus and started to follow him. Some of them talked in the Greek language, and some of them talked in the Jewish language, called Hebrew. The Christians that talked Greek complained about the Christians that talked Hebrew. They said that the people that looked after the widows didn't give enough food or money to the widows that talked Greek.

²So Jesus's 12 special workers called all the other Christians to a meeting. They said, "We 12 men have been giving out the money and food, but now that job is too big for us. We haven't got the time to do that job and then teach people God's word properly. We have to keep on teaching people God's word, so somebody else has to give out the money and food. ³So, friends, you pick 7 of your own men to do that job. They can give the money and food to the widows. You have to pick men that other people say are good men. They have to be men that God's Holy Spirit controls properly, and they have to be men that always think properly. We will let those men take over that work. They will give money and food to the widows, ⁴while we will keep on praying and teaching God's word."

⁵All the Christians agreed with those 12 men. So they picked Stephen. He was a man that really trusted God, and that God's Holy Spirit controlled properly. And they

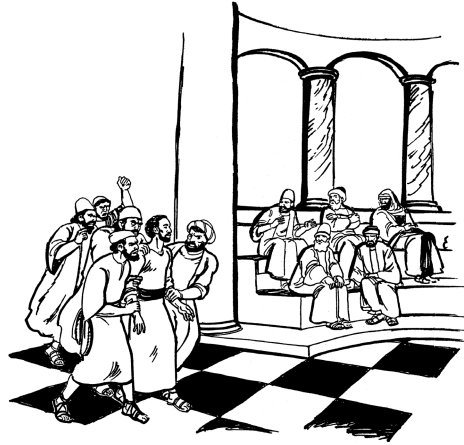
picked Philip, and Procorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas. Nicolas was from a city called Antioch. He was not born a Jew, but he turned to God and started to follow the Jewish ceremonies, and after that, he believed in Jesus. ⁶They brought those 7 men to Jesus's 12 special workers, and those 12 men prayed for God to help those 7 men, and they put their hands on their heads to show that they were giving those 7 men that job.

⁷At that time, the Christians kept on telling God's word to more people, and a lot more people in Jerusalem believed in Jesus. Even a big mob of the men that looked after the Jewish ceremonies believed in Jesus.

The Jewish leaders grabbed Stephen

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

¹²They told those lies to their elders and law teachers, and to a lot of other people at God's ceremony house. Then all those leaders got angry, and they went out and grabbed Stephen, and they took him to the mob called the Jewish Leaders Council, for them to judge him. ¹³Those men from that meeting house of the



Some Jewish leaders took Stephen to the Jewish Leaders Council

free men got those liars to stand up and say, "Stephen keeps on talking against this ceremony house. And he keeps on talking against our Jewish law. ¹⁴You know, we heard him say that Jesus from Nazareth will knock down this house. He says that Jesus will change the way we live and stop us doing the things that Moses told us to do."

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

Chapter 7

Stephen told the Jewish leaders a long story

¹The big boss of the Jewish ceremonies said to Stephen, "These men are saying bad things about you. We think

that they are telling the true story about you, but what do you say?"

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

⁵But God didn't give any of this country to Abraham. He didn't even give him a little bit of it. But God promised him that later on the people born into his family would own all of this land. At that time, Abraham didn't even have any kids.* ⁶But God told him, 'You will have grand-kids, and more grand-kids after them. Your family will go to a country that belongs to other people, to live there. Those people will treat your family really bad and make them work hard for no pay. They will do that for 400 years.* ⁷But after that, I will do payback to those other people, for treating your grand-kids really bad like that. Then your grand-kids will come out from that country, and they will show respect to me here in this place.'*

* 7:2-4 Genesis 11:31; 12:1, 4 * 7:5 Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; 48:4

* 7:6 Genesis 15:13-14 * 7:7 Exodus 3:12

⁸Then God promised to look after Abraham, and Abraham agreed to follow him. God told Abraham that his mob had to do a young man operation on all their boys, to show that they agreed with God. After that, Abraham had a son called Isaac, and 8 days later Abraham did a young man operation on him. After that, Isaac grew up and had a son called Jacob, and he did that operation on him too. And Jacob did the same for his 12 sons, and those 12 men became our grand-fathers that lived a long time ago.*

⁹Joseph was one of those 12 men. His brothers were jealous of him, and they sold him to some people that took him to Egypt. He had to work there for no pay. But God was with Joseph and looked after him there in Egypt.* ¹⁰Joseph got a lot of trouble there, but God saved him from all that trouble. God helped Joseph to think properly about everything. God showed Egypt's big boss that Joseph was really good. So the big boss made Joseph the boss over all the people in Egypt, and he made Joseph the boss over his big house too.*

¹¹After a long time, there was a dry time for all those countries. There was no rain, so no food grew in Egypt. And there was no food in Canaan, the country that our grand-fathers were living in. They had no food, and they were very hungry.* ¹²Then Jacob heard that there was food in Egypt. So he sent his sons to Egypt to get food.

* 7:8 Genesis 17:10-14; 21:2-4; 25:26; 29:31; 35:18 * 7:9 Genesis 37:11, 28; 39:2, 21

* 7:10 Genesis 41:39-41 * 7:11 Genesis 42:1-2

Those men were our grand-fathers that lived a long time ago. When they got to Egypt, they met Joseph, but he looked so different that they didn't know him. Then they bought some food and took it home.

¹³After that, Jacob sent them to Egypt again to get more food, and this time Joseph told them, 'I am your brother.' And Egypt's big boss heard that Joseph had some brothers. * ¹⁴Then Joseph sent his brothers to get his father Jacob, and all his family, to come and live in Egypt. So all 75 of them went to Egypt. * ¹⁵That's how Jacob and his family went to Egypt, and they lived there until they died. * ¹⁶Later, their grand-kids took their bodies back to the place called Shekem, and they buried them in a cave. A long time before that, Jacob's grand-father Abraham bought that cave from Hamor's family. He paid the full price for that cave.”*

Stephen talked about Moses

¹⁷Stephen kept on talking to the men of the Jewish Leaders Council. He said, “Remember, a long time before that, God told Abraham, ‘I will give you a big family, and they will become a great nation.’ And God also said, ‘Your family will move to another country, but after 400 years I will bring your family back and give them this country.’ So Abraham's family lived in Egypt, and they had lots of kids and grand-kids, and those families grew

* 7:13 Genesis 45:1, 16 * 7:14 Genesis 45:9-10, 17-18; 46:27 * 7:15 Genesis 46:1-7; 49:33 * 7:16 Genesis 23:3-16; 33:19; 50:7-13; Joshua 24:32

into a big mob of people. Then it was almost time for God to bring them back to this country. * ¹⁸Then, a new man became Egypt's big boss. That new big boss didn't know anything about Joseph. * ¹⁹He tricked our family, and he was very hard on them. He made our mob throw their baby boys into the river to kill them. * ²⁰Moses was born while that man was the big boss. Moses was a very good little baby, and his mother and father looked after him in their house for 3 months. * ²¹After that, they had to leave Moses out at the river, but the big boss's daughter came along and found him, and she took him home and called him her own son. * ²²So Moses grew up in the big boss's family, and the teachers in Egypt taught him a lot of their wise things. Moses became an important man. He talked well, and he did everything properly.

²³Moses kept on living in the big boss's family until he was 40 years old. Then one day, he went to visit his own people. They were our grand-fathers, the Israel mob. *

²⁴While he was there, he saw an Egypt man beating up an Israel man. Moses wanted to help that Israel man, so he killed that Egypt man. ²⁵Moses reckoned, 'Now my people will understand about me, and they will know that God will use me to save them.' But they didn't understand that.

²⁶The next day, Moses saw 2 of his own men fighting, and he tried to get them to stop fighting. He said, 'You

* **7:17** Genesis 12:2; 15:13-15 * **7:18** Exodus 1:7-8 * **7:19** Exodus 1:10-11, 22

* **7:20** Exodus 2:2 * **7:21** Exodus 2:3-10 * **7:23** Exodus 2:11-15

2 men, you are both family. Why do you hit each other?’
²⁷But the man that started the fight pushed Moses away. He said, ‘Nobody said that you can be our boss or our judge. ²⁸Are you going to kill me like you killed that Egypt man yesterday?’ ²⁹Moses heard that man’s words, and he got frightened. He thought, ‘Everyone knows that I killed that man. Now I will get big trouble.’ So he ran away from Egypt and went to live in the country called Midian. He didn’t belong to that country, but he got married there and had 2 sons.*

³⁰Moses stayed in Midian country for 40 years. Then one day, he was in the desert place near the big hill called Sinai, and God sent one of his angel messengers to him there. It happened like this. Moses saw a little tree that was burning with flames of fire.* ³¹It kept on burning all the time, but it didn’t finish up that little tree. Moses was surprised. He thought, ‘How come that fire doesn’t finish up that tree?’ So he went closer to have a good look at it. Then he heard God talk to him from that fire. God said, ³²‘I am the God of your grand-fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I am their God.’

Moses was so frightened that he started shaking. He was too frightened to look at that little tree any more. ³³Then God said to him, ‘Moses, take off your shoes. The ground you are standing on is my special ground. ³⁴Listen, I saw those bosses in Egypt, they were hitting my people. I heard my people crying and groaning, and

* 7:29 Exodus 18:3-4 * 7:30 Exodus 3:1-10

now I'm going to save them. So now, Moses, you go back to Egypt. I'm sending you back there to save them.'”

³⁵Stephen kept on talking to that mob of Jewish leaders. He said, “You see, God’s people didn’t listen to Moses before. They said, ‘Nobody said that you can be our boss or our judge.’ But later, God sent Moses back to save them, and to be their boss. And God sent his angel messenger to help Moses, the same angel that made that little tree keep on burning with fire.* ³⁶Moses helped God’s people leave Egypt. He did powerful things in Egypt, so that the big boss there let them go. So God’s people all followed Moses out of Egypt, and when they got to the water called the Red Sea, he did another powerful thing to let the people walk across to the other side. And later, he did more powerful things for them, while they walked around in the desert for 40 years.*

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

³⁸All our grand-fathers were with Moses in the desert country. And God sent an angel messenger to Moses, at the big hill called Sinai, to tell him the good message that helps people live with God. And then Moses told our grand-fathers that same message.*

³⁹But our grand-fathers didn’t listen to Moses. They didn’t want him to be their leader. So when Moses went

* 7:35 Exodus 2:14 * 7:36 Exodus 7:5; 14:21; Numbers 14:33

* 7:37 Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 * 7:38 Exodus 19:1—20:17; Deuteronomy 5:1-33

back up that hill, they said that they just wanted to go back to Egypt. ⁴⁰They told Aaron, ‘Make us statues of gods, and we will get them to show us the way back to Egypt. We followed that Moses out from Egypt, but now he is not here. What happened to him? We don’t know.’* ⁴¹So then they made a statue that looked like a young cow. They brought some animals, and they killed them and burned them to give them to that statue. And they had a big party to show respect to the statue they made.* ⁴²So God turned away from our grand-fathers. He left them, and they showed respect to the sun and the moon, and the stars too. Some time later God told one of his men to write about that, and now it is in God’s book. He wrote,

‘You people of Israel, you were in the desert for 40 years, and at that time, did you bring animals to kill and give to me? No, they were not for me.

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

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

Stephen talked about God’s ceremony house

⁴⁴Stephen kept on talking to the Jewish Leaders Council. He said, “A long time ago, God talked to Moses, and he

* 7:40 Exodus 32:1, 23 * 7:41 Exodus 32:2-6 * 7:42-43 Amos 5:25-27

showed Moses a picture of his special tent, and God told Moses how to make it. Our grand-fathers carried God's special tent with them through the desert. That tent showed everyone that they had God's law.*

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

⁴⁶God was good to David. And David wanted to build a ceremony house, instead of that tent, for the God of us Israel people. So David asked God to let him build that house.* ⁴⁷But God stopped David, and instead it was Solomon, David's son, that built God's ceremony house.*

⁴⁸But, you know, our great God does not live in houses that people build. You see, God told one of his men to write about that, and it is in God's book. He wrote, ⁴⁹⁻⁵⁰'God says, "I fill up all of heaven. It is like my big seat.

And the whole earth is just like something for me to rest my feet on.

So what sort of house will you people build for me?
You can't build a place big enough for me to live in.
You see, I made everything." ' '*

* 7:44 Exodus 25:9, 40 * 7:45 Joshua 3:14-17 * 7:46 2 Samuel 7:1-16;
1 Chronicles 17:1-14 * 7:47 1 Kings 6:1-38; 2 Chronicles 3:1-17
* 7:49-50 Isaiah 66:1-2

Stephen talked strong to the Jewish Leaders Council men

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

They killed Stephen with stones

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

* 7:51 Isaiah 63:10

⁵⁷When the Jewish council men heard that, they covered their ears so they couldn't hear Stephen, and they yelled out really loud, and they jumped up quick and grabbed him. ⁵⁸Then they dragged Stephen outside the city and started throwing big stones at him



© 1996, David C Cook

The Jewish council men threw big stones at Stephen to kill him

to kill him. And the men that told lies about Stephen took off their coats and gave them to a young man to look after. The name of that young man was Saul.

⁵⁹Those men kept on hitting Stephen with big stones. Then he called out, “Jesus, my leader, let my spirit come to be with you now.” ⁶⁰Then he went down on to his knees, and he shouted, “Jesus, don't blame these men for doing this bad thing.” And after he said that, he died.

Chapter 8

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

After that, some good men got Stephen's body and buried it, and they cried a lot for him.

Saul made trouble for the Christians

But Saul and his friends started making a lot of trouble for the Christians in Jerusalem. They went into the houses of Christians and dragged out the men and

women, and locked them up in jail. Saul and his men were trying to finish up the Christian people. So a lot of those Christians ran away from Jerusalem to Judea country, and to Samaria country. But Jesus's 12 special workers stayed in Jerusalem. *

Philip went to Samaria

⁴The Christians that ran away from Jerusalem went to a lot of different places, and in all those places they told people the good news about Jesus. ⁵One of them was Philip. He went to a town in Samaria country and told everyone, "Jesus is the Christ, the special man that God promised to send." ⁶God gave Philip a lot of power. A lot of people saw him do powerful things, and they listened to him, and they thought carefully about his message. ⁷You see, a lot of people had bad spirits in them, and Philip used God's power to force those bad spirits out of them. Those bad spirits screamed as they left those people. And Philip also used God's power to make a lot of crippled people better, and other people that couldn't walk because their legs were too weak, Philip made them better too. ⁸So the people in that town were very happy.

⁹A man that used to do magic lived in that town in Samaria. His name was Simon. He did that magic for a long time before Philip went there. Everyone there was surprised by the things he did. He used to say, "I am a great man." ¹⁰All the people talked about him and said,

* 8:1-3 Acts 22:4-5; 26:9-11

“This man is really great. He has God’s power.” Important people said that, as well as other people.

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

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

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

²⁰⁻²¹But Peter said to him, “You think you can buy God’s power with money, but you are wrong. No way.

Only God can give people that power. And God can see that you are not thinking the right way, so he will not give you that power, and he will not let you work with us. Look out. God can finish you up, and finish up your money too. ²²Stop thinking in that really bad way. Turn around and think God's way. Pray to him and ask him not to punish you for thinking like that. ²³I can see that you are jealous, and that you want to do bad things, and that those bad things are controlling you."

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

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

Philip talked to a man from Ethiopia

²⁶While Philip was in Samaria, one of God's angel messengers came to him and said, "Get up, and go south along the desert road, you know, the road that goes from Jerusalem to the town called Gaza." ²⁷So Philip got up, and he started to go along that road, and he saw a man from Ethiopia country sitting in a trailer, and horses were pulling the trailer along that road. He was the sort of man that couldn't have any kids. He worked for an important woman called Candace. She was the big

boss over Ethiopia. That man was one of her important workers. He looked after all her money. But he had a break from that work and went to Jerusalem to show respect to God, and then he started to go back home along that road. ²⁸Philip saw him sitting in his trailer, and he was reading God's book. He was reading the part that Isaiah wrote a long time ago. Isaiah was one of God's men that told people God's messages.

²⁹Then the Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Catch up with that trailer and walk along beside it."

³⁰So Philip ran up close to the trailer, and when he was beside it, he heard that man reading from the words that Isaiah wrote in God's book. Philip asked him, "Can you understand that book you are reading?"

³¹The Ethiopian man said, "No, I can't understand it. I need somebody to help me." Then he asked Philip to climb up into the trailer and sit beside him. ³²He was reading these words in God's book,

"Some people took him away to kill him,
just like men take a sheep away to kill it,
but he was quiet and didn't say anything.

You know that a sheep is quiet,
and it doesn't make a noise while men cut off all its wool,
well, he was quiet, just like that.

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

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

* 8:32-33 Isaiah 53:7-8

³⁴And the Ethiopian man said to Philip, “Who was Isaiah talking about? Was he talking about himself or somebody else?”

³⁵Then Philip told him that Isaiah was talking about Jesus. And he kept on talking, and he told that Ethiopian man the good news about Jesus.



© 1996, David C Cook

*Philip told the man from Ethiopia
the good news about Jesus*

³⁶⁻³⁷They kept going along the road, and they came to some water. The Ethiopian man said, “Look, there is some water. I want you to baptise me now.” ³⁸Then he told the man that was controlling the horses to stop. And the Ethiopian man and Philip went down into the water, and Philip baptised the Ethiopian man.

³⁹After they came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit quickly took Philip away. The Ethiopian man never saw him again, but he was really happy, and he kept going on his way home.

⁴⁰But the Holy Spirit put Philip in a town called Azotus. Philip went around telling people the good news about Jesus. He walked north, and he told the good news about Jesus to the people in all the towns along the way, until he got to the town called Caesarea, and he stayed there.

Chapter 9

Saul kept on making trouble for Christians

¹⁻²At that time, Saul was still making trouble for Jesus’s followers. He was telling them, “I’m going to hurt you and kill you.” He went to the big boss of the Jewish ceremonies and said, “I want to go to the city called Damascus and grab the followers of Jesus there. Will you write letters for me to take to the people in the Jewish meeting houses there? Tell them that you want me to grab anyone that belongs to that mob called the Jesus Way mob. I will grab those men and women, and tie them up, and I will bring them back to Jerusalem for you to punish them.” So that big boss wrote letters like that, and he gave them to Saul to take to Damascus.

Saul met Jesus

³Then Saul got some men, and they went along the road to Damascus. As they got close to that city, suddenly a bright light from heaven shined down on Saul, and it shined all around him.

⁴He fell down on to the ground, and he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul. Saul. Why are you making trouble for me and hurting me?”



Suddenly a bright light from heaven shined down on Saul, and Jesus talked to him

⁵Saul asked, “Who are you, boss?”

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

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

¹⁰There was a man called Ananias that lived in Damascus. He believed in Jesus. Ananias had something like a dream, but he was still awake. He heard Jesus say to him, “Ananias.”

And Ananias said, “Yes, sir, I’m here.”

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

¹³But Ananias said, “But sir, people have told me about that man Saul. He’s a properly cheeky man. He hurt your people in Jerusalem, and he did a lot of bad things to them. ¹⁴And the bosses of the Jewish ceremonies told him that he can grab all the people here that say they

follow you, Jesus, and he can take them to jail. He came here now to do just that.”

¹⁵But Jesus said to Ananias, “Don’t worry. Go to him anyway. You see, I picked that man to do my work. He will tell a lot of people about me. He will tell Jewish people about me. And he will tell people that are not Jews about me, even their biggest bosses too. ¹⁶I will show him that some people will not like him talking about me, so they will give him big trouble and hurt him.”

¹⁷So Ananias got up and went to the house that Judas lived in. He went inside, and he put his hands on Saul, and he said, “Saul, my friend, you saw Jesus on the road as you were coming here. Well, he has sent me so that you can see again, and the Holy Spirit will come into you and fill you.” ¹⁸Then some things fell down from Saul’s eyes. They were like fish scales, or like finger nails. After that, Saul could see again. He got up, and the Christians there baptised him. ¹⁹Then he ate some food, and he got strong again. Saul stayed in Damascus for a few days with the people that followed Jesus.

Saul told the people in Damascus about Jesus

²⁰As soon as Saul was strong again, he started talking to the Jewish people in their meeting houses. He told them, “Jesus is God’s son.”

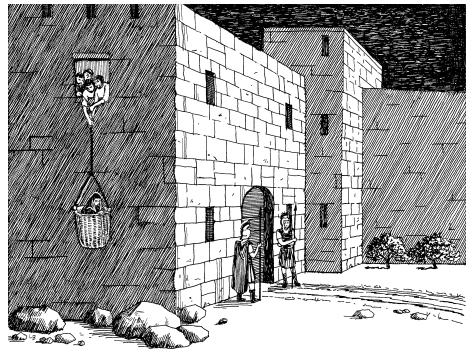
²¹All the Jews that heard him were really shocked. They said, “Wow, this man has really changed. He’s the man that really hurt the people in Jerusalem that

followed Jesus. And he came here to grab the people here that say they follow Jesus. He was going to tie them up with chains and take them back to the bosses of our ceremonies in Jerusalem.”

²²But Saul told those people about Jesus. The Jewish people in Damascus argued with him, but he showed them that Jesus really is the man that God promised to send to save us, the man that is called the Christ. Saul got better and better at showing them he was right, and they couldn't show that he was wrong. And they didn't like it.

²³⁻²⁴After that, some of those Jewish people talked with each other about killing Saul. There was a big wall around that city, and it had some gates in it. Every day and every night, they watched those gates. They thought they might see Saul going out of the city, and then they can catch him and kill him.

But somebody told Saul about them. ²⁵So the Christians there helped Saul get away. They got a big basket, and they took Saul to that big wall in the night. They went up to a window, high up in that wall. Then they tied ropes to the basket and put Saul in it, and then they put it through that window, and



The Christians in Damascus put Paul through a window and let him down to the ground in a basket

they let it go down to the ground outside the wall. Then Saul got out of the basket and ran away. *

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

²⁷But Barnabas, one of Jesus's followers there, he listened to Saul and believed his story. So he took Saul to Jesus's special workers, and he told them Saul's story. He said, "On the way to Damascus, Saul saw our leader, Jesus, and Jesus talked to him. After that, Saul told the people in Damascus about Jesus. He wasn't frightened of them." ²⁸Those church leaders in Jerusalem believed Barnabas, so Saul stayed there with them, and he went around Jerusalem with them. He talked to everyone about Jesus and wasn't frightened of anyone.

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

³¹Then, at last, everything settled down and was quiet for the Christians in the churches in Judea country, and in Galilee country, and in Samaria country, and they

* 9:23-25 2 Corinthians 11:32-33

got stronger for Jesus. The Holy Spirit helped them to be strong, and they respected Jesus properly. And more people joined them and believed in Jesus.

Peter got Jesus to make a crippled man better

³²After that, Peter went around visiting God's people that lived in Judea country, and he went to the town called Lydda. ³³He met a man there called Anias. About 8 years before that time, Anias got crippled. He couldn't walk, so he always lay on his swag. ³⁴Peter said to him, "Anias, Jesus Christ makes you better. Get up and roll up your swag." Right then Anias got better, and he stood up. ³⁵When the people in Lydda saw him, a lot of those people changed their ways and believed in Jesus. Lydda was in the country called Sharon, and the people there saw him, and a lot of them changed their ways and believed in Jesus too.

Peter got God to make a woman alive again

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

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

⁴⁰Peter told everyone to go outside. Then he got down on his knees, to show respect to God, and he prayed. Then he turned and looked at the body, and said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and she saw Peter, then she sat up. ⁴¹Peter held out his hand for her and helped her to stand up. Then he called out to the widows and to all God’s people there, and he told them to come. Then he showed them that Tabitha was alive. ⁴²Those people that saw her alive, they started telling other people about it, and soon everybody in Joppa heard that story, and a lot of people believed in our leader Jesus.

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

Chapter 10

An angel messenger came to a Roman soldier

¹There was a soldier that lived in the town called Caesarea. His name was Cornelius. He was the boss over a mob of soldiers in the Roman army that were called the Italian Mob. ²He and his family respected God, and they always tried to do things that made God happy. Cornelius gave a lot of money and things to poor people, and he prayed to God every day.

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

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

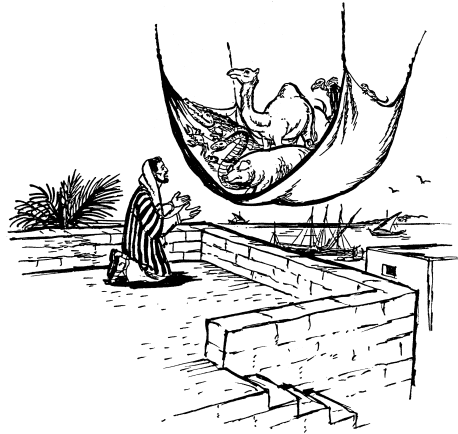
The angel said, "Cornelius, God heard you pray and saw you give money and things to poor people. It is like you gave that money and those things to God, so God is thinking about you. ⁵So send some men to Joppa to find a man called Peter. ⁶He is staying with a leather worker called Simon. His house is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

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

Peter had something like a dream while he was still awake

⁹The next day, in the middle of the day, those men were walking along and getting near to Joppa. At that same time, Peter went up on to the flat roof of the house to pray. ¹⁰He started feeling hungry and he wanted something to eat, but he waited and prayed while the people in the house were getting some food ready. Then Peter had something like a dream, but he was still awake. ¹¹⁻¹²He saw the sky open up, then he saw something like

a big sheet. Somebody was holding on to the 4 corners of that sheet, and there were things in the middle of it. It was coming down from the sky to the ground. There were all sorts of animals in it, and lizards, and snakes, and birds. Their Jewish law said, “Don’t eat those sorts of animals, they are no good.” ¹³Then a voice said to Peter, “Get up, Peter. Kill some of those animals and eat them.”



Peter had something like a dream and saw a sheet with all sorts of animals in it

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

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

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

¹⁷Peter sat there and thought, “What does this mean? What is God telling me?”

While Peter was still trying to understand it, those 3 men from Cornelius walked into that town. They asked

people, “Where does Simon live, the leather worker man?” And the people told them how to get there. Then they went to that house and stood outside the gate, ¹⁸and they asked, “Is Peter here?”

¹⁹At that same time, Peter was thinking about what he just saw, and the Holy Spirit said to him, “Listen, 3 men are down at the gate. They are looking for you. ²⁰So get up and go down to them. You see, I sent them to you, so just go with them. Don’t worry.”

²¹Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the man you are looking for. Why did you come here?”

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

²³So Peter said that he will go with them the next day, and he asked them to come in and stay there that night.

Peter went to the Roman soldier’s house

The next morning, Peter got up and went with those men. Some of the Joppa Christians went with him too. It was a long way, so they had to camp one night along the road.

²⁴The next day, Cornelius called all his relatives and his close friends to come to his house in Caesarea to wait there for Peter. And Peter and his mob got there at about 3 o’clock in the afternoon.

²⁵Peter started to go into the house, and Cornelius met him and got down on to his knees in front of Peter, to

show him respect. ²⁶But Peter lifted him up and said, “Stand up. I’m only a man, like you.” ²⁷Peter kept on talking with Cornelius, then they went into the house, and Peter saw a lot of people there.



Peter went to the Roman soldier's house

²⁸He said to them, “You know, you Roman people are not Jews, and the Jewish law teachers reckon that people that aren’t Jews are no good, so a Jewish man shouldn’t go into their house. But God showed me that I can’t say that anyone is no good. He showed me that it is all right for me to visit you. ²⁹Then these men came and asked me to come here, so I didn’t argue with them, and I came here with them. Now, please tell me, why did you ask me to come here?”

³⁰Cornelius said, “4 days ago I was praying in my house at 3 o’clock in the afternoon. Suddenly I saw a man wearing bright shining clothes standing in front of me.

³¹And he said to me, ‘Cornelius, God heard you pray, and he knows that you give money and things to poor people.

³²So send some men to Joppa, and tell them to get Peter and bring him back here. He is staying with Simon, a leather worker. His house is near the sea.’ ³³So right away I sent those men to bring you here. Thank you for coming. We are all here, and we know that God is with us. We are ready to hear everything that he told you to say to us.”

Peter told the Romans about Jesus

³⁴Then Peter started telling those Roman people his message. He said, “Now I really understand that God treats everyone the same. * ³⁵If anyone respects God, and if they do the right thing, God will let them come to him, and he will listen to them. It doesn’t matter if they are Jews, like us mob, or if they belong to a different nation, like you Roman mob.

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

³⁹And I was one of Jesus’s special workers. We went around with him, and we saw all the good things that he did. We saw all those things he did in Jerusalem city, and in all the rest of the Jewish people’s country. But then his enemies killed him. They nailed him to a cross. ⁴⁰But after 2 days, when it was the 3rd day, God made him alive again, and God let people see him alive.

* 10:34 Deuteronomy 10:17

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

⁴³But listen, a long time ago, God sent his men to tell people his messages, and they all talked about Jesus. They said that if anyone believes in him, God will say that they are not guilty of the bad things they did.”

The Holy Spirit went into people that were not Jews

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

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“God gave the Holy Spirit to these people too, just like he gave the Holy Spirit to us. Now nobody can stop us from baptising them in water.” ⁴⁸So he told the other Christians to baptise them, to show that those Roman people follow Jesus, the man that God sent to save people.

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

Chapter 11

Peter told the Jewish Christians what God taught him

¹Jesus's other special workers, and the other Christians in Judea, they heard about Peter's visit to Caesarea. They heard that some people in Caesarea, that were not Jews, believed God's word. ²After Peter got back to Jerusalem, some of the Jewish Christians argued with him. They reckoned he broke their law. ³They said, "You went into the house of people that are not Jews, and you even ate food with them."

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

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

¹¹Just then 3 men came to the house I was staying in. They came from Caesarea. ¹²The Holy Spirit told me, 'Don't worry, just go with those men.' So I went with them, and these 6

other men here, they went with me too. We got there, and we went into a Roman man's house. ¹³⁻¹⁴That man told us that he saw an angel in his house, a few days ago. The angel said to him, 'Peter has a message for you, so send somebody to Joppa to get him. He will tell you how God can save you, and your family, and everyone else in your house too.'

¹⁵I started talking to those people, and then the Holy Spirit came into them, just like he came into us that first time. ¹⁶And I remembered that our leader Jesus said, 'John baptised people with water, but God will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'^{*} ¹⁷You know, we believed in our leader Jesus Christ, and God gave us the Holy Spirit. And now those people that are not Jews, they believe in Jesus too, and God gave them the Holy Spirit too, just like he gave him to us. So, you see, I couldn't try to stop God. No way."

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

The Christian people in Antioch got strong

¹⁹At the time when some men killed Stephen, those men wanted to kill the rest of the Christians too. So a lot of Christians ran away from Jerusalem, and they went a

* 11:16 Acts 1:5

long way, even to other countries. They told people in those places the message about Jesus, but they only told it to their own countrymen, the Jews. Some of those Christians went to Fonisha country, and some of them went to the island called Cyprus, and some of them went to the city called Antioch.* ²⁰But some of them, men that belonged to Cyprus and men that belonged to the town called Cyrene, they went to Antioch too, and they didn't just talk to Jews, they talked to people that are not Jews too. They told them the good news about our leader Jesus. ²¹God helped them tell people his message, and a lot of people that were not Jews believed in Jesus and followed him.

²²The Christians in Jerusalem heard about those things happening at Antioch, so they sent one of their men there. His name was Barnabas. ²³He got to Antioch, and he saw everything that was happening. Then he knew that God was very good to the people there, so he was very happy. He told those new Christians, "Stay strong for Jesus and keep on following him all the time." ²⁴Barnabas was a good man. He let the Holy Spirit control him, and he really trusted God. He got lots more people there to follow Jesus.

²⁵After that, Barnabas left Antioch, and he went to the town called Tarsus to look for Saul. ²⁶He found Saul there, and he took him back to Antioch. They both stayed there for a year, and they met with the Christians in the church there, and they kept on teaching them. A

* 11:19 Acts 8:1-4

lot of people in Antioch followed Jesus, and that was the place where people first used the name *Christians* for the people that followed Jesus Christ.

The Antioch Christians helped the Judea Christians

²⁷At that time, some Christian men left Jerusalem and went to Antioch. They had the power to tell God's messages.

²⁸One of those men was Agabus. He stood up in a meeting, and the Holy Spirit told him a message to tell everybody. He said, "There is going to be a very hard time for all the people everywhere. There will be no food to eat anywhere." (And that really happened later, when Claudius was the biggest Roman boss.)* ²⁹⁻³⁰The Christians in Antioch heard Agabus tell that message, and they remembered the Christians in Judea. They knew that the Judea Christians were poor, so they would have a very hard time if there is not much food. The Antioch Christians wanted to help them, so they all put money into a bag. Each of them gave as much money as they could. Then they gave it to Barnabas and Saul, and those 2 men, took it to the Christian leaders in Jerusalem, in Judea country.

Chapter 12

The big boss killed James, one of Jesus's special workers

¹In Jerusalem, at that time, the big boss was called Herod. He told his soldiers to grab some of the Christians.

* 11:28 Acts 21:10

²One of them was James. He and his young brother, John, were both special workers of Jesus. Herod told his soldiers to kill James with a big knife.

³The Jewish leaders told Herod that this made them very happy, so he told his soldiers to grab Peter too. It was the time for the Jewish people to have their ceremony where they ate flat damper. ⁴So Herod thought, “I will wait until the end of that ceremony, then I will judge Peter and kill him.” So they put Peter in jail, and Herod told 4 little mobs of soldiers to guard Peter there. Those little mobs had 4 soldiers each, and they took turns to guard Peter.*

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

Peter walked out of the jail

⁶That Jewish ceremony was almost finished, and Herod was going to judge Peter the next day. That night, Peter was asleep in that jail. There was one soldier on each side of him, and they tied each of his hands with chains to those soldiers. And 2 other soldiers stood at the gate of the jail.

⁷Suddenly, there was a bright light in that little room in the jail, and one of God’s angel messengers came and stood in front of Peter. That angel touched his side to wake him up, and said, “Quick. Get up.” And the chains fell off Peter’s hands. ⁸Then the angel told him, “Get

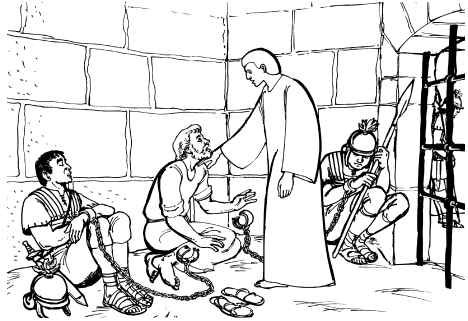
* 12:4 Exodus 12:1-27

dressed and put on your shoes.” So Peter did that. Then the angel said, “Now put on your coat and follow me.”

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

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

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



An angel messenger came to get Peter out of jail

¹³Peter knocked on the door of that house, and a worker went to the door. She was a girl called Rhoda.

¹⁴She heard his voice, and she knew it was Peter, so she was very happy. She was so happy that she forgot to open the door. She just ran back into the house and told all the people, “Peter is here, standing outside the door.”

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

¹⁶But Peter kept on knocking on that door. After a little while they stopped arguing, and they opened the door, and they saw him, and they were really surprised. ¹⁷Peter held up his hand to get them to be quiet, then he told them the story about how God got him out of that jail. Then he said, “Tell this story to the other Christians, and make sure you tell it to James too.” Then he left them and went to another place.

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

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

Herod, the big boss, died

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

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

²³Herod liked their talk. He didn't tell them that he is only a man, and that God is the great and powerful one. So then one of God's angels punished Herod. That angel put worms inside of Herod's body, and they ate his guts, and he died.

²⁴At that time the Christians kept on telling everybody about Jesus, so a big mob of people heard that message, and a lot of them believed in Jesus.

The Holy Spirit picked Barnabas and Saul for a special job

²⁵After that, Barnabas and Saul finished their work at Jerusalem, so they went back to the city called Antioch. And they took John Mark with them.

Chapter 13

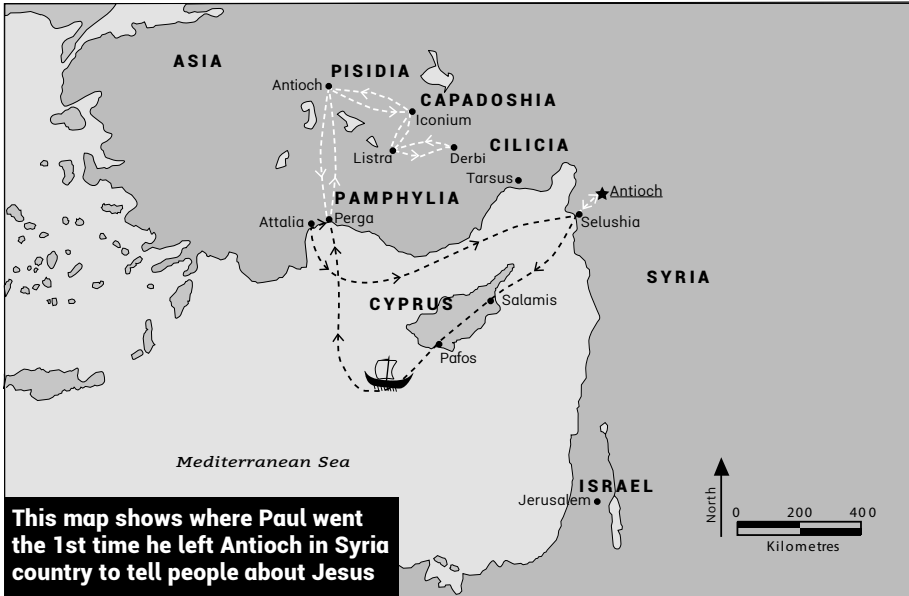
¹Barnabas and Saul, and some other men in the church in Antioch, used to tell people God's messages and teach them God's word. Those other men were Simeon (his other name was Niger), and Lucius from the country called Cyrene, and Manen (he grew up with Herod, the big boss). ²At one time, Barnabas and Saul, and those other men, they stopped eating food for a while, and they prayed to God. At that time, the Holy Spirit said to them, "Pick out Barnabas and Saul for me now. I've got special work for them to do."

³So those men kept on praying and not eating any food for a bit longer. Then they put their hands on Barnabas and Saul, and they prayed for them and told them, "You can go now and do God's work."

Barnabas and Saul went to Cyprus Island

⁴The Holy Spirit told Barnabas and Saul the places they had to go to. So they went to the town called Selushia, and then they got on a ship and sailed to the island called Cyprus.

⁵They took John Mark with them to help them in their work. They got off the ship at a town called Salamis, on Cyprus Island, and they went to the Jewish meeting houses in that town, and they told the people God's message about Jesus.



⁶⁻⁹Then Barnabas, and Saul, and John Mark went over to the other side of the island, to the town called Pafos. (Saul had another name. They called him *Paul*.) The Roman boss over that island lived in Pafos. His name was Sergius Paulus. He was a man that could think properly, and he wanted to hear God's message, so he sent men to bring Barnabas and Saul to him. There was a Jewish man there that worked for Sergius Paulus. His Jewish name was Bar-Jesus, and his Greek name was Elimas. He was a magic man, and he used to reckon that he was telling people God's messages, but he was lying.

Elimas tried to stop Barnabas and Paul from telling God's message to Sergius Paulus. He kept on telling his Roman boss, "Don't listen to them."

But the Holy Spirit was with Paul and gave him power. He looked straight at Elymas ¹⁰and said, “You are just like the devil, the boss over the bad spirits. You tell a lot of lies, and you do a lot of bad things. You try to stop everything that is good, and you try to change God’s true story, and you lie about him. You are trying to trick people. You have to stop doing that. ¹¹God will punish you now. He will make you blind, and you will not see the sunlight for a while.” Suddenly Elymas felt himself going blind, and he walked around asking somebody to hold his hand and take him to the place he wanted to go to.

¹²The Roman boss saw all that happen, and he heard everything Paul said about our leader Jesus. He thought, “Wow. This message is really good.” So he believed in Jesus.

Paul and Barnabas went to another place called Antioch

¹³Paul and his friends got on a ship and left Pafos, on Cyprus Island, and they sailed to the town called Perga, in the country called Pamfilia. Then John Mark left them there, and he went back to Jerusalem.

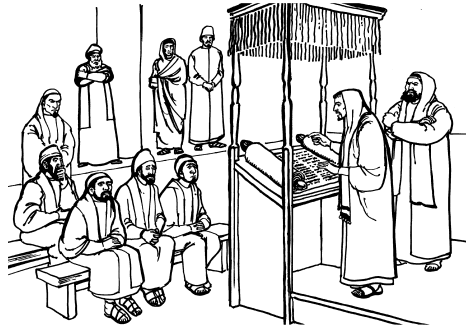
¹⁴Paul and Barnabas went on from Perga to another town called Antioch, in the country called Pisidia. Then on Saturday, the day the Jews get together to show respect to God, Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish meeting house, and they sat down with the men there.

¹⁵Some of the leaders in that meeting read from God’s book. They read words from the law that Moses wrote, and they read other words that God’s men wrote a long

time ago. Then the leaders said to Paul and Barnabas, “Friends, if you have something to say that will help the people here, go ahead and say it.”

Paul told the Antioch people the message about Jesus

¹⁶So Paul stood up and lifted up his hand to get the people to be quiet and listen to him. Then he said, “All you Jewish men and all you other people that respect God, listen to me. ¹⁷A long time ago, the God of us



Paul went to the Jewish meeting house in Antioch and told people about Jesus

Jewish people picked our grand-fathers to be his own people. They went to the

country called Egypt to live, and while they were there, God made them strong, and they had a lot of kids. So they became a really big mob of people. Then God used his great power to take them out of that country. * ¹⁸Then they were in the desert country for 40 years. Sometimes they didn't listen to God, but he looked after them anyway. *

¹⁹Then they got to the country called Canaan, and God helped them fight against 7 different tribes, and they won. They killed all their enemies, and God gave that country to his own people to keep. *

* 13:17 Exodus 1:7; 12:51 * 13:18 Numbers 14:34; Deuteronomy 1:31

* 13:19 Deuteronomy 7:1; Joshua 14:1

²⁰It was about 450 years from the time they went to Egypt, to the time they got that country. Then God picked leaders for them, so they always had a leader to look after them. After lots of other leaders, God picked Samuel to be their leader. He was a man that told God's messages to the people.* ²¹Samuel was their leader, but the people wanted a big boss that would always tell them what to do. So God gave them Saul. He was the son of Kish. Saul belonged to the Benjamin tribe, and he was the big boss over the Israel people for 40 years.*

²²Then God stopped Saul from being their big boss, and God picked David, and he made David the big boss over the Israel people. And God said this, 'Look at this man, David, the son of Jesse. He is a man that makes me happy. He will do everything that I want him to do.'*

²³And God promised that a man from David's family will come to save us Israel people. And now that man has come. His name is Jesus.

²⁴But before Jesus came, John the Baptiser came and talked to us Israel people. He said, 'Stop doing bad things. Turn around. Turn back to God, and then I will baptise you.'* ²⁵And John said, 'Who do you reckon I am? Do you think I'm that special man that God promised to send to save his people? No way. He will come later. I am nothing. I'm not good enough to touch his feet or untie

* 13:20 Judges 2:16; 1 Samuel 3:20 * 13:21 1 Samuel 8:5; 10:21

* 13:22 1 Samuel 13:14; 16:12; Psalm 89:20 * 13:24 Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3

his shoes.’ That’s what John told everyone when he was finishing his work. *

²⁶Listen, friends. Some of you are Jews that belong to our grand-father Abraham’s family, and some of you are not Jews but you respect our God. All of you have to listen to this message that God sent to us. It is about how God wants to save us. ²⁷A long time ago, the men that told God’s messages to people wrote those words in his book. They said that God will send a special man, but people will kill him. And people read those words from God’s book in their meetings every Saturday, but they don’t understand them. The people in Jerusalem and their leaders didn’t know that Jesus was that special man, and they said, ‘We have to kill him.’ ²⁸So, even though he didn’t do anything wrong, they asked Pilate, the Roman judge, to kill him anyway. * ²⁹That’s how Jesus died, just like those men wrote in God’s book.

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

³²And we are telling you the same good news about Jesus. You see, a long time ago, God promised our

* **13:25** Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:20, 27 * **13:28** Matthew 27:22-23; Mark 15:13-14; Luke 23:21-23; John 19:15 * **13:29** Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42 * **13:31** Acts 1:3

grand-fathers that he will do something good for them,
³³and God did it for us, their grand-kids. He made Jesus
alive again. You see, we can read it in God's book, in the
part called Psalm number 2. God said,

'You are my son.

Now people will know that I am your father.'*

³⁴You see, God made Jesus alive, so Jesus will never rot
in the grave. We know that is right because we can read
that God told his son,

'I made special promises to David,

and I'm making those same promises to you.'*

³⁵And in another psalm in God's book, David said to God,

'You will not let your special person rot in the grave.'*

³⁶But David was not saying that he was that special
person. You see, at that time, David did God's work, and
then he died, and people buried him next to his grand-
fathers. His body rotted in that grave. ³⁷But Jesus's body
didn't rot in a grave. God made him alive again. So those
words in God's book were not about David. They were
about Jesus.

³⁸⁻³⁹You see, my friends, I'm telling you this message.
Jesus died for us, so if we believe in him, God will say
we are not guilty of the bad things we did. Jesus will
make us right and good. The law that Moses gave us
can't do that, it can't make us right and good. ⁴⁰A long
time ago, God told some of his men to write about that,
and it is in God's book. And now you people be careful.

* 13:33 Psalm 2:7 * 13:34 Isaiah 55:3 * 13:35 Psalm 16:10

Don't be like the people that those men wrote about in God's book. One of them wrote,

⁴¹ 'Listen all of you people that make fun of God, he will do something that you will not believe, even if somebody tells you about it.

You will be really shocked, but you will not believe it, and then you will die.'*

Don't let that happen to you. You have to believe the things God does." That's the message that Paul told the people in that meeting in Antioch.

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

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

⁴⁶ Paul and Barnabas were not frightened of them. They said, "God sent us to tell his message to you Jews first. But you didn't listen to it, and that shows us that you don't want to live with God for ever. So now we will tell

* 13:41 Habakkuk 1:5

God's message to people that are not Jews. ⁴⁷You see, God told us to do this. It's in God's book. He said,

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

You will tell people everywhere in the world that I can save them.'⁴⁸*

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

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

* 13:47 Isaiah 42:6; 49:6 * 13:51 Matthew 10:14; Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5; 10:11

Chapter 14

Paul and Barnabas told people about Jesus, in Iconium and Listra

¹⁻⁴The same thing happened in the town called Iconium. Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish meeting house, and they talked strongly about Jesus to the people there. They told them that God is very good to people. And a big mob of people believed in Jesus. Some of them were Jews, and some of them were not Jews. But there were other Jewish people that didn't believe in Jesus, and they talked to the other people that were not Jews, and they got them to hate the Christians. So the people of Iconium split up into 2 mobs. One mob reckoned that Paul and Barnabas were right, but the other mob reckoned those Jewish people were right. Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium a long time, and they kept on telling people about Jesus, and they were not frightened of anyone. And God helped Paul and Barnabas do powerful things, to show that they were telling the true story about Jesus.

⁵Then some of those people that didn't believe in Jesus, and their leaders, they made a plan to hurt Paul and Barnabas, and to kill them with stones. Some of that mob were Jews, and some of them were not Jews. ⁶But somebody told Paul and Barnabas that those people wanted to kill them, so Paul and Barnabas ran away to the country called Lyconia. They went to the towns called Listra and Derbi, and to the country around those towns, ⁷and they told people there the good news about Jesus.

In Listra Paul got Jesus to make a crippled man better

⁸In Listra there was a man that was crippled. He was born crippled. He never walked in his life. ⁹As Paul was talking to the people there, that crippled man was sitting there listening to him. Paul looked straight at him, and when he saw that man's face, he knew that the man believed that Jesus can make him better. ¹⁰So Paul said real loud, "Stand up on your feet." And the man jumped up and started to walk around.

¹¹A big mob of people saw Paul do that, and they yelled out in their own Lyconian language, "The gods turned themselves into men, and they came here to us." ¹²And those people reckoned Barnabas was their boss god called Zeus, and

they reckoned Paul was their messenger god called Hermes, because Paul did all the talking. ¹³There was a house for Zeus just outside the town, and there was a man there that looked after the ceremonies for Zeus. That man and all the people got some bulls and some flowers, and they took them to the gates of the town. They wanted to show respect to Paul and Barnabas, just like they



© 1996, David C Cook

People in Lyconia reckoned Paul and Barnabas were gods, so they wanted to give them flowers and kill bulls for them

always showed respect to their gods. They were going to kill those bulls for them, and they were going to give them the flowers too.

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

People threw big stones at Paul

¹⁹After that, some Jewish people came to that place from the towns called Antioch and Iconium, and they talked to the Listra people, and they made them get angry with

* 14:15 Exodus 20:11; Psalm 146:6

Paul. Then those Jewish people threw big stones at Paul. They hit him with those stones until they thought he was dead. Then they dragged him outside the town and left him there. ²⁰Then the Christians stood around Paul. They thought he was dead too, but then he got up, and he went back into the town.

Paul and Barnabas told the Derbi people about Jesus

The next day, Paul and Barnabas left that place and went to the town called Derbi. ²¹Paul and Barnabas told the people there the good news about Jesus, and a lot of people believed in him.

Paul and Barnabas helped the new churches in each town

After that, Paul and Barnabas went back to Listra, and Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia country. ²²In each of those towns they talked to the Christians and said, “Keep on believing in Jesus, and don’t turn away from him. Some people will keep on making big trouble for all of us Christians, but don’t worry, Jesus is with us. We are in God’s family now.”

²³Then, in each town, Paul and Barnabas picked leaders for the Christians in the church there. After that, they stopped eating for a while, and they prayed for those leaders. They prayed, “Jesus, our leader, these men believe in you now, so we ask you to look after them all the time.”

²⁴Then Paul and Barnabas left that place, and they went through Pisidia country, and they came to the country called Pamfilia. ²⁵In a town called Perga, they talked

to the people about Jesus. Then they went to the town called Attalia, near the sea.

Paul and Barnabas went back to Antioch

²⁶Paul and Barnabas got on a ship at Attalia, and they went back to Antioch, in Syria country. Antioch was the city where they started from, some time before. It was those Antioch Christians that asked God to look after Paul and Barnabas and be good to them, and then they sent them out to tell people about Jesus. That is the reason why Paul and Barnabas went back to Antioch after they finished that work.

²⁷Paul and Barnabas got all the Christians in Antioch to come together, and they told them all about the things God helped them do. They said, “We told the people that are not Jews about Jesus, and God let them believe in him.” ²⁸And Paul and Barnabas stayed there a long time, with the Christians at Antioch.

Chapter 15

The church leaders had a meeting in Jerusalem

¹At that time, some men came to Antioch from Judea country, and they started to teach the Christian men, “If you don’t have the young man operation that Moses wrote about, God will not save you. That operation is in our law.”* ²Paul and Barnabas heard those men saying

* 15:1 Leviticus 12:3

that, and they didn't agree with them. They argued with them and told them they were wrong. The Christians at Antioch thought about that problem, then they told Paul and Barnabas to go with some other men to Jerusalem, to talk about it with Jesus's special workers and the other church leaders there.

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

⁴After that, Paul and the men with him got to Jerusalem, and the Christians there were happy to see them. Jesus's special workers, and all the church leaders there, told them, "We are happy you came." Then Paul and Barnabas, and the other men with them, told the Christians in Jerusalem everything that God helped them do.

⁵But some of those Christians in Jerusalem were from the Pharisee mob, that were strong for the Jewish law. They stood up and said, "Those men that are not Jews, they might be Christians, but they have to have that young man operation too, just like Moses said. We have to tell them to do all the things in the law of Moses."

⁶Then Jesus's special workers, and all the church leaders, met together to talk about that problem. ⁷They

talked about it for a long time, and then Peter stood up and said to them, “My friends, you know that God picked me, and I was the first person to go to the people that are not Jews to tell them the good news about Jesus. God did that so that they could hear about Jesus and believe in him.* ⁸God always knows what people are thinking, and when those people that are not Jews believed in Jesus, God gave them the Holy Spirit to show them that he wants them in his family too. You see, at first he gave the Holy Spirit to us, then he gave the Holy Spirit to those people that are not Jews.* ⁹He did the same thing for them that he did for us. They believed in him, and he made them clean from the wrong things they did. ¹⁰So, why are you telling those Christians that are not Jews to do something that is too hard for them? You are making God angry. You know that we can’t keep all of the law of Moses. It is too hard for us, and it was too hard for our grand-fathers too. ¹¹But our leader, Jesus, is good to us Jewish people, and he is also good to people that are not Jews. He saves everybody that believes in him. That law doesn’t save anybody. Jesus saves us because he is good to us.”

¹²Then everyone stopped talking and listened to Barnabas and Paul. They told everyone that God gave them power to do great things for the people that are not Jews. God did that to show those people that the story about Jesus is true.

* 15:7 Acts 10:1-43 * 15:8 Acts 2:4; 10:44

¹³They finished talking, then James stood up and said, “My friends, listen to me. ¹⁴Peter just told us the story about how God showed himself to people that are not Jews, and that he picked some of them to be his own people. ¹⁵Peter’s story agrees with what God told his men to write, a long time ago, and their words are in God’s book. One of them wrote,

¹⁶ ‘God said,

“I will come back later,
and I will fix up David’s family again.

David’s family are like a tent that broke and fell down.
But I will fix them up and make them strong again.

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

They are my people too.

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

That’s all in God’s book.”

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

- If somebody reckons that a statue is a god, and if they give food to that statue to show respect to it, don’t eat any of that food.

* 15:16-18 Amos 9:11-12

- And don't sleep with somebody that you are not married to, as if they are your wife or husband.
- And if somebody holds an animal's neck really tight to kill it, don't eat its meat.
- And don't eat the blood of animals. *

²¹You see, every Saturday the Jewish people read the law of Moses out loud in their meeting houses, and this happens in all the towns where those people live. They have been doing that for a long time, and people that are not Jews have already heard those rules.”

The church leaders wrote to the Christians that are not Jews

²²Then Jesus's special workers, the church leaders, and all the Christians in Jerusalem picked 2 of their leaders to go with Paul and Barnabas, and take this news to the Christians in the city called Antioch, in Syria country. One man was Judas Barsabbas, and the other man was Silas. ²³So the church leaders wrote a letter for them to take with them. They wrote,

“This letter is from Jesus's special workers, and from the other church leaders in Jerusalem. We are writing to you Christian people that are not Jews, that live in Antioch, and in the rest of Syria country, and in Cilicia country. You are like brothers and sisters to us.

²⁴Listen, we heard that some men from here went to you and told you things that worried you and upset you. But those things are not true. We didn't send those men.

* 15:20 Exodus 34:15-17; Leviticus 17:10-16; 18:6-23

²⁵So we met together and picked some messengers, and we are sending them with our good friends Barnabas and Paul. ²⁶You know, Barnabas and Paul work for our leader Jesus Christ, and people tried to kill them for doing that. ²⁷We are sending Judas and Silas with them, and they will tell you the same things that we are writing in this letter.

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

- ²⁹If somebody reckons that a statue is a god, and if they give food to that statue to show respect to it, don't eat any of that food.

- And don't eat the blood of animals.

- And if somebody holds an animal's neck really tight to kill it, don't eat its meat.

- And don't sleep with somebody that you are not married to, as if they are your wife or husband.

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

That's our message to you now.

Goodbye.”

³⁰Then Judas and Silas went with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. They called all the Christians there to come to a meeting, then they gave them the letter. ³¹Those Christians read that letter, and they were very happy.

³²Judas and Silas were men that told God's messages to people, and they talked a lot to those Christians. They helped them to be happy and to believe strongly in Jesus.

³³After that, Judas and Silas left Antioch to go back to the church in Jerusalem. The Antioch Christians said to them, “We pray you will have a safe and happy trip.”

³⁴⁻³⁵But Paul and Barnabas stayed there in Antioch, and they kept on teaching the people the message from God about Jesus. And a lot of other Christians helped them do that too.

Paul and Barnabas stopped working with each other

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

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

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

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

* 15:38 Acts 13:13

Chapter 16

Paul, Silas and Timothy told people about Jesus in lots of towns

¹Then Paul and Silas went to the town called Derbi, and then to the town called Listra. A Christian man called Timothy lived in Listra. Timothy's mother was a Jew, and she believed in Jesus too, but Timothy's father was a Greek. ²All the Christians there in Listra said that Timothy was a good man, and all the Christians in the town nearby, called Iconium, they said that too. ³But the Jewish people in those places knew that Timothy's father was Greek, and they knew that the Greek people don't do a young man operation on their boys, like the Jewish



people do. Paul wanted Timothy to go around with him to a lot of places, and he wanted the Jewish mob in every place to be happy with Timothy, so he got them to do a young man operation on Timothy.

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

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

⁶Paul and his friends wanted to tell the message about Jesus to the people in the country called Asia, but the Holy Spirit told them, “No, don’t go there.” So they went through the countries called Frigia and Galatia. ⁷Then they got to the country called Misia, and they tried to go on into the next country, called Bithinia. But again the Holy Spirit said, “No, don’t go there.” ⁸So they went past Misia and got to the town called Troas.

⁹They stayed in Troas, and that night, Paul had something like a dream, but he was not asleep, he was still awake. He saw a man from Macedonia country. That man was standing there, and he was saying to Paul, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

¹⁰I, Luke, joined with Paul and Silas there at Troas. After Paul saw that Macedonian man, we knew that

God wanted us to tell the good news to the people in Macedonia, and we got ready to go there.

A woman called Lydia believed in Jesus

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

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

Paul got Jesus to force a bad spirit out of a young woman

¹⁶On another day, we started to go to a place where people meet together and pray to God. There was a young woman on that road that had a bad spirit in her.

That spirit showed her things that were going to happen to people later on. Some men made this young woman work for them with no pay. People used to pay a lot of money to her bosses, and then she told those people things that will happen to them later.

¹⁷That young woman saw Paul and the rest of us going on that road, and she followed us, and she kept on shouting, “These men serve the God that is the greatest of all gods. They can tell you what to do so that God will save you and not punish you.”

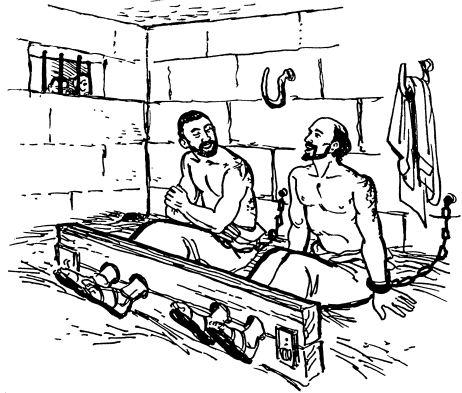
¹⁸She kept on doing that for a lot of days. In the end Paul got angry. He turned around to the young woman and said to that bad spirit, “My boss, Jesus Christ, says, ‘Get out of her.’” Then the bad spirit came out of that young woman.

¹⁹Her bosses saw this happen, and they thought, “This is bad for us. Now she can’t tell anybody what will happen to them, and she will not get us any more money.” And her bosses were angry with Paul and Silas. They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the Roman judges in the middle of that town.

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

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

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



Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs to God while they were in jail

Paul told the jail boss that God can save him

²⁵Later, in the middle of the night, Paul and Silas were praying out loud to God and saying that he is really good, and they were singing songs to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was a very big earthquake. It shook the jail, and even the cement underneath it, and all the doors of the jail swung open, and all the chains fell off the arms and legs of all the prisoners.

²⁷The jail boss woke up and saw that the doors of the jail were open, and he thought, “All those prisoners ran away. I’m in big trouble now.” So he got his big knife, and he was going to kill himself.

²⁸But Paul saw the jail boss and shouted to him, “Don’t hurt yourself. We are all here.”

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

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

³²Then Paul and Silas told the jail boss and his family all about Jesus, and they all believed in Jesus. ³³Then, while it was still night time, the jail boss washed the sores on their backs, and Paul and Silas baptised the jail boss and his family. ³⁴Then the jail boss took Paul and Silas into his house, and he gave them some food to eat. And the jail boss and his family were all really happy because they believed in God.

Paul and Silas left Philippi

³⁵The next morning, the judges said to some policemen, “Go and tell the jail boss, ‘You can let those 2 prisoners go now.’” Then the policemen went to the jail boss and told him that message.

³⁶So the jail boss told Paul, “The judges have sent a message telling me to let you and Silas go free. So you can go quietly out of the jail now.”

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

against the Roman law, because we are Romans. You see, even though we are Jews, we are Romans too. Our names are on the list of all the Roman people. So those judges broke the Roman law yesterday. And now they want to send us away while nobody is looking. No way. Those judges have to come to us and tell us that they are sorry, and they have to take us out of this jail themselves.”

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

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

Chapter 17

Paul told people in Thessalonica about Jesus

¹Paul and Silas went through the towns called Amfipolis and Apollonia, and they got to a town called Thessalonica. There was a Jewish meeting house there, ²⁻³so Paul went to that meeting house on the next

Saturday to tell the people about Jesus. He used to do that in all the towns and cities that he went to. Paul went to that meeting house in Thessalonica each Saturday for 3 weeks, and he read some parts of God's book and talked about them to the people there. They were the parts where God's men wrote about the special man that God promised to send, called the Christ. They wrote that people will hurt God's special man, and kill him, but then God will make him alive again. And Paul said, "Jesus is that special man that God sent to save us. People killed him, but God made him alive again."

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

Some Jewish people made trouble for Paul and Silas

⁵But some of the Jewish people there were jealous of Paul. So they went to the middle of the town and found some trouble makers, and they lied to those trouble makers and told them that Paul and Silas were bad people. Then that mob of trouble makers started shouting and saying bad things about Paul and Silas. Some of them went into the house that belonged to a Christian man. His name was Jason. They were looking for Paul and Silas, to drag them outside, so that the mob could beat them up. ⁶They couldn't find Paul and Silas in that house, so they grabbed Jason, and some of the other

Christians there, and they dragged them to the town bosses. They shouted, “Those 2 men, Paul and Silas, they make trouble everywhere, and now they have come to our town to make trouble here too.” ⁷And they said, “All this Christian mob are against everything that our big boss in Rome tells us to do. They reckon Jesus is really the biggest boss. And this man here, Jason, he is letting them stay at his house.”

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

Paul told people in Beria about Jesus

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

Jewish people from Thessalonica made trouble for Paul

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

Paul was upset by all the statues in Athens

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

Paul talked to the Athens people about Jesus

¹⁸Some of that Athens mob always thought about the best way to live, and they always talked to other people

about it. Some of them were called Epicurians, and some of them were called Stoics. They talked to Paul, and he told them about Jesus. Paul said that Jesus died, and that God made him alive again. Some of that mob said, “This man is just talking rubbish.” Others said, “We think he is talking about gods from other countries.”

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

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

²²Then Paul stood up and talked to the council mob at Athens. He said, “I can see that you Athens mob think a lot about gods. ²³I walked around this city, and I saw a lot of statues that you set up, to show respect to a lot of gods. And I saw a stone table that you set up, and you wrote on it, ‘This is for that god that we don't know.’ Look, you don't know that God, but you



© 1996 David C Cook

*The people in Athens had a stone table
for the god that they didn't know*

show respect to him anyway. Listen, I do know him, so now I want to tell you all about him. I'll tell you about that God that you don't know.

²⁴He is the God that made all the world, and he made everything in the world. He is the boss over everybody everywhere. He is boss up in the sky, and he is boss down here on the ground. So nobody can build a house big enough for him to live in. * ²⁵And he doesn't need us to do anything for him. You see, he is the one that makes us alive, and he gives us our breath, and he gives us everything we need. *

²⁶At first he just made one man, then later he made all of us from that man. All of us in every tribe everywhere were born into that man's family. And God gave each tribe their own country, and he planned where they will live and how long they will live there.

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

'We are his kids.'

²⁹So, if it is true that we are God's kids, we shouldn't just dream up something and then make a statue like that from gold or silver or stone, and say, 'My god looks like this.' No way. Nobody can make any sort of statue that is anything like God.

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

Some council people believed in Jesus

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

Chapter 18

Paul went to the city called Corinth

¹After that, Paul left Athens, and he went to a city called Corinth. ²In Corinth, he met a Jewish man and his wife. His name was Aquila, and her name was Priscilla. Aquila

was born in a country called Pontus, but he used to live in a city called Rome. Before this time, the big boss in Rome, called Claudius, told all the Jewish people to get out of Rome. So Aquila and Priscilla left Rome and went to live in Corinth.

³Aquila and Priscilla made tents. That was their work. And Paul made tents too, so he stayed with them in Corinth, and they worked together.

⁴Every Saturday the Jews in Corinth met together in the Jewish meeting house there. Paul met with them there too. He talked a lot with those Jewish people, and he talked to the Greek people there too. He tried to get them to believe in Jesus.

⁵Then Silas and Timothy came to Corinth from Macedonia country, and after that, Paul spent all of his time telling God's good news to the Jewish people. He told them, "Jesus is the Christ, the man that God promised to send to save us." ⁶But those Jewish people wouldn't listen to Paul, and they said bad things about him. So Paul shook the dirt from his clothes, to show them that they were wrong, and he said to them, "I told you God's good news, but you didn't listen. So you can't blame me for anything that happens to you now. You can only blame yourselves. From now on, I will go and tell God's word to the people that are not Jews."

⁷So Paul stopped going to the Jewish meeting house, and he moved to live with a man that was not a Jew, but he respected God. His name was Titius Justus, and he lived in the house next door to the Jewish meeting house.

⁸Another man, Crispus, was the boss of the Jewish meeting house. Crispus and everyone in his family believed in Jesus. And a lot of other people in Corinth heard Paul talk about Jesus, and they believed in him too. So the other Christians baptised them all in water.

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

A Roman boss didn’t judge Paul

¹²Later on, a new man became the Roman boss over Corinth, and of the country around it, called Akaya. That new boss’s name was Gallio. The Jewish leaders got together, and they grabbed Paul, and they took him to the judge’s seat in the court house of that new boss. They blamed Paul, ¹³and they told that boss, “This man is teaching people wrong. He is telling them to break our Jewish law. He is telling them the wrong way to show respect to God.”

¹⁴⁻¹⁵Then Paul got up to talk, but Gallio said, “Wait.” And he said to the Jewish leaders, “I will not listen to you mob. You are only arguing about words, and names, and your own Jewish laws. I will not judge those Jewish things. You mob look after that yourselves. This man

didn't do anything bad, and he didn't break our Roman law, so I will not listen to you." ¹⁶Then Gallio sent those Jewish leaders away from the judge's seat.

¹⁷There were people watching that court, and they grabbed the leader of a Jewish meeting house. His name was Sosthenes. They beat him up right there in front of the judge's seat. Gallio saw them hitting him, but he didn't do anything to stop them.

Priscilla and Aquila went to Ephesus with Paul

¹⁸Paul kept on living in Corinth for some time, then he said *goodbye* to the Christians there, and he went to the town called Centria, and Priscilla and Aquila went with him. After they got to Centria, Paul cut all the hair off his head. You see, at some time before this, Paul made a strong promise to God, and then at this time, he did what he promised to do. And in Jewish culture, after people finish doing what they promise to God, they cut off their hair.* After that, Paul got on a ship to go to Syria country, and Priscilla and Aquila went with him.

¹⁹⁻²¹That ship stopped half-way, at a town called Ephesus. They got off that ship there, and Paul went into the Jewish meeting house in Ephesus, and he talked to the Jewish people there. They asked him to stay there longer, but he said, "No, sorry, I've got to say *goodbye* and keep going. But if God wants me to come back here

* 18:18 Numbers 6:18

one day, I will come back.” Then he got on a ship to go to Syria country, and he sailed away from Ephesus. But Priscilla and Aquila stayed there.

Paul went to Jerusalem, then to other places

²²Paul stayed on that ship until he got to the town called Caesarea. Then he left the ship, and he kept going by road to Jerusalem city, and he said *hello* to the Christians there. Then he went north to Antioch, a city in Syria country.

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



Priscilla and Aquila told Apollos more about Jesus

²⁴⁻²⁶ At that time, there was a Jewish man living in a town called Alexandria. His name was Apollos. Somebody there taught him some things about Jesus. He could talk really good, and he knew God's book properly, and he liked to teach people about Jesus. He taught them the things he knew, but he didn't know the whole story about Jesus. He only knew the message John the Baptist taught to people.

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

Apollos helped the Christians in Akaya country

²⁷ Later on, Apollos told the other Christians in Ephesus, "I want to go to Akaya country."

They said, "That's good. You go there." And they wrote a letter to the Christians in Akaya, and told them, "Be friendly to Apollos." So Apollos went to the city called Corinth in Akaya country.

Before that time, God was good to some of the Corinth people, and he helped them believe in Jesus. After Apollos got to Corinth, he really helped those new Christians there. ²⁸ But some of the Jewish leaders

didn't believe in Jesus, so Apollos argued strongly with them all the time. And he talked to everyone, showing them that God's book tells us about the man that God promised to send to save us, the man that is called the Christ. And he showed them that Jesus is that man.

Chapter 19

Paul helped some men follow Jesus

¹At that time, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul was visiting places in Frigia country and Galatia country. Then Paul left those places and went through Asia country, then he went on to the town called Ephesus. He met some men there that reckoned they were Christians.

²Paul asked them, "Did the Holy Spirit come into you when you believed God's message?"

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

³So Paul asked them, "Who baptised you, and why did they do it?"

They said, "We got John the Baptist to baptise us, to show we were sorry for doing bad things."

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

* 19:4 Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:4, 7-8; Luke 3:4, 16; John 1:26-27

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

People in Asia country heard about Jesus

⁸For the next 3 months, Paul went to the meetings that the Jewish people had in their meeting house in Ephesus, and he talked strongly to the people there. He tried to get them to understand how God takes people into his family. ⁹Some of those people believed that message about Jesus. But some of them didn't believe it, and they didn't want to keep on hearing it, so they stood up in front of everybody and said bad things about the Christian people. (Another name for the Christians was the *Jesus Way* mob.)

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

God gave Paul a lot of power

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

Some men that were not Christians tried to use Jesus's power

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

¹⁵But that bad spirit didn't come out. He said to those men, "I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but I don't know you mob." ¹⁶Then the man that had the bad spirit jumped on those 7 men, and he knocked all of them down, and he tore their clothes off, and he beat them up. They all ran out of the house to get away from him.

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

Christians burned their books about bad magic

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



Christians in Ephesus burned their books about bad magic

Some work-men got money from people that respected a woman god

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

²³Soon after that, some of the people in Ephesus tried to make a lot of trouble for the Christians, the *Jesus Way* mob. ²⁴There was a man there that used silver to make little models of the special house of a woman god called Artemis. That man's name was Demetrius. And there were other men there that made those little house models too. They sold them to people that respected Artemis, and they got a lot of money from that business.

Demetrius got a lot of people to go wild

²⁵Demetrius had a meeting with his work-men and the other men that made things for that god called Artemis. Demetrius said to them, "Men, you know that we make these things and we sell them for a lot of money. ²⁶But that man, Paul, he talks to big mobs of people, and he says, 'Don't buy those things. Those statues that people say are gods, they are not gods at all. It was people that made them, so don't show respect to them.' Lots of people here in Ephesus listened to him, and now even the people from other towns in this Asia country agree with him, and they don't want to buy the things we make. ²⁷If people keep on listening to Paul, we'll soon be broke. And not only that, but people will reckon they don't have



Demetrius was angry with Paul, so he had a meeting with the work-men

to come to the special house of Artemis to show respect to her. People all over our Asia country and everywhere show respect to our great woman god Artemis, but soon people might not think that Artemis is great at all.”

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

²⁹A lot of the other people in the town heard them shouting, and they went and joined those men and started shouting too. They got angry with Paul, and they grabbed the 2 men from Macedonia that used to go around with Paul. Their names were Guyus and Aristarkus. They dragged those 2 men to the sports oval of that town. ³⁰Paul wanted to go there too, to talk to the people, but the other Christians wouldn’t let him do that.

³¹There were some government officials of that country that were friends with Paul. They heard that those people went wild, so they sent him a message to tell him strongly, “Don’t go to that sports oval. That mob are too wild. They might kill you.”

The wild mob kept on shouting for 2 hours

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

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

An important government leader got the mob to settle down

³⁵Then an important government leader in that town got the mob to stop shouting, and he said to them, "Listen, Ephesus people, everyone knows that we Ephesus people look after the special house for Artemis, the great woman god. And everyone knows that we look after the statue of her that fell down from the sky. ³⁶Nobody can say that those things are not true. So you have to be quiet now. Don't do anything that will make trouble for us. ³⁷Why did you bring these 2 men here? They didn't do anything bad. They didn't go into the special houses for our gods and take things from there. And they didn't say anything bad about our woman god. ³⁸If Demetrius and his mates want to blame anyone about anything bad, they have to do it the right way. They have to go to the judges in the courts. If anybody wants to blame somebody else, those judges are ready to listen. That's their job. ³⁹Or if anybody wants to complain about something else, there are other government bosses that can meet together and think about that problem. ⁴⁰You see, you mob now are not a proper meeting, and if the big Roman bosses hear about all this trouble, they might say that we Ephesus people are trying to start a fight

against the Roman government. If they ask me about all this trouble, I will not know what to tell them.”

⁴¹Then the government leader told the mob, “You can all go home now.” And they all went away from that sports oval.

Chapter 20

Paul went to the countries called Macedonia and Greece

¹Everyone in the mob went home, then Paul asked all the Christians to meet with him. He said to them, “I’m going to Macedonia country now. You have to always keep on believing in Jesus, and always be strong for him. I’m going now. Goodbye.”

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

Then he kept going and went to Akaya country. Another name for that country is Greece. ³Paul stayed in Greece for 3 months. Then he got ready to go back to Syria on a ship. But he heard that some Jewish men were going to try to kill him, so he changed his mind and didn’t go on that ship. Instead, he went by road through Macedonia country again. ⁴⁻⁵Paul had some friends that were going with him, but at that time they didn’t go with him by road. They got on that ship and went to the town called Troas and waited for Paul there. Those men were,

- Sopater. He grew up in the town called Beria, and his father’s name was Pirus.

- Aristarkus and Secundus, 2 men from Thessalonica.
- Guyus, from Derbi.
- Timothy, from Galatia country.
- Tikicus and Trofimus, 2 men from Asia country.

Those men waited for Paul in Troas.

Luke, the man writing this story, went with Paul to Troas

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

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

against him. Then he said, “Don’t worry, he is alive.” And that was true. That young man came alive again.

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

Paul left Troas and went to Miletus

¹³Then we went back to the ship, but Paul didn’t get on the ship with us. He wanted to go by road to the town called Assos. The rest of us got on the ship and sailed to Assos.

¹⁴We met Paul there, and he got on the ship with us, then we all sailed to the town called Mitilini. ¹⁵The next day, we kept going, and we sailed to a place near Kios Island. And the next day, we sailed past Ephesus to Samos Island. The next day, we left Samos Island and sailed to the town called Miletus, and we stopped there. ¹⁶You see, Paul was in a hurry to go to Jerusalem, so he didn’t want to stop at Ephesus and stay with the people there in Asia. It was nearly time for the Jewish ceremony called Pentecost, and Paul wanted to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost time.

Paul talked to the Christian leaders of Ephesus

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

¹⁸After they got there, Paul talked to them. He said, “Each one of you knows the good way that I lived, all the time that I was here with you in Asia country, from the first day that I was here until the day that I left. ¹⁹You know the way I worked for our leader Jesus. I didn’t try to make myself important, and sometimes I cried when people went wrong. And you know that some of the Jewish people here tried to hurt me. ²⁰And you know that I told you all of God’s message, everything that will help you. I didn’t keep anything secret. I taught you God’s message in places where everyone heard me, and I taught you in your homes too. ²¹I talked to everyone. I talked to Jewish people and to people that are not Jews. I told all of them, ‘You have to turn to God and stop doing bad things, and believe in our leader Jesus.’”



© 1996, David C Cook

Paul got the Christian leaders from Ephesus to come and talk to him

Paul told some Christians, “You will not see me again”

²²Paul kept on talking to them. He said, “And now I want to tell you this. God’s spirit clearly showed me that I have to go to Jerusalem, so I’m going there. I don’t know what will happen to me at Jerusalem. ²³But I do know that in each town I went to, up until now, the Holy Spirit told me that the people in Jerusalem will

hurt me and put me in prison. ²⁴But I will keep going to Jerusalem anyway. I want to finish the work that our leader Jesus told me to do. I have to tell people the good news, that God is good to us, and that he saves us. I really don't care about myself, I don't even care if they kill me, so long as I can tell them that good news.

²⁵In the past I told you all how to join God's family, and I taught you about Jesus, but I can't do that any more. I know that none of you will see me again. ²⁶So I want you all to understand that if any of you don't end up in God's family, you can't blame me. ²⁷I told you all everything that God wants to do for you. ²⁸Now you leaders have to make sure you keep on following Jesus properly, and you have to help God's people to follow him properly too. The Holy Spirit picked you to be their leaders, so look after them properly. Remember, God bought his people with the blood of his own son.

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

Paul asked God to look after the Christian leaders

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

³³⁻³⁴Listen, you mob know me. You saw the way that I lived when I was with you. I showed you the right way for a Christian to live. I never wanted to get anyone’s money or good clothes. I always worked to get the money that I needed, and to get money for my friends too. ³⁵I did everything in a way that showed you that we all have to work hard to get enough money, not just for ourselves, but to give some to people that don’t have the things they need. We have to remember that our leader, Jesus, said, ‘If people give things to you, that can make you a bit happy. But if you give things to other people, you will be properly happy.’”

The leaders said goodbye to Paul, and they were very sad

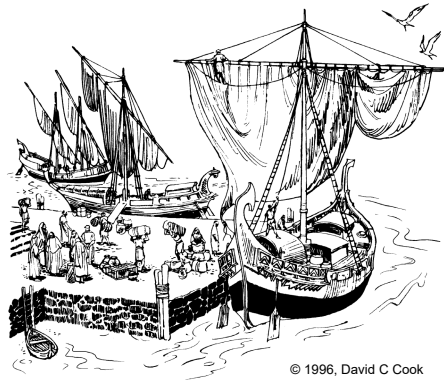
³⁶Paul finished talking, then he got down on his knees with all of those Christian leaders, to show respect to God, and he prayed with them. ³⁷They all cried a lot, and they hugged Paul and kissed him. ³⁸You see, they heard Paul say that they wouldn’t see him again, and that made them very sad.

Then they all went with him to the ship.

Chapter 21

Luke, the man writing this story, went with Paul to Tyre

¹We were very sad, but we had to say *goodbye* to the Christian leaders of Ephesus. Then Paul and the rest of us got on the ship, and we sailed to the island called Cos. The next day, we sailed to the island called Rhodes. And then, the next day, we sailed to the town called Patara, and we stopped there. ²That ship wasn't going to Fonisha country, so we got off it and got on another ship. ³We sailed on that ship until we could see the island called Cyprus, and we went past it, on its south side, and we kept sailing until we got to Syria country. Then the ship stopped at a town called Tyre, and they started to unload it there.



© 1996, David C Cook

*The workers had to unload
the ship in Tyre*

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

⁴While the ship was at Tyre for the workers to unload it, we got off it, and we found the Christians there, and we stayed with them for 7 days. God's Holy Spirit told those Christians to tell Paul, "Don't go to Jerusalem." So they told him that, but Paul wanted to keep going to

Jerusalem. ⁵The ship workers finished unloading the ship, and then it was time for it to leave, so we went back to the sea shore to get on the ship. All the Christian men, and their wives and kids, they all went with us to the sea shore. We all got down on our knees there on the sand, to show respect to God, and we prayed. ⁶After that, we said *goodbye* to those other Christians, then we got on the ship, and the others went back to their homes.

Paul left Tyre and went to Caesarea

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

The Christians couldn't stop Paul going to Jerusalem

¹⁰A few days later, a Christian man came there from Judea country. His name was Agabus. He had power

* 21:8 Acts 6:5; 8:5

from the Holy Spirit to tell God's special messages to people.* ¹¹He came to us, and he took off Paul's belt. Then he tied his own feet and hands together with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says this, 'See the man that owns this belt. The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will tie him up, just like this, and they will give him as a prisoner to the people that are not Jews.'"

¹²The rest of us heard him say that, then we all talked really strongly to Paul. We said, "Please don't go to Jerusalem."

¹³But Paul said, "Stop crying and trying to make me change my mind. Stop telling me not to go to Jerusalem. I work for our leader Jesus, so I'm ready for people to put me in prison in Jerusalem, and I'm even ready for them to kill me."

¹⁴Then we knew that Paul wouldn't listen to us, so we stopped trying to tell him not to go to Jerusalem. We just said, "All right. We want our leader, Jesus, to do whatever he wants to do."

Paul went on to Jerusalem

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

* 21:10 Acts 11:28

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

Paul agreed to do a Jewish ceremony

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

Then they said to Paul, “Listen, brother, there are thousands of Jewish people here that believe in Jesus, and they are very careful to do everything in the law that Moses gave us. ²¹But we have heard people say that you tell the Jewish Christians in those other countries to stop following our law. Those people reckon you tell Jewish people not to do a young man operation on their sons, and they reckon you tell Jewish people to stop doing other things from our culture. Look, we know their story isn’t true, ²²but some of the other Jewish people here believe that story about you. And those people will hear that you came here, and they might be angry with you. So you need to do something to show everyone that the story they heard about you is not true.

²³So listen. Do this to show everyone that story is not true. You see, there are 4 men among us that have promised something to God, so they have to buy things

to do a ceremony to make themselves clean. ²⁴So you join those men, and go with them to God's ceremony house, and do that ceremony with them, and pay for the things they buy. Then they can shave their heads. That's our culture, to show that they have done everything they promised to do. And the people will see you do all that with those men at God's ceremony house, and they will know that the things people told them about you are not true, and they will know that you do everything in our Jewish law and culture. * ²⁵We leaders know that the Christians that are not Jews don't have to do everything in our Jewish law, and we wrote them a letter about it. But we told them,

- If somebody reckons that a statue is a god, and if they give food to that statue to show respect to it, don't eat any of that food.
- And don't eat the blood of animals.
- And if somebody holds an animal's neck really tight to kill it, don't eat meat from that animal.
- And don't sleep with somebody that you are not married to, as if they are your wife or husband.

That's what we wrote in our letter.”*

²⁶Paul listened to everything they said, and he agreed to do that ceremony with those 4 men. The next day, he got them together, and they started to do the ceremony to make themselves clean. After that, Paul went to God's ceremony house, and he told the leader of the Jewish

* 21:23-24 Numbers 6:13-21 * 21:25 Acts 15:29

ceremonies the date they will finish that ceremony and give animals to God for each of them, the way they do in Jewish culture.

Some Jews grabbed Paul

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

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

* 21:27-29 Acts 20:4

Roman soldiers stopped the mob from killing Paul

³¹That mob started hitting Paul, trying to kill him. Somebody went to the big Roman boss and said, “The people in Jerusalem are going wild.” ³²So he quickly got a big mob of soldiers, and some boss soldiers, and they all ran to the mob that was hitting Paul. The mob saw the Roman soldiers and their big boss, so they stopped hitting Paul.

The soldiers took Paul to their big house

³³Then the big boss told his soldiers to grab Paul and tie him up with 2 chains. Then he asked that mob, “Who is this man, and what did he do?”

³⁴Some of the people there started shouting one thing, and some of them started shouting something else, and they kept on shouting really loud. There was too much noise, and the big boss soldier couldn’t understand them. So he told the soldiers, “Take him into your big house.”

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

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

The boss said, “Can you talk Greek? ³⁸I reckon you are that man from Egypt country, that fights against us

Romans. You got lots of other men to join you, and you took 4,000 of those men to the desert to get ready to fight us. We call you mob the Murderers, because you are always killing people. Am I right? You are that man from Egypt, right?”

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

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

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

Chapter 22

Paul told the mob his story

¹Paul said, “You mob are Jewish, and I am Jewish. I respect you like you are my family. Please listen to me now while I tell you that I haven’t done anything wrong.”

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

Then Paul said to them, ³“I am a Jew, just like you. I was born in Tarsus, in Cilicia country, but I grew up here in Jerusalem. I was a young man here, and I learned all our laws. You know Gamaliel. You know he is a really good teacher, right? Well, he taught me all the laws that Moses gave to our grand-fathers. And I wanted to always

do everything God says, so I never broke any of those laws. I'm sure that all you mob properly follow those laws too.* ⁴And I used to hurt anyone that followed Jesus, all those people that belonged to the *Jesus Way* mob. Whenever I found them, I grabbed them and put them in jail. I did that to men and women. I wanted to kill those people.*

⁵The big boss of our Jewish ceremonies knows that, and so do the other men that belong to our Jewish Leaders Council. They gave me letters to take to our Jewish countrymen in Damascus. Those letters said that it was all right for me to grab the Christians there, and tie them up, and bring them to Jerusalem, for our leaders here to punish them.

So I got some other men to join me, and we were going along the road to Damascus. ⁶In the middle of the day, we were getting close to Damascus, and suddenly a bright light from the sky shined all around me. ⁷The light was so bright that I fell down to the ground. Then I heard the voice of somebody talking to me from the sky. He said, 'Saul. Saul. Why are you making trouble for me and hurting me?'

⁸I asked him, 'Who are you, boss?'

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

⁹The men that were with me saw that very bright light, and they heard that voice, but they didn't understand the

words that the voice said to me. ¹⁰Then I said, ‘What do you want me to do, boss?’

He said, ‘Get up and go into Damascus. A man there will tell you everything that I picked you to do.’ ¹¹That light was so bright it made me blind. I couldn’t see, so the men with me held my hand and took me into Damascus. ¹²A Jewish man lived in that town. He respected God, and he properly followed our Jewish laws. His name was Ananias. All the Jewish people living in Damascus said that he was a good man. ¹³He came to me and stood beside me, and he said to me, ‘My friend Saul, look up. You will see again now.’ So I looked up, and straight away, I could see again. And I saw him standing there beside me. ¹⁴Then he said, ‘The God that we respect, and that our grand-fathers respected, he picked you, and he will show you everything he wants you to do. You will see the man that is properly good, and you will hear him talking to you. ¹⁵He wants you to tell everyone that you saw him, and that you heard him talk to you. ¹⁶So now, don’t wait. Stand up, and I will baptise you. Pray to our leader, Jesus, and ask him to wash you properly inside, so God will not punish you for all the bad things you did.’ That’s what Ananias said to me.”

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

¹⁷Paul kept on talking to that mob. He said, “After that, I went back to Jerusalem. One day, I went to God’s ceremony house. While I was praying there, I had something like a dream. ¹⁸I saw my leader, Jesus,

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

¹⁹I said to him, ‘But, sir, they know me. They know that I went to a lot of our meeting houses looking for people that believe in you. I grabbed anyone that believed in you, and I beat them up, and I put them in jail. ²⁰The people here know about Stephen too. He told people about you, and they killed him. And I stood there watching them kill him, and I agreed with them. I even looked after the coats of the men that were killing him. The Jerusalem people know all that, so I reckon they will believe my story.’*

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

²²The mob listened quietly to Paul until he said that. You see, they didn’t like the people that were not Jews, so when they heard him talk about those people, that mob got very angry. They started shouting, “Kill him. Don’t let this sort of man stay alive on this earth.”

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

²³The mob kept on shouting, “Kill him.” And they took off their coats, and they threw dirt into the air, to show that they were very angry.

* 22:20 Acts 7:58

²⁴So the big boss soldier told his soldiers, “Take Paul into your big house and hit him with a whip so he will tell us why that mob are shouting at him.”

The soldiers took Paul into their house, ²⁵then they stretched out his arms and tied them so that they could whip his back. But Paul talked to the boss soldier that was standing there. He said, “Wait. I’m a Jew, but I’m a Roman too.

My name is on the list of all the Roman people. But you didn’t take me to court, and no judge said that I’m guilty, so if you whip me, you will be breaking the Roman law.”

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

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

Paul said, “Yes, I am.”

²⁸Then the big boss soldier said, “I’m a Roman too. I paid a lot of money to get the men in a Roman office to write my name on the list of all the Roman people, to make me a Roman.”



© 1996, David C Cook

The soldiers were going to whip Paul's back, but he told them that he was a Roman

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

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

The big boss soldier took Paul to the Jewish Leaders Council

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

Chapter 23

A Jewish boss got angry with Paul

¹⁻²One of the men at the Jewish Leaders Council meeting was the big boss of the Jewish ceremonies. His name was Ananias. Paul stood up in front of Ananias and all the men at the Jewish Leaders Council meeting, and he looked straight at them, and said, “My brothers, I have respected our God all my life, and I have always done whatever I reckoned was right.”

As soon as Paul said that, Ananias told the men that were near Paul to hit him on the mouth.

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

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

⁵Paul said, “I’m sorry, friends. I didn’t know that he is the big boss of our Jewish ceremonies. I know that Moses wrote in our Jewish law, ‘Don’t say bad things about your people’s big boss.’”*

The soldiers took Paul away from the Jewish Leaders Council

⁶⁻⁸Some of the Jewish Leaders Council were men that belonged to the Sadducee mob, and others belonged to the Pharisee mob. The Sadducee mob believed that after people die, they will never become alive again. And they believed that there are no spirits, not even God’s angel messengers. But the Pharisee mob believed that all of those things are true, and they were strong for the Jewish law. Paul worked out that some of those council men were from the Sadducee mob, and some of them were from the Pharisee mob, so he shouted out loud to them. He said, “My friends, I’m a Pharisee man, like my father was. I believe that after people die, one day God

* 23:3 Matthew 23:27-28 * 23:5 Exodus 22:28

will make them alive again. That's the reason why I'm here in this court.”*

As soon as Paul said that, the Pharisee mob and Sadducee mob started to argue with each other. ⁹The council split up into 2 mobs and started shouting at each other. Some of the teachers of the Jewish law were from the Pharisee mob. They stood up and said, “We reckon this man hasn't done anything wrong. Maybe an angel or some other spirit talked to him. That's all right.”

¹⁰Then those 2 mobs argued with each other and got really wild, and the big boss soldier thought, “They are going to tear Paul to bits.” So he told his soldiers, “Go and save Paul from those council men, and take him back to your big house.” So the soldiers did that.

Jesus told Paul that he will go to Rome

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

Some men said, “We will kill Paul”

¹²The next morning, some of those Jewish men met together secretly and thought about a way to kill Paul. Then they promised God, “We will not eat or drink anything until we kill Paul. If we break this promise and

* 23:6-8 Matthew 22:23; Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27; Acts 26:5; Philippians 3:5

don't kill Paul, then, God, you can kill us." ¹³There were more than 40 men in that mob.

¹⁴They went to the Jewish ceremony bosses and the Jewish elders and told them, "We promised God that we will not eat or drink anything until we kill Paul. ¹⁵So we want you to go to the big boss soldier and say to him, 'The Jewish Leaders Council wants to ask Paul some more questions. Can you bring him to our meeting house?' But we will hide beside the road, and when they bring Paul along that road, we will jump up and kill him."

A young man talked to the boss soldier

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

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

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



A young man told Paul that some men made a plan to kill Paul

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

²²The big boss soldier said to the young man, “You can go home now, but don’t tell anyone that you told me this news.”

A lot of soldiers took Paul to a safe place

²³⁻²⁴Then the big boss soldier got 2 other boss soldiers and told them, “You have to take Paul north to Caesarea town tonight. Take him to Felix, the government boss of this country. And you have to keep him safe. So get 200 soldiers ready to go with you. And get ready 70 soldiers that ride horses, to go there with you too. And get ready 200 soldiers that use spears, and they can go with you too. And get horses for Paul too. All of you have to be ready to leave at 9 o’clock tonight.”

²⁵Then that big boss soldier wrote a letter for them to take with them to that government boss. He wrote,

²⁶“Dear Felix,

I am Claudius Lisisias. I’m writing to you, Felix. You are the government boss over this country, and I respect you. I hope you are good and happy.

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

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

That is the letter that the big boss soldier wrote to Felix.

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

³⁴Felix read the letter, and then he asked Paul, “What country are you from?”

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

³⁵Then Felix said, “The people that are blaming you will come here, and I will listen to them, and I will listen to you too, and then I will say if you are guilty or not.”

And he told the soldiers, “Put Paul in the jail in the big house called Herod’s House.”

Chapter 24

The Jewish leaders blamed Paul in Felix’s court

¹Then, 5 days later, the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem came to Caesarea. One of them was Ananias, the big boss of the Jewish ceremonies, and another one was Tertullus, a lawyer. And there were some Jewish elders in that mob too.

They went to the court house of Felix, the government boss, and they told him that Paul did bad things. ²⁻³So Felix told a soldier, “Bring Paul into this court house.”

Then Tertullus started to blame Paul. He said to Felix, “You have been our government boss for a long time, and you have been a good boss for us. You have made a lot of things good in this country, and we have been happy all the time, with no trouble. So we just want to thank you for everything that you do for us all the time. ⁴But now, I don’t want to take up too much of your time, so I’m asking you to listen to me for a little while. ⁵You see, this man is a trouble maker. He makes trouble everywhere he goes. He gets the Jewish people angry everywhere, and they go wild. He is the leader of the *Nazarene* mob. ⁶⁻⁷He even tried to do things in God’s ceremony house that are against our law. So we grabbed him. ⁸If you ask him questions, you will find out for yourself that everything we are telling you is true.”

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

Paul said that the Jewish leaders were wrong

¹⁰Then Felix, the government boss, let Paul know that it was his turn to talk.

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

¹¹You can check on my story, and you will find out that it was just 12 days ago that I went to Jerusalem to show respect to God. You know, 12 days is not enough time for me to make a lot of trouble. ¹²This mob didn’t see me do anything wrong. I wasn’t arguing with anyone, and I wasn’t making people angry or wild. I didn’t do those things at God’s ceremony house, or in a Jewish meeting house, or anywhere in Jerusalem. ¹³They can’t show you that the things they say are true.

¹⁴But I can tell you this, I do show respect to the God that our Jewish people respect, the God that our grand-fathers respected a long time ago. It is true that I’m with the mob called the *Jesus Way* mob. The Jewish leaders say that we are wrong, but that is not true. And I believe everything in God’s book. I keep our law, and I believe everything that God got his men to write in his book. ¹⁵You know, these Jewish leaders here believe that one day God will make all the dead people come alive again, both the people that were good and the people that were bad. And I believe that too. ¹⁶So I always try to do whatever God

wants, and I always try to do whatever other people want too. You see, I want to feel good about everything I do.

¹⁷Let me tell you what happened. A few years ago I went to some other countries, and then a few days ago I got back to Jerusalem. I brought some money with me to give to poor people there, and I wanted to show respect to God by giving things to him at his ceremony house. * ¹⁸And I did the ceremony to make myself clean. Some Jewish people saw me there at God's ceremony house. But I was by myself. There was no mob of people with me, and I was not getting anyone to go wild. ¹⁹It was some other Jews from Asia country that made the people go wild. If those Asia Jews really thought I did something wrong, why didn't they come here to blame me in front of you? I reckon they know their story isn't true. ²⁰And this mob here, they had me in their Jewish court in Jerusalem. But can they tell you that they found me guilty of something? No. I told them my story, and they didn't say that I was guilty of anything. ²¹But there is one thing that I said in that court that made them angry. I shouted, 'You are judging me today because I believe that God will make all the dead people become alive again.' That's all."*

Felix stopped the court to wait for the big boss soldier to come

²²Then Felix stopped the court. You see, he already knew a lot about the Christian people, the *Jesus Way*

* 24:17 Acts 21:17-28 * 24:21 Acts 23:6

mob. Felix said to the people in the court, “Lisias will come here later. He is the big boss over the soldiers in Jerusalem. And after I listen to his story I will say if Paul is guilty or not.”

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

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

²⁴A few days later, Felix came back with his wife. She was a Jewish woman. Her name was Drusilla. Felix told a soldier to bring Paul to them, and they listened to him talk. Paul told them, “We have to believe in Jesus. He is the Christ, the special man that God sent to save us.” ²⁵And Paul told them about the way God wants people to live. He said that God wants us to do what is right, and that he wants us to control ourselves. And Paul told them that God will judge everybody one day.

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

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

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

Chapter 25

Festus said that he will judge Paul in Caesarea

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

⁴But Festus said, "Paul is in Caesarea, and my soldiers are guarding him there. I'll be going back to Caesarea in a few days, ⁵so you pick some of your leaders to come with me. They can blame Paul in my court there."

Paul asked for Caesar, the biggest boss, to judge him

⁶About 8 or 10 days later, the Jewish leaders went with Festus back to Caesarea, and the next day, Festus sat on the judge's seat in the court house there. He told his soldiers, "Bring Paul in now."

⁷They brought Paul into that room, then the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem stood up and blamed him. They told Festus, “Paul did a lot of bad things.” But they couldn’t show him that their story was true.

⁸Then Paul talked to everyone there and said that he was not guilty. He said, “I haven’t done anything wrong. I didn’t break the Jewish law, and I didn’t break the rules about God’s ceremony house, and I didn’t break the Roman laws.”

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

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

¹²Festus had some special men that always helped him work out what to do, so he talked with them. Then he said to Paul, “All right. You want me to send you to Caesar, and I will do that. I’ll send you to Caesar, and he can judge you there in Rome.”

Festus told Agrippa about Paul

¹³After a few days, another country's big boss came to Caesarea. His name was Agrippa. And his young sister came with him. Her name was Bernice. They came to say *hello* to Festus, and to say, "We are happy because you are the new government boss over this country."

¹⁴While they were there at Caesarea, Festus told Agrippa about Paul. He said, "I want to tell you about a prisoner here. Felix left him in jail here, and I'm not sure what to do with him. ¹⁵You see, I went to Jerusalem, and the Jewish ceremony bosses and elders there, they told me that this man did a lot of bad things. They asked me to say he is guilty, and to tell my soldiers to kill him.

¹⁶But I told them, 'That's not how we Romans judge people. If somebody blames another person, we don't say that person is guilty until after we get them in front of a judge with the people that are blaming them. And we let that person say why they reckon they are not guilty.'

¹⁷So those Jewish leaders came here to Caesarea with me. I didn't waste any time. The next day, I sat down on the judge's seat, and I told some soldiers to bring Paul in.

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

²⁰I didn't know how to find out the true story, and I didn't know how to judge Paul, so I said to him, 'How

about this? I can send you to Jerusalem, and I can judge you there. Will that be all right?’

²¹But Paul said, ‘No, I don’t want to go to Jerusalem. I want Caesar to judge me, that biggest boss in Rome.’ So I told my soldiers to guard Paul here, until I can send him to Caesar.”

²²Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I want to hear that man myself.”

Festus said, “All right, I’ll let you hear him tomorrow.”

Festus wanted Agrippa to help him write a letter about Paul

²³The next day, Agrippa and his young sister Bernice came into the big room that had the judge’s seat. There was a lot of ceremony for them as they came in. Some boss soldiers came with them, and the leaders of Caesarea came with them too.

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

²⁵So I asked them, ‘What did he do?’ And I found out that he didn’t do anything bad, so we can’t kill him. But then he asked me to send him to Rome, for our biggest boss to judge him, so I will send him to Rome. ²⁶But I can’t think of anything to write about him, I don’t know any bad things he did to tell our big boss about.

So I brought him here. I want you all to hear him tell his story, and I especially want you, Agrippa, to hear him. Then we can ask him some questions, and maybe I will find out something to write about him. ²⁷You see, I reckon it's not right to send a prisoner to Rome without telling our biggest boss what people are blaming that prisoner for."

Chapter 26

Paul talked to the big bosses

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

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

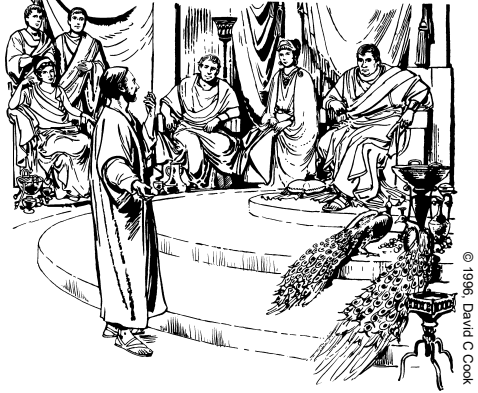
Paul said that he used to be a Pharisee man

⁴Then Paul said, "A lot of Jewish people know the way I lived from the time I was a young man. They know the way I lived in my home country, and also in Jerusalem.

⁵They know that I joined the Pharisee mob, and I kept our law properly, like all the Pharisee mob do. Those Jews that are blaming me, they know this, and they can

tell you this about me if they want to.*

⁶⁻⁷You see, boss, a long time ago, God promised our grand-fathers that he will do something real good for us Jews. And I reckon God does everything that he says he will do. All of us Jews, in all of our 12 tribes, we are all waiting for God to



*Paul told Big Boss Agrippa
why he was not guilty*

do the good thing that he promised, and we show respect to him all the time. We all reckon he will do it. But now those Jewish leaders are blaming me for believing that God is doing it. ⁸You see, God can make dead people alive again. So why can't any of you people here believe that?"

Paul said that he used to hurt Christians

⁹Paul kept on talking. He said, "You know, at one time I thought I had to stop people from following Jesus, the man from Nazareth. I did a lot of things to try to stop them. ¹⁰I started in Jerusalem. I put a lot of Christians in jail. The bosses of the Jewish ceremonies told me to do that. And if they judged any of those Christians and said, 'Kill them,' I agreed with them, and I said that too. ¹¹I often punished the Christians that were in the Jewish

* 26:5 Acts 23:6; Philippians 3:5

meeting houses. I tried to get them to say bad things about Jesus.

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

Paul said that he met Jesus

¹²Paul kept on telling his story. He said, “The bosses of the Jewish ceremonies in Jerusalem said that I can go to Damascus to grab the Christians there, so I started to go to Damascus to look for the Christians. ¹³And I'll tell you what happened next, boss. In the middle of the day, while I was going along the road, I saw a bright light in the sky. It was even brighter than the sun. It shined all around me, and all around the men that were with me.

¹⁴We all fell down on to the ground. Then I heard the voice of somebody talk to me in the Hebrew language. He said, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you making trouble for me and hurting me? You are hurting yourself too, you know.’

¹⁵Then I asked, ‘Who are you, boss?’

And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus. You are making trouble for me and hurting me. Whenever you hurt my followers, you are hurting me too. ¹⁶But stop doing that, and get up, and stand on your feet. Listen, I came to you like this to pick you to be my worker. I want you to tell everyone everywhere about the things you have seen, and tell them about the things that I will show you later. ¹⁷Your own Jewish people will give you trouble, and people that

* 26:9-11 Acts 8:3; 22:4-5

are not Jews will give you trouble too. But I will look after you. You see, I will send you to other countries, to people that are not Jews, ¹⁸and you will tell them the true message about me. It will be like you will open their eyes so that they can see things properly. They will come to God. Then Satan, the boss over the bad spirits, he will not control them with his power any more. It is like they are always in the dark now, but they will come into the light. They will believe in me, and they will stop believing lies. And then God will say they are not guilty of the bad things they did, and they will be God's people.' Jesus said that to me."

Paul said that he did everything Jesus told him to do

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

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

²¹And Paul said, "I told everyone this message, but some of the Jewish people didn't like it, so they grabbed

* 26:20 Acts 9:20, 28-29

me, and they tried to kill me. They did that in God's ceremony house.

²²But God helped me. You see, God helps me all the time, and he is still helping me now. So I'm standing here now, and I'm telling you mob that Jesus is the special man that God promised to send to us, the man that is called the Christ. I'm telling this message to you big bosses, and I'm telling it to all you other people too. This message is already in God's book. I'm only saying things that Moses wrote about a long time ago. God's other men wrote about these things too. ²³They said that people will hurt God's special man, and kill him, but then God will make him alive again. They said that he will be the first person to come alive again after being dead, and that's how he will show everyone that God can save them. He will be like a light for everyone, for both Jewish people, and for people that are not Jews.”*

Paul wanted them all to become Christians

²⁴While Paul was talking, Festus suddenly shouted, “Paul, you are crazy. You have been reading and learning too much, and it made you go crazy in your head.”

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

* 26:23 Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; 1 Corinthians 15:20

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

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

²⁹Paul said, “It doesn’t matter if it is quick, or if it takes a long time. I’m asking God that you, and everyone here that is listening to me, will become just like I am now. I want you to become Christians. But I don’t want anyone to put you in jail for being a Christian, like they did to me.”

Agrippa said that Paul has to go to Rome

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

³²Then Agrippa said to Festus, “But you can’t let him go free, because he asked you to send him to Rome, so that our biggest boss can judge him there. So you have to send him to Caesar.”

Chapter 27

The Romans started to take Paul to Caesar, their biggest boss

¹Later on, Festus, the government boss over that country, reckoned it was time for Paul to go to Rome, in Italy

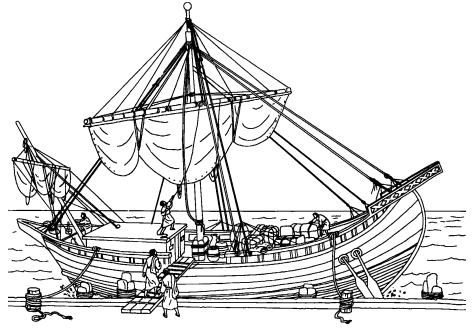


country. So he took Paul and some other prisoners to Julius. Julius was the boss over a mob of soldiers that were called the Augustus Mob. Festus told him, “Take all these prisoners to Rome.” And they let me, Luke, go with them.

²So we got on a ship that came from a town called Adramitium. It was going to sail to some of the towns along the coast of Asia country. Another one of Paul’s friends came with us too. His name was Aristarkus. His home town was Thessalonica, in Macedonia country. We all started sailing on that ship, and ³the next day, we stopped at the town called Sidon. Julius was good to Paul, and he let him go and see his friends there,

so they could give him anything he needed. Then Paul came back to the ship.

⁴After that, the ship left Sidon, but the wind was blowing against us, so the ship went along the north



side of Cyprus Island, to get away from the wind. ⁵Then

This is the sort of ship that Paul went on
we crossed over the sea close to the coast of Cilicia country and Pamfilia country, and we got to a town called Myra, in Lisia country. Then we got off the ship there and looked for another ship to take us to Rome, in Italy country.

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

⁷We sailed slowly for a few days, and then we went close to the coast of Asia country, near a town called Kenidus. After that, the wind got very strong. It didn’t let the ship sail straight ahead towards the west, so we sailed towards the south. We sailed along the south side of Crete Island to get away from the wind. We went past Cape Salmone. ⁸The wind was still strong, so the ship couldn’t sail properly, and we went slowly along the coast of Crete Island until we got to a place called Fair Havens Harbour, near a town called Lasia.

Paul told the ship's men to wait, but they kept going

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

¹¹But the boss soldier didn't listen to Paul. He listened to the boss of the ship-men and the owner of the ship.

¹²That place, Fair Havens Harbour, was not a good place to stay in the cold weather time, so most of the men on the ship reckoned we had to leave there and go on a bit further, to a town called Phoenix, and stay there for the cold weather time. The harbour at Phoenix was all right. It was open to the sea in the west, but the strong winds didn't blow from the west in the cold weather time.

¹³We waited at Fair Havens Harbour until the strong wind stopped. Then a little wind started to blow from the south, and the ship-men thought that they could sail the ship to Phoenix, so they lifted the anchor, and sailed west along the southern shore of Crete Island. ¹⁴But after a little while, the wind changed, and a big strong wind blew across the island from the north side, and it pushed the ship to the south, away from the land. (That wind was called the *Northeaster*.) ¹⁵The ship-men couldn't steer the ship the right way. The wind kept on blowing it the wrong way. So they just let the wind take the ship

anywhere. ¹⁶The ship was towing a little boat behind it. The sea was very rough, so we wanted to put that little boat up on the deck of the ship, so that it would not get full of water. But the wind was too strong for us to do that. Then we went beside a little island called Cauda. That island blocked the wind, so it wasn't as strong, and we lifted the little boat up out of the water and tied it on to the deck of the ship. There was still a lot of wind, so it was really hard work for us, but we did it.

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

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

Paul told everybody on the ship that they will not drown

²¹None of us on the ship wanted to eat any food. We didn't eat anything for a long time. Then one day, Paul stood up in front of us and said, "Listen, men, you didn't listen to me in Crete. I told you not to sail out of that little harbour, but you did. So now you are in trouble, and you lost all the things this ship was carrying. ²²But listen. Don't be frightened. I'm telling you that none of us will die. But the wind and the waves will wreck this ship.

²³You see, I work for God, and last night he sent one of his angel messengers to me. He came and stood beside me, ²⁴and he said, 'Paul, don't be frightened. You have to go and stand in front of Caesar, the big boss in Rome. And God will be good to all the other men that are with you on this ship, too. None of them will die.'

²⁵Listen friends, don't be frightened. I believe that God will help us, just like that angel told me. ²⁶But the ship will crash on to an island, and we will all go on to the land there."

Paul stopped the ship-men from leaving the ship

²⁷We were in that storm for 2 weeks. The wind was still blowing the ship across the water called the Adriatic Sea. Then, in the middle of the night, the ship-men thought the ship was getting close to land. ²⁸So they got a rope with a stone on the end of it and dropped it into the water to find out how deep it was. That stone went down 37 metres into the water, so they knew the water was 37 metres deep. We went a little further, and then they

threw the stone out again. This time it only went down 28 metres, so they knew the water was not as deep there. ²⁹That's how they knew for sure that the ship was getting close to land. Then they got frightened. They thought the ship might smash on to some rocks, so they threw down 4 anchors on ropes from the back of the ship, to stop the ship. They really wanted daylight to come, so they could see the land.



The ship-men threw down 4 anchors on ropes to stop the ship from going on to the rocks

³⁰The ship-men wanted to leave the ship and get in the little boat, so they lied to everyone. They said, “We are going to drop some anchors from the front of the ship.” Then they started to put the little boat down into the sea.

³¹But Paul said to the boss soldier, and to the other soldiers, “If these ship-men don't stay on the ship, you will all drown.” ³²So the soldiers cut the ropes of the little boat and let it fall down into the water, and the waves took it away.

Paul got them all to eat some food to stay alive

³³Just before daylight came, Paul tried to get everyone to eat some food. He said, “For the past 14 days you were too worried, and you didn't eat anything. ³⁴So now I'm telling

you, you've got to eat some food, so you will get stronger and stay alive. I know that none of you will drown."

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

³⁸Everyone ate as much as they wanted, then they threw all the bags of food out of the ship into the sea, and that made the ship a bit lighter.

The ship started to break up

³⁹Then the day-light came, and we saw the land. The ship-men didn't know that place, but they could see a bay with a beach, and they reckoned, "Maybe we can steer the ship on to that beach." ⁴⁰So they cut the anchor ropes and let the anchors stay in the sea, and at the same time, they untied the rudders, so they could steer the ship again. Then they put up the sail at the front of the ship, and then the wind started to blow the ship towards the land. ⁴¹But half-way there, it hit a sand-bar, not far from the beach. The front of the ship got stuck there, and it didn't go any further. Then the big waves kept on hitting the back of the ship, and they started to break it up.

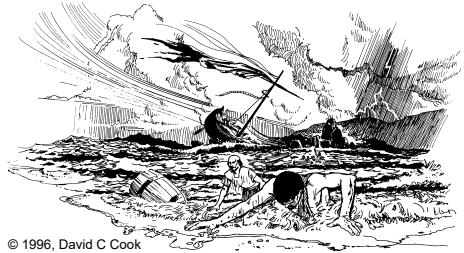
The boss soldier saved Paul

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

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

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

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



© 1996, David C Cook

*The ship broke up, but
 everyone got to the land*

Chapter 28

A cheeky snake bit Paul

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

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

let him stay alive. That snake will kill him dead.”

⁵But Paul just shook the snake until it fell off into the fire, and nothing happened to him. ⁶The people watched Paul. They thought, “His body will swell up, or he will fall down dead.” But after they waited a long time, they saw that he was still all right. Nothing bad happened to him. So then they changed their minds and said, “This man is a god.”



A cheeky snake bit Paul, but he just shook it off into the fire

Paul got Jesus to make a lot of people better on Malta Island

⁷The Roman boss over that island was called Publius. He owned some gardens near that beach. He was good to us. He told us to come and stay at his house, so we stayed there for 3 days, and he took care of us.

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

⁹After Paul did that, all the other sick people on the island came to him, and God made them better too.

¹⁰Then the people there did a lot of things to show us that they thought we were great. And when the time came for us to get ready to sail away on another ship, those people gave us food and other things that we needed.

We all sailed to Putioli, then we kept going by road

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

¹²We sailed away from Malta Island, and we got to an island called Sicily, and we stopped at a town called Siracuse. We stayed there for 3 days. ¹³Then we kept going on that ship, and we got to a town called Regium, in Italy country. The next day, the wind was blowing from behind us and pushing us fast, and the day after that, we got to the town called Putioli. Then we got off there, and we left that ship. ¹⁴We met some Christians in Putioli, and they asked us to stay with them, so we stayed there for a week. Then we left Putioli and started to go along the road to Rome.

Christians came from Rome to meet Paul

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

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

Paul talked to the Jewish leaders in Rome

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

But I don’t want to blame my own Jewish people about anything. * ²⁰So I asked you to come here now. I want to meet you, and I want to tell you my story. You see, I believe in the man that we are all waiting for. He is the man that God promised to send to us Israel people. But our leaders of Israel didn’t agree with me, and that is the reason why I’m a prisoner now, tied up with this chain.” That is what Paul told the Jewish leaders in Rome.

* 28:19 Acts 25:11

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

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

***Paul said, “People that are not Jews
will believe God’s message”***

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

²⁴Some of them believed Paul’s words, but some of them didn’t agree with him. ²⁵So they started to argue with each other, and then they got up to go home. Then Paul told the people that didn’t believe his message, “The Holy Spirit said a true word to your grand-fathers, a long time ago. He told God’s man, Isaiah, to write this, and it is in God’s book. He wrote,

²⁶⁻²⁷ ‘Go to the Jewish people and say,

“You keep on hearing God’s words with your ears, but you don’t understand them properly.

It’s like your ears are going deaf.

You keep on looking with your eyes, and you see God doing things,

but you don’t understand what you see.

It’s like you closed your eyes.

Your problem is that you don’t want to know God’s message.

If you do understand God’s message properly, you will turn around and come back to him,

and then God will not say you are guilty for the bad things you did.

But you mob don’t want to come back to God.” ’*

That’s what Isaiah wrote.”

²⁸⁻²⁹Paul kept on talking to them. He said, “You Jewish people have to understand this. God sent his message to you, but you didn’t listen to it. So he is sending that message to the people that are not Jews, and they will listen to it, and believe it.” That is what Paul told the Jewish people in Rome that did not believe his message.

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

* 28:26-27 Isaiah 6:9-10

Notes

About this translation

This booklet uses the **Plain English Version** (PEV) of the Scriptures, an English translation of the Bible designed for Indigenous Australians whose first language is an Indigenous language. Its purpose is to convey the meaning of the original Scripture in English that is easy to understand and natural for them. We have, as much as possible, limited its grammar, semantic and rhetorical features to those common in Aboriginal languages, and its vocabulary to the English that is most widely used.

We have applied the principles of meaning-based translation, wherein we have sought to convey the same meaning that the original authors conveyed to the original readers. That means not just considering individual words, but also the message of the whole passage.

The following are some of the more common modifications that have been made:

- Where the grammar of the original has used the passive voice, we have used the active voice, since the grammars of most indigenous Australian languages do not have passive voice.
- Where the original text has used an abstract noun to express a concept that is fundamentally an action or a quality, we have usually used a verb or adjective to translate that concept, since abstract nouns are comparatively rare in Australian languages.
- Where the grammar of the original has used long and complicated sentences, we have conformed to the grammars of Australian languages by using shorter sentences, making other adjustments as necessary to retain the meaning carried by the grammar of the original.
- Where the original text has implicit or background information that would not be obvious to our target audience, we have made that information explicit.
- Where the original text has used a word or phrase, the literal translation of which would not be understood by our target audience, we have used an explanatory rendering to convey the same meaning, whether or not it involved more words.
- Where the original text has used figurative language that would be taken as literal by our target audience, we have stated the meaning of the figure rather than its literal form.
- Where the original text is not in chronological or logical order, we have usually adjusted the order of information.

At any one place in our translation we may have used a combination of the above.

PEV Translation Team