

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

v92

Acts

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Table of Contents

Acts 1
- Chapter 1 1
- Chapter 2 1
- Chapter 3 3
- Chapter 4 3
- Chapter 5 4
- Chapter 6 6
- Chapter 7 6
- Chapter 8 8
- Chapter 9 9
- Chapter 10 10
- Chapter 11 11
- Chapter 12 12
- Chapter 13 13
- Chapter 14 15
- Chapter 15 15
- Chapter 16 17
- Chapter 17 18
- Chapter 18 19
- Chapter 19 20
- Chapter 20 21
- Chapter 21 22
- Chapter 22 24
- Chapter 23 25
- Chapter 24 25
- Chapter 25 26
- Chapter 26 27
- Chapter 27 28
- Chapter 28 29

Acts

1 Dear Theophilus,
In the first book that I wrote for you, I told about many
of Jesus' actions and teachings. 2 *I told you about those things*
up to the moment when God took Jesus up to heaven. Before
Jesus went to heaven, he gave instructions to his chosen
Representatives as the Holy Spirit guided him. 3 Even though
the Romans executed Jesus on a cross, God made him alive
again. Jesus then went to his Representatives *and other disciples*
and proved to them in many convincing ways that he truly
was alive again. He met with them at different times over a
period of 40 days. He talked with them about how God would
rule the lives of people everywhere.

4 One time while Jesus was with his disciples, he told them,
"I want you to stay here in the city of Jerusalem and wait
until God our Father sends his Spirit to you. As I told you,
he promised that he would do that. 5 John baptized people in
water, but within a few days God is going to baptize you in
the Holy Spirit."

6 One day when the Representatives were meeting together
with Jesus, they asked him, "Lord, will you now become our
king so that we Israelite people will have our own king once
again?" 7 He replied to them, "You do not need to know when
that will happen. God my Father alone has decided *when he*
will make me king." 8 But when the Holy Spirit comes to you,
he will enable you to tell people about me powerfully. You
will do this here in the city of Jerusalem. You will do it in
the nearby regions of Judea and Samaria. But you will also
do it all over the world. 9 After he said that, he started to rise
up *into heaven* while they watched. But then a cloud blocked
their view so that they could no longer see him.

10 While they were still staring toward the sky as Jesus was
going up, suddenly two angels in human form stood beside
them. Their clothes shone brightly. 11 One of the angels said,
"You men who come from Galilee, you do not need to look up
at the sky any longer! Someday this same Jesus, whom God
took from you up into heaven, will come back *to earth*. He
will return in the same way that you just now saw him go up
to heaven."

12 Then *after the two angels left*, the Representatives returned
to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is a short distance
from Jerusalem. 13 After they entered the city, they went into
the upstairs room *in the house* where they were staying. Those
who were there included Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip,
Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew. They also included
another man named James, who was the son of Alphaeus;
Simon the Zealot; and Judas, who was the son of yet another
man named James. 14 All these men prayed together regularly
and frequently. Others who prayed with them included the
women who had traveled with Jesus; Mary, who was Jesus'
mother; and his younger brothers.

15 Now about 120 people were meeting together at that
place. At one of the meetings, Peter stood up among his fellow
believers *because he was going to say something important*. He
said, 16 "You who believe as I do, there are words that King
David wrote in the Scriptures long ago that had to happen
as he said they would. The Holy Spirit, who knew that Judas
would show Jesus' enemies where to find him and arrest him,
inspired David to write those words. 17 But Jesus had chosen
Judas, along with the rest of us, to represent him. *So we need*
to find someone else to take his place."

18 This is how Judas died. The Jewish leaders gave Judas
money for betraying Jesus. He used that money to buy a field
and he went to that field to kill himself because he felt so badly
about what he had done to Jesus. As he killed himself, his body
landed with such force on that field that his abdomen burst
open and all his intestines spilled out. 19 The news about this
spread widely among the people of Jerusalem. When they
heard about it, they gave that field a new name. In their
Aramaic language it was Akeldama, which means "Field of
Blood." *They gave it that name because it was where someone*
had died.

20 Peter also said, "What happened to Judas is like what
we read in the book of Psalms: 'May his home become empty,
with no one living in it.' These other words in the Psalms also
refer to him: 'Let someone else take over his work as a leader.'"

21 "So we need to identify all the men who were with us
during the whole time when the Lord Jesus was with us.
22 *They need to have been with us* from the time when John the
Baptizer began his work until the day when Jesus left us and
rose up to heaven. One such man must *replace Judas and* join
us in telling people about Jesus and how God caused him to
live again after he died."

23 So the people who were meeting together suggested two
men who could replace Judas. One man was Joseph the son
of Sabbas, who also had the name Justus. The other man was
Matthias. 24–25 Then they prayed: "Lord Jesus, Judas stopped
representing you as he should have. He has now gone to the
place where he deserves to be. You know what every person
thinks privately. So please show us which of these two men you
have chosen to take the place of Judas as your Representative."
26 Then they cast lots to choose between the two of them. The
lot indicated that Matthias was the one to replace Judas. So
he became a Representative along with the 11 others.

2 On the day when the Jews were celebrating the Pentecost
festival, the believers were all together in one place *in the*
city of Jerusalem. 2 Suddenly, they heard a noise coming from
the sky that sounded like a wind blowing loudly. Everyone
in the entire house where they were sitting heard the noise.
3 Then they saw what looked like burning flames. These flames
separated from one another and came to rest on each of the
believers. 4 Then the Holy Spirit empowered all of the believers.
They began to speak in languages they had never learned. The
Spirit was making it possible for them to do that fluently.

5 At that time many Jews were staying in Jerusalem *to*
celebrate the Pentecost festival. They were Jewish people who
sincerely worshiped God. They had come from many different
countries around the world. 6 When they heard this loud noise,
a large crowd *of these Jews* gathered *at the place where the*
believers were. The people in the crowd were amazed because
they were each hearing the believers speak in their own
languages. 7 They were all completely amazed, and they said

to each other, “Listen, all these people who are speaking have
come from Galilee. *So they cannot possibly know our languages!*
8 But all of us hear them speaking our own native languages!
9 Some of us are people from the regions of Parthia and Media
and Elam. Others of us are from the regions of Mesopotamia,
Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia. 10 There are some people
here from the regions of Phrygia and Pamphylia, from the
country of Egypt, and from the regions in Libya that are near
the city of Cyrene. There are others of us who are here visiting
Jerusalem from Rome. 11 They include native Jews as well as
non-Jews who have chosen to believe and practice what Jews
believe. And others of us are from the island of Crete and
from the region of Arabia. And yet we can hear these people
speaking in all our different languages about the mighty works
that God has done!” 12 The people wondered *about what was
happening* and did not know what to think *about it*. So they
asked one another, “What is happening here?” 13 But some of
them made fun of what they saw. They said, “*These people are
talking like this because* they have drunk too much wine!”

14 In response, Peter stood up with all the other
Representatives and spoke loudly to the crowd of people.
He said, “You Jewish people and all of you others who live
here in Jerusalem, listen to me and I will explain to you what
is happening! 15 Some of you think that we are drunk, but we
are not drunk. It is only nine o’clock in the morning*, and people
here never get drunk at this time of the day*! 16 Instead, what has
happened to us is the *miraculous* thing that the prophet Joel
wrote about *long ago*. He wrote:

17 ‘During the last days,’ God says, ‘I will give my Holy
Spirit to all kinds of people. Your sons and daughters will tell
people my messages. I will give visions to the young men, and
I will give inspired dreams to the old men. 18 During those
days I will give my Holy Spirit to my servants, both men and
women, so they can tell people my messages. 19 I will cause
things to happen in the sky that will make people marvel. I
will cause things to happen on the earth that will show that
great events are going to take place. Here on the earth there
will be blood, fire, and smoke everywhere. 20 In the sky the
sun will appear dark to people and the moon will appear red
to them. Those things will happen before the momentous time
when I, the Lord God, come to judge everyone. 21 But even
though I am coming to judge and punish sin, I will save all
those who repent and ask me to forgive their sins.’”

22 *Peter continued speaking. He said,* “You Israelites, listen to
me! When Jesus from Nazareth lived among you, God proved
to you that he had sent him by enabling him to do many
amazing miracles. These showed that he was from God. You
yourselves know that this is true. 23 Even though you knew
that, you urged people who do not obey God’s law to take
action to kill Jesus. They did that by nailing him to a cross.
However, God had already planned for that to happen, and
he knew what the results would be, so he allowed it. 24 Jesus
died, but God caused him to become alive again and no longer
dead, because it was not possible for him to stay dead.

25 Long ago King David wrote what the Messiah said:

‘I knew that you, Lord God, would always be there to protect
me. You are right beside me, so I will not be afraid of those
who want to harm me. 26 Because of that, I am happy, and
I joyfully praise you, O God. And I am completely confident
that you will cause me to become alive again after I die. 27 I am
confident because I know that you will not make me remain
in the place where the dead are. You will not even let my
body waste away, because you have chosen me for a special
purpose. 28 You have shown me how to live again. You will
make me very happy because you will be with me *forever*.’”

29 *Peter continued,* “You who are Jews like me, I can tell you
confidently that our ancient ruler, King David, died and that
his subjects buried him. In fact, his body is still here now at the
place where they buried him. 30 So we know that King David
was not talking about himself in this psalm. Instead, he was a
prophet, and he knew that God promised to him that one of
his descendants would become king after him. 31 A long time
ago, David knew what God would do. He said that God would
cause Jesus the Messiah to live again after he died. God would
not allow him to remain in a grave. God would not even let
him be dead long enough for his body to begin to decompose.

32 After this man Jesus had died, God made him alive again.
All of us who are standing here before you can testify to this.
We all saw him alive after he had died. 33 So we are not babbling
drunkenly. Instead, this is what has happened. God has greatly
honored Jesus by causing Jesus to rule where God himself is,
in heaven. Jesus has received the Holy Spirit from God his
Father, just as God promised. And now Jesus has generously
given us the Holy Spirit, and God has confirmed that gift by
doing this miracle that you are witnessing. 34 We know that
David was not speaking about himself, because David did not
go up into heaven *as Jesus did*. Besides that, David himself said
this about the Messiah:

> ‘The Lord God said to my Lord the Messiah, “I will
> honor you by giving you a position next to me
> 35 while I completely defeat your enemies.”’”

36 *Peter ended by saying,* “So I want every Israelite to know
definitely that God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah,
this same Jesus whom you had nailed to a cross and killed.”

37 When the people heard what Peter said, they knew
they had done wrong. The people asked him and the other
Representatives, “Can you men tell us what God wants us to
do?”

38 Peter answered them, “Each of you should turn away
from your sinful behavior. If you now believe in what Jesus,
the Messiah, has done for you, we will baptize you, showing
that God has forgiven your sins, and he will give you his Holy
Spirit. 39 You will receive the Holy Spirit because God has
promised to give him to you and to your children and to all
others whom the God we worship leads to have faith in Jesus.
That includes all those who live far away from here.” 40 Peter
said many more things and spoke strongly to them. He told
them, “Ask God to save you so that he will not punish you
when he punishes these evil people *who have rejected Jesus*!”

41 So the people who believed Peter’s message received
baptism. There were about 3,000 of them who joined the
group of believers that day. 42 They continually obeyed what
the Representatives taught. They met many times together with
the other believers, and they ate a meal and prayed together
every day.

43 Throughout Jerusalem people came to have a great awe
for God, because the Representatives were doing many kinds
of miraculous deeds. 44 All of those who believed in Jesus met

regularly together. They also kept sharing what they had with one another. 45 From time to time some of them sold some of their land and some of the other things that they owned. They did this so that they could give some of the money they made to other believers. They gave those believers as much as they needed. 46 Every day they kept gathering to worship together in the temple courtyard, and then they would have meals together in their homes. They ate together happily and with genuine affection. 47 As they did so, they kept praising God, and the other people who lived in Jerusalem greatly respected them. *As those things were happening,* every day the Lord Jesus saved more people and those people joined with the other believers.

3 One day Peter and John were going to the temple to pray. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, the time when people prayed there. 2 There was a man there who had not been able to walk from the time he was born. He was sitting by the Beautiful Gate at the entrance to the temple area. People carried him there every day so that he could ask those who were going into the temple area to give him some money.

3 As Peter and John were approaching that gate, he saw them and asked them to give him some money. 4 When they heard the man speak to them, Peter and John looked directly at him, and Peter said to him, "Look at us!" 5 So he looked directly at them, expecting to get some money from them. 6 Then Peter said to him, "I do not have any money, but I will do what I can do for you. I heal you by the power of Jesus the Messiah, that man who came from the city of Nazareth. So get up and walk!" 7 Then Peter grasped the man's right hand and helped him to stand up. The man realized immediately that his feet and ankles were going to be strong enough to support him. 8 So the man jumped *the rest of the way* up *by himself* and started walking! He went into the temple area with Peter and John, leaping for joy and praising God as he walked!

9 All the people who were there saw him walking and heard him praising God. 10 They recognized that he was the man who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate that led into the temple area and ask people for money! So all the people there were greatly amazed that he could now walk. 11 The man would not let go of Peter and John. The three of them were in Solomon's Porch*, a covered walkway within the temple area*. As the amazing news of the man's healing spread through the crowd, more and more people came running over to see them.

12 When Peter saw that a crowd was gathering around them, he said to the people, "You Israelites, it should not surprise you that this man can now walk. But you should not be looking at us as if we were so godly that we made him walk by our own power! 13 *Let me tell you what has really happened.* God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We Israelites are descendants of those men, so the covenant includes us. God honored that covenant by sending Jesus to be the Messiah. *We told this man that the power of Jesus could heal him, and* God has now glorified Jesus by doing this miracle. But when Jesus was living among us, you turned him over to the Romans for trial. Pilate, the Roman governor, *knew that Jesus was innocent and* wanted to set him free. But you gathered in front of Pilate and shouted that he should not release him. 14 Rather than have Pilate release Jesus to you, even though Jesus was the Messiah, you rejected him and asked Pilate to set free a killer instead! 15 So you are responsible for the death of Jesus, the one who gives people life. But God brought him back to life after he died. We can testify that we saw Jesus many times after he became alive again. 16 You recognize this man whom you see standing here. *He is the man who used to beg for alms at the Beautiful Gate.* He is now strong enough to stand on his own because he believed in what Jesus could do. Yes, it is because he trusted in Jesus that he is now completely healthy. All of you saw this happen.

17 Now, my countrymen, I know that you and your leaders killed Jesus because you did not know that he was the Messiah. 18 God said through the prophets ahead of time that the Messiah he would send would suffer and die. And now, by what has happened, he has fulfilled what the prophets said. 19 So stop living sinful lives and ask God to help you do what pleases him. Then God will completely forgive you for sinning against him. 20 If you do that, there will be times when you will know that the Lord God is helping you. And some day he will send back to earth the Messiah whom he has given to you. That person is Jesus. 21 Jesus will certainly stay in heaven until the time when God causes all that he created to become new. Long ago God promised to do that, and he chose holy prophets to tell that to people. 22 For example, *the prophet* Moses said this *about the Messiah*: 'The Lord our God will make one of you Israelites a prophet like me. You must do everything he tells you to do. 23 Those who do not do what that prophet tells them will no longer belong to God's people. God will destroy them.'" 24 *Peter continued,* "In fact, all the prophets have told about what would happen during the times we are now living in. Those prophets include Samuel and the ones who lived after him, who all spoke about these events before they happened. 25 What the prophets said long ago applies to you today. And the solemn agreement that God made to bless our ancestors also extends to you, their descendants. He said to Abraham *about the Messiah*, 'I will bless all the people groups on the earth as a result of what your descendant will do.' 26 So when God sent Jesus to the earth as the Messiah, he had him come to you Israelites first. God intended for the Messiah to bless you by getting you to stop doing things that were wrong."

4 While Peter and John were still speaking to the people, several men walked up and confronted them. They included priests who served in the temple, the officer in charge of the temple guard, and some members of the Sadducee group. 2 These men were very angry because these two men were teaching the people. They were telling the people that what God did for Jesus shows that God causes people to live again after they die. 3 So these men arrested Peter and John and put them in jail. They did this because it was already evening, and the Jewish council would have to wait until the next day to question them. 4 However, many people who had heard Peter speak put their faith in Jesus. The number of men who believed in Jesus increased to about 5,000.

5 The next day the high priest called the other chief priests, the teachers of the Jewish laws, and the other members of the Jewish council. They all assembled in one place in Jerusalem. 6 Annas, the former high priest, was there. Caiaphas, the new high priest, was also there. And so were John and Alexander and other men who were related to the high priest. 7 They commanded guards to bring Peter and John into the room,

and then they asked Peter and John, “Who gave you the right or the ability to do this?”

8 As the Holy Spirit gave him power, Peter said to them in response, “You fellow Israelites who rule us and all of you elders, listen to me! 9 Today you are questioning us about a good deed we did for a man who could not walk. You want to know how he became able to walk. 10 So we want this whole council and all the other Israelites to know what has happened. This man is able to stand before you because Jesus from Nazareth, the Messiah, healed him. You were responsible for the Romans executing Jesus by nailing him to a cross. But God brought Jesus back to life after they executed him.

11 Jesus the Messiah of Nazareth is the one of whom the Scriptures say,

> ‘The stone that the builders threw away has become the most important stone in the building.’
>
> And you are those builders*, because you rejected Jesus*.
> 12 *So you should no longer reject him, because* only Jesus can save us. For God has given us no other person in the world who can save us *from the guilt of our sins*!”

13 The Jewish leaders recognized that Peter and John were not afraid of them. They also realized that these two men were ordinary people who had not studied in schools. So the leaders were amazed. They knew that these men had spent time with Jesus. 14 They also saw the man who had become able to walk again standing there with Peter and John. So they were not able to say anything to contradict them.

15 The Jewish leaders told guards to take Peter, John, and this man outside of the room where they were meeting. After they did so, the leaders talked with each other *about Peter and John*. 16 They said, “There is nothing that we can do to punish these two men! The news of the amazing miracle that they have done has spread widely in Jerusalem. So we cannot tell people that it did not happen! 17 However, we must not allow any more people to hear what they have been teaching about this Jesus. So we must tell these men that we will punish them if they continue to tell other people about the one who they say gave them the power to heal this man.” 18 So the Jewish leaders told the guards to bring them into the room again. After the guards had done so, they told them both that they were completely forbidden to speak or teach about Jesus.

19 But Peter and John told them in response, “In order to obey your command, we would have to disobey God*, who commanded us to tell everyone about Jesus*. We will let you decide whether you think God would want us to obey you instead of him. 20 But as for us, we cannot obey you. We will not stop telling people about what we saw Jesus do and what we heard him teach.”

21 Then the Jewish leaders again told Peter and John not to disobey them. But then they let them go without punishing them. The leaders knew that throughout Jerusalem people were praising God for what had happened *to the man who could not walk, and they did not want to upset the people*. 22 The people were praising God because *this was a remarkable miracle*. The man whom Peter and John had healed by doing this miracle was over forty years old, *and he had never before walked in his life*.

23 After Peter and John left the council, they met with the others who believed in Jesus and told them everything that the people on the ruling council had said to them. 24 When the others who believed in Jesus heard this, they prayed together aloud to God, “O Lord! You made the sky, the earth, the oceans, and everything in them. 25 Your Holy Spirit caused our ancestor, King David, who served you, to write these words:

> ‘Why did the people groups of the world become angry
> and why did they plan uselessly *against God*?
> 26 The kings in the world prepared to fight,
> and the rulers joined with them
> to oppose the Lord God and the one whom he had chosen to be the Messiah.’

27 What David said is true! Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with people who were Israelites and people who were not, joined together in this city of Jerusalem to oppose Jesus. They opposed him even though he had done nothing wrong and even though you, God, had sent him as the Messiah. 28 *But when they opposed Jesus,* they did no more than you allowed because it was what you had decided long ago would happen. 29 So now, Lord, listen to what they are saying about how they will punish us! Help us who serve you to speak about Jesus without being afraid at all! 30 Use your power to do great healings and many other miraculous deeds that will show the authority you have given to Jesus, your chosen Messiah!”

31 When the believers had finished praying, the place where they were meeting started to shake. The Holy Spirit gave them all power to tell people about Jesus as God had commanded, and they did that with great courage.

32 Those in the group of people who believed in Jesus were in complete agreement about what they believed and what they wanted. Not one of them said that he was the sole owner of anything. Instead, they shared what they had with one another. 33 The Representatives continued to preach powerfully that God had caused the Lord Jesus to live again after he died. And God was helping all the believers very much. 34 Here is one way God was helping them. No one among the believers was lacking anything. This was because other believers who owned fields or houses would sell some of their property to help them. They would bring the proceeds from the sale 35 and they would give it to the Representatives, who would then give out the money to the believers who needed it.

36 Now there was a man named Joseph who belonged to the tribe of Levi and who came from the island of Cyprus. The Representatives called him Barnabas. In the language of the Jews, that name means a person who always encourages others. 37 Barnabas sold a field that belonged to him, and he brought the money to the Representatives *for them to give to other believers*.

5 Now there was one of the believers whose name was Ananias. He was married, and his wife’s name was Sapphira. They also sold some land. 2 He kept for himself some of the money he had received for the land. His wife knew that he had done that. Then he brought the rest of the money and gave it to the Representatives.

3 Then Peter said, “Ananias, you have allowed Satan to
control you so completely that you tried to deceive the Holy
Spirit. You kept for yourself some of the money you received
for selling the land. *You did not give us all of it.* 4 Before you
sold that land, you truly owned it. And after you sold it, the
money was still yours. So you should never have thought about
doing such a wicked thing. You were not just trying to deceive
people! No, you were trying to deceive God himself!” 5 When
Ananias heard the things Peter told him, he immediately fell
down dead. And everyone who learned *about Ananias’ death*
felt a great awe for God. 6 When Ananias died, some young
men came forward, wrapped his body in a sheet, and carried
it out and buried it.

7 About three hours later, his wife came in. But she did not
know that Peter confronted her husband about the lie they had
told and that her husband had died as a result. 8 Then Peter
showed her the money that Ananias had brought and asked
her, “Tell me, is this the amount of money you two received for
the land you sold?” She said, “Yes, that is what we received.”
9 So Peter said to her, “You both did a terrible thing when
you agreed to try to deceive the Holy Spirit! This is what will
happen to you as a result. *God struck your husband dead as a*
punishment and some young men are just coming back from
burying him. God is also going to strike you dead, and they
will take your body out and bury it as well.” 10 Immediately
Sapphira fell down dead right in front of Peter. Just then
the young men came back in. When they saw that she had
also died, they carried her body out and buried it next to her
husband’s body.

11 All the believers in Jerusalem felt a great awe for God
because of what had happened to Ananias and Sapphira.
Everyone else who heard about these things also felt great awe
for God.

12 God was enabling the Representatives to do many amazing
miracles *that showed the truth of what they were preaching* among
the people. All the believers were meeting together regularly in
the temple courtyard at the place called Solomon’s Porch. 13 All
of the other people who had not believed in Jesus were afraid
to meet with the believers. However, those people continued
to speak very highly of them. 14 Many more men and women
started believing in the Lord Jesus, and they joined the group
of believers. 15 Because the people were seeing such amazing
miracles, they started bringing those who had various diseases
right into the streets and placing them on stretchers and
mattresses there. They were hoping that when Peter walked
by his shadow might touch some of them, because if even that
happened, God would heal them. 16 Large crowds of people
were also coming from the towns near Jerusalem. They were
bringing those who had various diseases and those whom evil
spirits were tormenting, and God healed all of them.

17 However, the high priest became very resentful *that such*
large crowds were coming to the Representatives. Many priests
who were members of the Sadducee group were also very
resentful of them. They joined together with the high priest to
work against them. 18 So they commanded the temple guards to
arrest them and to put them in the public jail. 19 *The high priest*
and his allies kept them in jail overnight so that they could question
them in the morning. But that night an angel from the Lord God
opened the jail doors and led all the Representatives outside.
Then the angel told them, 20 “Go to the temple courtyard,
stand there, and tell the people about the eternal life that
Jesus can give them. Do not leave anything out, even though
the Sanhedrin has commanded you not to say certain things.”
21 So when the Representatives heard what the angel said,
they went to the temple courtyard and began to teach the
people once more about Jesus. By then it was about dawn.
Around that same time, the high priest and the other priests
who were working with him gathered together in the Jewish
council chamber. From there they summoned the other council
members. Together they were all the leaders of Israel. Once
the whole council was present, they sent guards to the jail
to get the Representatives. 22 But when the guards arrived at
the jail, they discovered that they were not there. So they
returned to the council and told the members, 23 “We saw that
the jail doors were very safely locked and that the guards were
keeping watch in front of the doors. But when we opened the
doors *and went in to get those men*, none of them were inside
the jail.” 24 When the chief priests and the officer in charge
of the temple guards heard that, they were greatly confused.
They wondered what the consequences would be.

25 Then someone came and reported to them, “Listen to
this! The men you put in jail have somehow gotten into the
temple courtyard. And they are telling the people there about
Jesus!” 26 So the officer in charge of the temple guards went
to the temple courtyard with the officers. They brought the
Representatives back *to the council room*. But they did not
treat them roughly. They were afraid that if they did that, the
people would try to kill them by throwing stones at them.

27 After the captain and his officers had brought the
Representatives to the council room, they commanded them
to stand in front of the council members. Then the high priest
questioned them intensely. 28 He said to them, “We ordered
you very clearly not to teach people about that man Jesus! But
you have disobeyed us, and you have taught people all over
Jerusalem about him! Furthermore, you are trying to make it
seem that we are the ones who are guilty of that man’s death!”
29 But Peter, speaking for himself and the other Representatives,
replied, “We have to obey what God commands us to do, not
what you people tell us to do! 30 You are the ones who killed
Jesus by nailing him to a cross! But God, whom our ancestors
worshiped, caused Jesus to live again after he died. 31 God has
honored Jesus more than he has honored anyone else. He has
made him the one to save us and rule over us. He has enabled
us Israelites to stop sinning and he has forgiven us for the
sins we committed. 32 We tell people about these things that
we saw happen to Jesus. The Holy Spirit, whom God has sent
to us who obey him, is also confirming that these things are
true.” 33 When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they
became so angry *with the Representatives* that they wanted to
kill them.

34 But there was a council member named Gamaliel. He
was a member of the Pharisee group. He taught the Jewish
laws, and the Jewish people respected him highly. He stood up
in the council and told the guards to take the Representatives
out of the room for a short time. 35 *After the guards had taken*
them out, Gamaliel said to the other council members, “You
leaders of the people of Israel, you must think carefully about
what you are going to do to these men. 36 Some years ago
a man named Theudas led a revolt against the government.
He claimed that he was a great man, and about 400 men

joined him. But the Romans captured and executed him, and all those who had joined him went back to where they came from. So this revolt did not succeed. 37 After that, during the time when the Romans were recording the names of people in order to tax them, a man named Judas from the region of Galilee rebelled. He convinced some people to rebel with him. But he too died, and all those who had joined him went off in different directions. 38 Based on these examples, let me offer some advice. Do not kill these men! Set them free! I say this because if the things that are happening now are just something that humans have planned, someone will stop them. They will fail. 39 But if God has commanded them to do these things, you will not be able to stop them. You may even discover that you are working against God!" The other members of the council accepted what Gamaliel said. 40 They told the temple guards to bring in the Representatives and beat them. *So the guards brought them into the council room and beat them.* Then the council members commanded them not to speak to people about Jesus any more, and they let them go.

41 So they left the council chamber. As they did, they even rejoiced that God had honored them by allowing people to treat them badly because they were testifying to Jesus. 42 Every day after that, they went to the temple area and to various people's houses, and they continued teaching people and telling them that Jesus is the Messiah.

6 During that time, many more people were becoming believers. The Greek-speaking Jews began to complain about the Aramaic-speaking Jews because the widows among them were not receiving their fair share of food every day.

2 So *after* Jesus' 12 representatives *had heard what they were saying, they* summoned all the other believers *in Jerusalem* to meet together. Then they said to them, "We would not be doing the right thing if we stopped telling people the message God told us to share about Jesus in order to distribute food to people! 3 So, fellow believers, carefully choose seven men from among you, men whom you know the Spirit of God directs and who are very wise. Then we will instruct them to do this work. 4 As for us, we will keep on using our time to pray and to proclaim the news about Jesus."

5 All of the disciples liked their suggestion. So they chose Stephen, a man who strongly believed in God and whom the Holy Spirit controlled completely. They also chose Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, who was from the city of Antioch. Nicolas was a former Gentile who had converted to the Jewish religion. 6 The believers brought these seven men to the Representatives, who prayed for those men. As they prayed, they placed their hands on the men's heads to show that they approved of them to do that work.

7 More and more people were hearing the news about Jesus. The number of people in Jerusalem who believed in Jesus was increasing greatly. Among them were very many Jewish priests. They put their trust in Jesus as the Messiah and so they began to live in the way he said they should.

8 God was giving Stephen power to do many amazing miracles among the people *that showed that the message about Jesus was true*. 9 However, some people opposed Stephen. They were Jews who attended a synagogue that had the name Freedmen's Synagogue. Some other Jews also opposed Stephen. They were from the synagogues that people attended who were from the cities of Cyrene and Alexandria and from the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. They all began to argue with Stephen. 10 But they were not able to prove that what he said was wrong, because God's Spirit enabled him to speak very wisely.

11 So they secretly persuaded some men to accuse Stephen falsely. Those men said, "We heard him say bad things about Moses and God." 12 They also made the other Jewish people angry at Stephen, including the elders and the teachers of the Jewish laws. They came up to Stephen, grabbed him, and took him to the Jewish council. 13 They also brought in some people who told lies about Stephen. They said, "This man keeps saying bad things about this holy temple and about the laws that Moses received from God. 14 What we mean is that we have heard him say that this Jesus from the town of Nazareth will destroy the temple here in Jerusalem and will tell us to obey different customs from the ones that Moses taught our ancestors."

15 All the people in the council room stared at Stephen and saw that his face resembled the face of an angel.

7 Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are the things that these people are saying about you true?" 2 Stephen replied, "Fellow Jews and respected leaders, please listen to me! The glorious God whom we worship appeared to our forefather Abraham while he was still living in the region of Mesopotamia, before he moved to the city of Haran. 3 God said to him, 'Leave this land where you and your relatives are living and go into the land to which I will direct you.' 4 So Abraham left that land, which was also called Chaldea, and he arrived in Haran and lived there. After his father died, God told him to move to this land where our people are now living.

5 At that time God did not give Abraham any land to own here, not even a small plot of this land. But God promised that later he would give this land to him and his descendants, and that it would always belong to them. However, at that time Abraham did not have any children who would inherit it.

6 Later God told Abraham, 'Your descendants will go and live in a foreign country. They will live there for four hundred years. During that time, the rulers will mistreat your descendants and force them to work as slaves. 7 But I will punish the people who make them work as slaves,' said God. 'After that, your descendants will leave that land, and they will come and worship me in this land.'

8 Then God commanded that every male in Abraham's household and all of his male descendants should be circumcised to show that they all belonged to God. Later Abraham's son, Isaac, was born, and when Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him. Later Isaac had a son named Jacob. Jacob was the father of the 12 men whom we Jews call the patriarchs, our forefathers.

9 You know that Jacob's older sons became jealous because their father favored their younger brother Joseph. So they sold him to merchants who took him to Egypt, where he became a slave. But God took care of Joseph. 10 God protected him whenever people caused him to suffer. He enabled Joseph to be wise, and he caused Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to think well of Joseph. So Pharaoh appointed him to rule over Egypt and to look after all of Pharaoh's property.

11 *While Joseph was doing that work,* there was a time when
there was very little food anywhere in Egypt and also in
Canaan. People were suffering badly. At that time Jacob and
his sons in Canaan could not find enough food to eat. 12 When
Jacob heard a report that there was grain in Egypt that people
could buy, he sent Joseph's older brothers there to buy grain.
*They went and bought grain from Joseph, but they did not recognize
him. Then they returned home.* 13 When Joseph's brothers went
to Egypt again, they bought grain from Joseph once more. But
this time he told them who he was. And so Pharaoh found
out that these men who had come from Canaan were Joseph's
brothers. 14 Joseph sent his brothers back home to tell their
father Jacob that Joseph wanted him and his entire family to
come to Egypt. At that time Jacob's family consisted of 75
people. 15 So when Jacob heard that, he and all his family
went to live in Egypt. *Later on,* Jacob died there, and our
other ancestors, his sons, also died there. 16 Their descendants
brought their bodies back to our land and buried them in the
tomb that Abraham bought from Hamor's sons in the city of
Shechem.

17 Our ancestors had become very numerous by the time
God was about to rescue them from Egypt. That is what God
had promised Abraham he would do. 18 Another king had
begun to rule in Egypt. He did not know that Joseph had
greatly helped the people of Egypt *long before his own time*.
19 That king tried to get rid of our ancestors in cruel ways. He
oppressed them and caused them to suffer greatly. He even
commanded them to abandon their newborn babies outside
their homes so that the babies would die.

20 During that time Moses was born, and God saw that he
was a very beautiful child. His parents secretly cared for him
in their house for three months. 21 Then they had to abandon
him outside the house. But Pharaoh's daughter found him and
cared for him as her own son. 22 The Egyptians taught Moses
the many things that they had learned. When he grew up, he
spoke and did things powerfully.

23 One day when Moses was about forty years old, he
decided to see how his relatives, the people of Israel, were
doing. 24 He saw an Egyptian mistreating one of the Israelites.
So he went over to help the Israelite man. He avenged him by
killing the Egyptian. 25 Moses expected that his fellow Israelites
would understand that God had sent him to free them from
being slaves. But they did not understand. 26 The next day,
Moses saw two of his fellow Israelites fighting each other. He
tried to make them stop by saying to them, 'Now you two are
both Israelites! You must stop hurting each other!' 27 But the
man who was injuring the other man pushed Moses away. He
said to him, 'You have no authority over us! 28 You probably
want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday!' 29 When
Moses heard that, he fled from Egypt to the land of Midian.
He lived there for some years. *He got married, and* he *and his
wife* had two sons.

30 One day forty years later, the Lord God came to Moses
in the form of an angel. This was in the desert near Mount
Sinai. He appeared in the flames of a bush that was on fire.
31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed because the bush was
not burning up. As he went over to look more closely, he heard
the Lord God say to him, 32 'I am the God whom your ancestors
worshiped. I am the God whom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
worship.' Moses was so afraid that he began to shake. He was
afraid to look at the bush any longer. 33 Then the Lord God
said to him, 'Take your sandals off to show that you honor
me. Because I am here, the place where you are standing is
especially mine. 34 I have seen clearly how the people of Egypt
are continually causing my people to suffer. I have heard my
people when they groan because of it. So I am taking action to
rescue them from Egypt. Now get ready, because I am going
to send you back to Egypt.'

35 This Moses is the one who had tried to help our Israelite
people. But they rejected him by saying, 'You have no authority
over us!' Moses is the one whom God himself sent to rule
them and to free them from being slaves. He did that with the
help of the angel who spoke to him from the bush. 36 Moses is
the one who led our ancestors out from Egypt. He did many
kinds of miracles in Egypt, at the Sea of Reeds, and during the
forty years that the Israelite people lived in the wilderness.
37 This Moses is the one who said to the Israelite people, 'God
will cause another man from among your own people to be a
prophet like me for you.' 38 It was this man Moses who was
among the Israelites who were together in the wilderness. God
spoke through the angel on Mount Sinai to give Moses our
laws. Moses was the one who told our ancestors what the angel
had said. He was the one to whom God gave commandments
and who passed them on to us. Those commandments are still
powerful today.

39 However, our ancestors did not want to obey Moses.
Instead, they rejected him as their leader and wanted to return
to Egypt. 40 So they told his older brother Aaron, 'Make idols
for us who will be our gods to lead us. As for that fellow Moses
who led us out of Egypt, we do not know what has happened
to him!' 41 When the Israelites rejected Moses, they made an
image that looked like a calf. Then they offered sacrifices to
honor that idol. They sang and danced to worship something
that they themselves had made. 42 So God stopped correcting
them. He left them to worship the stars in the sky. This agrees
with what one of the prophets wrote:

> God said, 'You Israelite people repeatedly killed
> animals and offered them to me with grain as
> sacrifices during those forty years that you
> were in the wilderness. But you certainly
> were not truly offering them to me!
> 43 On the contrary, you carried with you the tent that
> contained the idol representing the god
> Molech that you worshiped. You also
> carried with you the image of the star
> called Rephan. Those were idols that you
> had made, and you worshiped them instead
> of me. So I will cause you to be taken
> away far from your homes to regions even
> farther than the country of Babylon.'

44 While our ancestors were in the desert, they worshiped
God at the sacred tent that showed that he was there with them.
They had made the tent exactly like God had commanded
Moses to make it. It was exactly like the model that Moses
had seen when he was up on the mountain. 45 Later on, other
ancestors of ours carried that tent with them when Joshua led
them into this land. That was during the time when they took
this land for themselves, when God forced the people who

previously lived here to leave. So the Israelites were able to possess this land. The tent remained in this land and was still here when King David ruled. 46 David pleased God, and he asked God to let him build a temple where he and all of our Israelite people could worship God. 47 But instead, God told David's son Solomon to build a temple where people could worship him.

48 However, we know that God, who is greater than everything, does not live in temples that people build. It is as the prophet Isaiah wrote:

49–50 God said, 'I created everything in heaven and on
earth. My presence fills all of creation. So
you human beings cannot make a place
good enough for me to live in!'

51 You people are disobedient to God, as if you did not even know God! You are exactly like your ancestors! You always resist the Holy Spirit, just as they did! 52 Your ancestors caused every prophet to suffer. They even killed those who long ago announced that the Messiah would come, the one who always did what pleased God. And the Messiah has come! He is the one whom you recently turned over to his enemies and insisted that they kill him! 53 You are the people who have received God's laws. Those were laws that God caused angels to give to our ancestors. However, you have not obeyed them!"

54 When the Jewish council members and others there heard all that Stephen said, they became very angry. They were grinding their teeth together because they were so angry at him!

55 But the Holy Spirit completely controlled Stephen. He looked up into heaven and saw a dazzling light from God, and he saw Jesus standing at God's right side. 56 "Look," he said, "I see right into heaven, and I see the Son of Man *in human form* standing where God rules!"

57 *When the Jewish council members and others heard that,* they shouted loudly. They put their hands over their ears so that they would not hear him. All together they ran up to Stephen and grabbed him. 58 They dragged him outside the city of Jerusalem and started to throw stones at him to kill him. The people who were accusing him took off their outer garments in order to throw stones more easily. They put these garments on the ground next to a young man whose name was Saul so that he could guard them. 59 While they continued to throw stones at Stephen, Stephen prayed out loud, "Lord Jesus, welcome me when I die!"

60 Then Stephen knelt down and cried out loud, "Lord, do not punish them for this sin!" After he had said this, he died.

8 Then some men who honored God buried Stephen's body in a tomb, and they mourned loudly for him.

But Saul thought the Sanhedrin had done the right thing by stoning Stephen. On that same day, people *Saul was leading* started severely persecuting the believers who were living in Jerusalem. So most of the believers fled to other places throughout the provinces of Judea and Samaria. But the apostles remained in Jerusalem. 3 Saul began trying to destroy the group of believers. He entered their houses one by one. He dragged away men and women *who believed in Jesus*, and he put them in prison.

4 The believers who had left Jerusalem went to different places, where they continued preaching the message about Jesus. 5 One of those believers, whose name was Philip, went from Jerusalem to a city in the district of Samaria. There he was telling the people that Jesus is the Messiah. 6 Many people there heard Philip speak and saw the miraculous things that he was doing. So they all paid close attention to what he was saying. 7 For example, Philip commanded evil spirits to come out of many people, and they came out screaming. Also, many people who could not move their muscles and many others who were lame were healed. 8 So many people in that city were very happy.

9 There was a man in that city whose name was Simon. He had been practicing sorcery for a long time, and he amazed the people in the district of Samaria with his magic. He claimed he was "Simon the Great One!" 10 The people there, both ordinary and important people, listened to him. They were saying, "Simon is the Great Power of God." 11 They continued to listen to him carefully because for a long time he had astonished them by practicing sorcery. 12 But then they believed Philip's message of the good news about how God would rule the lives of people everywhere and about Jesus the Messiah. Philip baptized the men and the women who believed in Jesus. 13 Though the people had been worshiping him, Simon too believed Philip's message and received baptism. He began to accompany Philip constantly. He was continually amazed by the great miracles he saw Philip doing. These things showed that Philip was speaking the truth.

14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that many people throughout Samaria district had believed God's message, they sent Peter and John there. 15 When Peter and John arrived in Samaria, they prayed for those new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For the Holy Spirit had not yet openly empowered any of them. They had only received baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 Simon saw that people received the Holy Spirit as a result of the apostles placing their hands on them. So he offered to give money to the apostles. 19 He said, "Enable me also to do what you are doing, so that if I place my hands on someone, he will receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May you and your money be destroyed, because you tried to get God's gift with money! 21 You cannot work with us in what we are doing, because you do not have the right attitude toward God! 22 So stop thinking wickedly like that! Plead with the Lord to forgive you for what you wanted to do, since he will forgive you if you ask sincerely. 23 You are in spiritual danger! I perceive that you are extremely jealous of us and that a continual desire to do evil is controlling you." 24 Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord that he will not do to me what you just said!"

25 Peter and John then told the people there what they knew personally about the Lord Jesus. They shared the message of the Lord with them. Then they both returned to Jerusalem. Along the way, they declared the good news about Jesus to people living in many towns in the district of Samaria.

26 While Peter and John were returning to Jerusalem, the Lord sent an angel to Philip. *Even though so many Samaritans were becoming believers in Jesus,* that angel told him, "Get ready and go south along the road that goes from Jerusalem to the

city of Gaza." That road is in a desert area. 27 So Philip got ready and went along that road. On the road he met a man from the land of Ethiopia. The man was an important official of the queen of Ethiopia. In his language people called their queen the Kandake. He took care of all of her funds. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship God, 28 and he was returning home and was seated, riding in his carriage. As he was riding, he was reading aloud from what the prophet Isaiah had written.

29 God's Spirit told Philip, "Go near to that carriage and keep walking close to it!" 30 So Philip ran over to the carriage. He heard the official reading what the prophet Isaiah had written. He asked the man, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 He answered Philip, "No, I cannot possibly understand it if there is no one to explain it to me." Then the man said to Philip, "Please come up and sit beside me." *So Philip got into the carriage.* 32 The part of the Scriptures that the official was reading was this: "People will lead him away to kill him as they lead a sheep to the place where they are going to kill it. He will be silent, as a lamb stands silently while someone cuts off its wool.

33 People will humiliate him and condemn him unjustly.
He will have no descendants because people
will kill him before he can have children."

34 The official asked Philip about what he was reading, "Tell me, who was the prophet writing about? Was he writing about himself, or about someone else?" 35 So Philip replied to him. He began with that Scripture passage, and he told him the good news about Jesus.

36 While they were traveling along the road, they came to a place where there was some water. Then the official said to Philip, "Look, there is some water! I would like you to baptize me." 37 [a] [Philip said, "If you believe in Jesus with complete sincerity, God will save you, and you may be baptized." The Ethiopian answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] 38 So the official told the driver to stop the carriage. Then both Philip and the official went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, suddenly the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away. The official never saw Philip again. Even so, the official continued going very happily along the road.

40 Philip then realized that the Spirit had miraculously taken him to the town of Azotus. While he traveled around in that region, he continued proclaiming the good news about Jesus in all the towns between the cities of Azotus and Caesarea. He was still proclaiming it when he finally arrived in Caesarea.

9 Meanwhile, Saul continued angrily threatening to kill those who believed in the Lord Jesus. He went to the high priest in Jerusalem 2 and requested him to write letters introducing Saul to the leaders of the Jewish synagogues in the city of Damascus. The letters would ask them to give Saul the authority to seize any man or woman who followed the teachings of Jesus and take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. *There the Jewish leaders could judge and punish them. The high priest gave Saul the letters he asked for.*

3 While Saul and those with him were traveling, they were approaching Damascus. Suddenly a brilliant light from heaven shone around Saul. 4 Immediately he fell onto the ground. Then he heard the voice of someone say to him, "Saul, Saul, stop trying to hurt me!" 5 Saul asked him, "Lord, who are you?" He replied, "I am Jesus, whom you are hurting. 6 Now stand up and go into the city of Damascus! Someone there will tell you what I want you to do." 7 The men who were traveling with Saul were so astonished that they could not say anything. They just stood there. This was because they heard someone speaking, but they did not see anyone. 8 Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes, he could not see anything. So the men with him took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. 9 For the next three days Saul could not see anything, and he did not eat or drink anything.

10 In Damascus there was a man who believed in Jesus named Ananias. Jesus made him see a vision and in it he called to him, "Ananias!" Ananias replied, "Lord, I am listening." 11 Jesus told him, "Go to Straight Street, to the house that belongs to Judas. Ask someone there if you can talk to a man named Saul who is from the city of Tarsus. Saul is praying to me at this moment. 12 Saul has seen a vision in which a man named Ananias entered the house where he was staying and put his hands on him to restore his sight." 13 Ananias answered, "But Lord, many people have told me about this man! He has done many bad things to the people in Jerusalem who believe in you! 14 The chief priests have given him permission to come here to Damascus and take prisoner all those who believe in you!" 15 But Jesus told Ananias, "Go visit Saul! Do what I say, because I have chosen him to serve me. I want him to speak about me to non-Jewish people and their leaders and to the Israelite people. 16 I myself will tell him that he must often suffer in order to tell people about me." 17 So Ananias went, and after he found the house where Saul was, he entered it. Then, as soon as he met Saul, he put his hands on him, and he said, "Saul, you are already like a brother to me. Jesus himself commanded me to come to you. Jesus is the one who appeared to you while you were traveling along the road to Damascus. He sent me to you to restore your sight, and he wants the Holy Spirit to lead and empower you." 18 Instantly, what seemed like flakes fell from Saul's eyes, and he was able to see again. Then he got up and was baptized. 19 After Saul ate some food, he became strong again. Saul stayed with the other believers in Damascus for several days.

20 Right away he began to preach about Jesus in the Jewish synagogues. He told the people there that Jesus is the Son of God. 21 The people who heard him preach were amazed. Some of them were saying, "We can hardly believe that this is the same man who persecuted the believers in Jerusalem! And he came here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests in Jerusalem!" 22 But God enabled Saul to preach to many people even more convincingly. He was proving from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah. The Jewish leaders in Damascus became angry *because they could not disprove what he said*.

23 Some time later, the Jewish leaders there plotted to kill him. 24 Those Jewish leaders were continually watching the people passing through the city gates so that if they saw Saul there, they could kill him. However, someone told Saul what

[a] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 37.

they planned to do. 25 So some of those whom he had led to
believe in Jesus took him one night to the high stone wall that
surrounded the city. They used ropes to lower him in a large
basket through an opening in the wall. In this way he escaped
from Damascus.

26 When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to meet with the
other believers there. However, almost all of them continued
to be afraid of him. They were not convinced that he had
become a believer. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him
to the apostles. He explained to the apostles how, while Saul
was traveling along the road to Damascus, he had seen Jesus,
who had spoken to him there. He also told them how Saul had
preached boldly about Jesus to people in Damascus. 28 So Saul
began to meet with the apostles and other believers throughout
Jerusalem. He spoke boldly to the people there about Jesus.

29 Saul was also speaking about Jesus with Jews who spoke
Greek, and he was debating with them. *They could not answer
his arguments,* so they were continually trying to think of a
way to kill him. 30 But the other believers found out that the
Jews who spoke Greek were planning to kill Saul. So some of
them took him to the city of Caesarea. There they put him on
a ship that was going to Tarsus, his hometown.

31 Since no one was persecuting them anymore, the believers
throughout the entire regions of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria
were able to live peacefully. The Holy Spirit was strengthening
them and encouraging them. They were honoring the Lord
Jesus, and the Holy Spirit was leading many other people to
become believers.

32 *Those peaceful conditions allowed* Peter to travel throughout
those regions. Once he went to the coastal plain to visit the
believers who lived in the town of Lydda. 33 There he met a
man whose name was Aeneas. Aeneas was not able to walk or
stand, and so he had not been able to get up from his bed for
eight years. 34 Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus the Messiah
heals you! Get up and roll up your own mat!” Right away
Aeneas stood up. 35 Most of the people who lived in Lydda and
on the Plain of Sharon saw Aeneas after the Lord had healed
him, so they believed in the Lord Jesus.

36 In the town of Joppa there was a believer whose name
was Tabitha. Her name in the Greek language was Dorcas. She
was always doing good deeds for poor people by giving them
things that they needed. 37 During the time that Peter was in
Lydda, she became sick and died. Some women there washed
her body *according to the Jewish custom*. Then they *covered her
body with cloth and* placed it in an upstairs room in her house.

38 Lydda was near the city of Joppa, so when the disciples
heard that Peter was still in Lydda, they sent two men to
go to Peter. When they arrived where Peter was, they urged
him, “Please come immediately with us to Joppa!” 39 Peter got
ready right away and went with them. When he arrived at the
house in Joppa, they took him to the upstairs room where the
body of Dorcas was lying. All the widows there stood around
him. They were crying and showing him the tunics and other
garments that Dorcas had made for people while she was still
alive. 40 But Peter sent them all out of the room *so that he could
pray*. Then he got down on his knees and prayed. Then, turning
toward her body, he said, “Tabitha, stand up!” Immediately
she opened her eyes and, when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 He
grasped one of her hands and helped her to stand up. After
he had summoned the believers and especially the widows
among them to come back in, he showed them that she was
alive again. 42 Soon people everywhere in Joppa knew about
that miracle and, as a result, many people believed in Jesus.
43 Peter stayed in Joppa many days with a man named Simon,
who made leather from animal skins.

10 There was a man whose name was Cornelius who
lived in the city of Caesarea. He was an officer who
commanded 100 men in a large group of Roman soldiers from
Italy. 2 He continually tried to do what would please God. He
and his entire household were non-Jews who worshiped God.
He often gave money to help poor Jewish people. He prayed
to God regularly.

3 One day at about three o’clock in the afternoon, Cornelius
saw a vision. He clearly saw an angel whom God had sent.
He saw the angel coming into his room and saying to him,
“Cornelius!” 4 Cornelius stared at the angel and became terrified.
Then he asked fearfully, “Sir, what do you want?” The angel
answered him, “You have been praying regularly to God. You
often give money to help poor people. Those things have
been like an offering to God, and he has noticed them. 5 So
now command some men to go to Joppa. Tell them to bring
back a man named Simon whose other name is Peter. 6 He is
staying with a man, also named Simon, who makes leather. His
house is near the ocean.” 7 When the angel who was speaking
with Cornelius had gone, he summoned two of his household
servants and a soldier who served him, one who also worshiped
God. 8 He explained to them everything that the angel had
said. Then he told them to go to the city of Joppa and ask
Peter to come to Caesarea.

9 About noon the next day, those three men were traveling
along the road. As they were approaching Joppa, Peter went
up on the flat housetop to pray. 10 Peter became hungry and
wanted something to eat. While some people were preparing
the food, he saw a vision. 11 He saw an opening in the sky
through which something like a large, square piece of cloth was
coming down. Someone seemed to be lowering it by its four
corners to the ground. 12 Inside the sheet were many different
kinds of creatures. Some had four feet, others crawled on the
ground, and others were wild birds. These included animals
and birds that the Mosaic laws forbade Jews to eat. 13 Then
he heard God say to him, “Go ahead, Peter, kill some of these
and eat them.” 14 But Peter replied, “Lord, surely not! I have
never eaten anything that our Jewish law says is unacceptable
to you or that we must not eat!” 15 Then Peter heard God
talk to him a second time. He said, “I am God, so if I have
made something acceptable to eat, do not say that it is not
acceptable to eat!” 16 This happened three times. Right after
that, the sheet with the animals and birds went back up into
the sky.

17 This left Peter trying to understand what that vision
meant. Meanwhile, the men Cornelius had sent arrived in
Joppa. They asked people how to get to Simon’s house. When
people told them, they found the house and stood outside
the gate. 18 They called from the gate and asked if a man
whose name was Simon, whose other name was Peter, was
staying there. 19 While Peter was still trying to understand
what the vision meant, the Holy Spirit said to him, “Listen!
Three men are here who want you to go with them. 20 So do
not be reluctant. Go downstairs and go with them! Do not

think that you should not go with them, because I have sent them here!" 21 So Peter went down to the men and said to them, "Greetings! I am the man you are looking for. Why have you come?" 22 They replied, "Cornelius, who is a Roman army officer, sent us here. He is a good man who worships God. All of the Jewish people who know about him speak well of him. An angel from God told Cornelius, 'Have some men to go to Joppa and get Simon Peter. Bring him to your house and listen to what he has to say.'" 23 So Peter invited them into the house and told them that they should stay there that night.

The next day Peter got ready and went with the men. Several of the believers from Joppa also went with him. 24 The day after that, they arrived in the city of Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them. He had also invited his relatives and close friends to come, so they were there in his house too. 25 When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and bowed low in front of him to worship him. 26 But Peter grasped Cornelius by the hand and lifted him to his feet. He said, "Stand up! Do not bow down and worship me! I myself am only human, like you!"

27 While he was talking to Cornelius, Peter *and the others* entered the house. They saw that Cornelius had invited many people to come *and hear Peter*. 28 Then Peter said to them, "You all know that we Jews think we are disobeying our laws if we associate with people who are not Jews or visit them in their homes. However, God has shown me *in a vision* that I should not say that God only accepts people who are Jews. 29 So when you sent some men to ask me to come here, I came right away without objection. So, please tell me, why have you asked me to come here?"

30 Cornelius replied, "About this time three days ago, I was praying to God in my house, as I regularly do at three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly a man whose clothes shone brightly stood in front of me 31 and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer. He has also noticed that you have often given money to help poor people, and he is pleased with that. 32 So now, send messengers to go to the city of Joppa in order to ask Simon, whose other name is Peter, to come here. He is staying near the ocean in a house that belongs to another man named Simon, who makes leather.' 33 So I sent some men right away to ask you to come here. I certainly thank you for coming. Now we all are gathered here, knowing that God is with us. We want to hear all the things that the Lord God has commanded you to say. So please speak to us."

34 So Peter began to speak to them. He said, "Now I understand that it is true that God does not favor only certain groups of people. 35 Instead, from every people group he accepts everyone who honors him and who does what pleases him. 36 You know what God told us Israelites. He proclaimed to us the good news that people could live peacefully with him because of what Jesus the Messiah has done. This Jesus is not Lord only over us Israelites. He is also the Lord who rules over all people. 37 You know what Jesus did throughout the land of Judea, beginning in Galilee. He started to do those things after John proclaimed to people that they should stop their sinful behavior. If they did, John baptized them. 38 You know that God gave his Holy Spirit to Jesus, the man from the town of Nazareth, and gave him the power to do miracles. You also know how Jesus went to many places, doing good deeds. Whenever he met people whom the devil was causing to suffer, he healed them. It was God who enabled Jesus to do those things."

39 "We all saw the things Jesus did in Jerusalem and around every part of the land of Israel where he lived. His enemies killed him by nailing him to a wooden cross. 40 Jesus died on a Friday, but God brought him back to life that Sunday. God made sure that many people would see that he was certainly alive again. 41 At that time God did not let everyone see him. God had previously chosen some people to be witnesses that Jesus was alive. I am one of the people who saw him and even ate meals together with him just after God brought him back to life. 42 Jesus commanded us to preach to the people and tell them that God has chosen him to judge everyone one day. He will judge those who are still alive and those who have died before that day. 43 All the prophets who wrote about him long ago told the people about him. They wrote that if anyone believed in him, God would forgive whatever sins they had done, because of what this man, Jesus, would do for them."

44 While Peter was still speaking about Jesus, suddenly the Holy Spirit came to all those people from other nations who were listening to the message. 45 The Jewish believers who had come with Peter from Joppa were amazed that God had so kindly given the Holy Spirit to people from all different nations too. 46 The Jewish believers knew that God had done that because they were hearing those people speak in other languages to tell how great God is. Then Peter said, 47 *to the other Jewish believers who were there*, "God has given them the Holy Spirit just as he gave him to us Jewish believers. Surely all of you would agree that we should baptize these people!" 48 Then Peter told Cornelius and his guests that they should receive baptism as believers in Jesus the Messiah. *Peter and the believers who had come with him from Joppa baptized all of them.* After they had received baptism, Cornelius invited Peter to stay with them for several days. *So he and the other Jewish believers did that.*

11 The apostles and other believers who lived in various towns in the province of Judea heard that some non-Jewish people had also believed the message of God about Jesus. 2 But there were some Jewish believers in Jerusalem who *followed the teaching of the Pharisees and* believed that Jews should not associate with non-Jews. When Peter came back from Caesarea to Jerusalem, they met with him and criticized him. 3 They said to him, "Not only was it wrong for you to go into the home of someone who was not Jewish, you even ate there!"

4 So Peter told them exactly what had happened. 5 He said, "I was praying *by myself* in the city of Joppa, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, suspended by its four corners. It came down to where I was. 6 As I was gazing at it, I looked closely and I saw some tame animals and also some wild animals, reptiles, and wild birds. 7 Then I heard a voice commanding me, 'Go ahead, Peter, kill some and eat them!' 8 But I replied, 'Lord, surely not! I have never eaten anything that our laws say we must not eat!' 9 The voice spoke to me from heaven a second time: 'I am God, so if I have made something acceptable to eat, do not say it is unacceptable.' 10 This same thing happened two more times. Then the sheet with all those animals and birds went back up into heaven.

11 At that exact moment, three men arrived at the house
where I was staying. Their master had sent them to bring me
to Caesarea. 12 God's Spirit told me that I should not hesitate
to go with them even though they were not Jews. Six Jewish
believers went with me to Caesarea. We went into the house
of the man who had sent for me. 13 He told us that he had seen
an angel standing in his house. The angel told him, 'Tell some
men to go to Joppa and bring back Simon whose other name is
Peter. 14 He will tell you how God will save you and everyone
else in your house.' 15 While I was speaking to them, the Holy
Spirit suddenly came to them just as he came to us during
the Pentecost festival. 16 Then I remembered what Jesus had
said: 'John baptized you with water, but God will baptize you
with the Holy Spirit.' 17 God gave us the Holy Spirit when we
believed in the Lord Jesus as the Messiah. God gave those
non-Jews the same Holy Spirit. So I had to cooperate with
what God was doing *and baptize them*."

18 After those Jewish believers heard what Peter said, they
stopped criticizing him. Instead, they praised God. They said,
"It is clear that God has accepted non-Jews so they too can
have everlasting life if they turn from their sinful behavior."

19 After Stephen died, people started persecuting the other
believers in Jerusalem. So many of them left and went to other
places. Some of them went to the land of Phoenicia. Some went
to the island of Cyprus. Others went to the city of Antioch in
Syria. In those places. They told people the good news about
Jesus. But most of them told only other Jewish people. 20 But
some of the believers were men from the island of Cyprus
and from the city of Cyrene in north Africa. They went to
Antioch and also spoke with non-Jewish people, telling them
that Jesus is the Messiah. 21 The Lord God was powerfully
enabling those believers to preach effectively. As a result, very
many non-Jewish people believed their message and trusted
in Jesus.

22 The group of believers in Jerusalem learned that many
people in Antioch were believing in Jesus. So they sent Barnabas
to Antioch *to teach and encourage the new believers*. 23 When
Barnabas got to Antioch, he recognized that God had acted
kindly toward the people there. This made him very happy. He
encouraged all of the new believers to continue to trust in the
Lord Jesus completely. 24 Barnabas was a good man whom the
Holy Spirit completely controlled. He trusted God completely.
Because of what Barnabas did, many more people in Antioch
believed in Jesus.

25 Then Barnabas left Antioch and went to the city of Tarsus
in the province of Cilicia to look for Saul. 26 After Barnabas
found Saul, he brought him back to Antioch to help teach
the believers there. Barnabas and Saul met regularly with the
church there for a whole year. They taught large numbers
of people about Jesus. The people of Antioch were the first
people who called the disciples of Jesus "Christians."

27 During the time that Barnabas and Saul were in Antioch,
some believers who were prophets came there from Jerusalem.
28 One of them whose name was Agabus stood up *in order to
speak*. God's Spirit enabled him to prophesy that there would
soon be a severe shortage of food in many countries. (This
shortage happened when Claudius was the Roman emperor.)
29 *When the believers there heard what Agabus said,* they decided
that they would send money to help the believers who lived
in Judea. Each of them decided to give as much money as he
was able to give. 30 They sent the money with Barnabas and
Saul to the leaders of the believers in Jerusalem.

12 About this same time, King Herod Agrippa sent soldiers
to arrest some of the leaders of the group of believers
in Jerusalem. The soldiers put them in prison. The king did that
because he wanted to hurt the believers and their community.
2 He commanded a soldier to cut off the head of the apostle
James, the older brother of the apostle John. So the soldier did
that. 3 When Herod realized that he had pleased the leaders of
the Jewish people, he commanded soldiers to arrest Peter too.
This happened during the festival when the Jewish people ate
bread without yeast. 4 After the soldiers arrested Peter, they
put him in prison. Herod assigned four groups of soldiers to
guard Peter. Each group had four soldiers. Herod wanted to
bring Peter out of prison and judge him in front of the Jewish
people after the Passover Festival was finished. *He then planned
to execute Peter.*

5 So for several days Peter stayed in prison. But the other
believers in their group in Jerusalem were urgently praying to
God, asking him to help Peter. 6 It was the night before Herod
planned to bring Peter out of prison and have him executed
publicly. Peter was sleeping in the prison between two soldiers.
A soldier on one side of him had locked a chain onto Peter's
wrist and his own wrist. A soldier on the other side of Peter
had done the same thing. Two more soldiers were guarding
the prison doors. 7 Suddenly, an angel from the Lord God stood
beside Peter. A bright light shone in his cell. *But Peter was still
sleeping so soundly that* the angel poked him in the side to wake
him up. The angel told him, "Get up quickly!" *While Peter
was getting up,* the chains fell off from his wrists. *However, the
soldiers were not aware of what was happening.* 8 Then the angel
said to him, "Fasten your belt around you and tie your sandals
onto your feet!" And Peter did what the angel told him to do.
Then the angel told him, "Wrap your cloak around you and
follow me!" 9 So Peter *put on his cloak and sandals and* followed
the angel out of the prison cell. He had no idea that all this was
really happening. He thought that he was dreaming. 10 Peter
and the angel walked by the soldiers who were guarding the
two doors, but the soldiers did not see them. Then they came
to the iron gate that led into the city. The gate swung open for
them, and Peter and the angel walked out of the prison. After
they had walked some distance along one street, the angel
suddenly disappeared. 11 Then Peter finally realized that this
was not a vision, it was really happening. So he thought, "Now
I know that the Lord God truly sent an angel to help me. He
rescued me from what Herod planned to do to me and from all
the things that the Jewish leaders expected would happen."

12 When Peter realized that God had rescued him, he went
to Mary's house. She was the mother of John, whose other
name was Mark. Many believers had assembled there, and they
were praying that God would help Peter somehow. 13 When
Peter knocked at the outer entrance, a servant girl whose
name was Rhoda came to find out who was outside the door.
14 *When Peter responded,* she recognized his voice, but she was
so happy and excited that she forgot to open the door! Instead,
she ran back into the house. She told the other believers that
Peter was standing outside the door. 15 But they said to her,
"You must be crazy!" But she continued to say that it was
really true. They kept responding, "*No, it cannot be Peter.* It

is probably his angel." 16 But Peter kept knocking the whole time those inside were talking. So when some of them finally opened the door, they saw that it was Peter, and they could hardly believe it! 17 Peter waved his hand to get them to be quiet. Then he told them exactly how the Lord God had let him out of the prison. He also said, "Tell James, the leader of our group, and our other fellow believers what has happened." Then Peter left and went away somewhere else.

18 The next morning the soldiers who had been guarding Peter *saw that he was gone*. They wondered what had happened to him, and they became terribly upset. 19 *Then Herod heard about it. So* he commanded soldiers to search for Peter, but they did not find him. Then Herod questioned the soldiers who had been guarding Peter. *But the soldiers had no good explanation for what had happened.* So Herod commanded them to be executed*, which was how the Romans punished guards whose prisoners escaped*. Afterwards, Herod went from the province of Judea to the city of Caesarea, where he stayed for some time.

20 King Herod became very upset with the people who lived in the cities of Tyre and Sidon. *He stopped them from trading with the people he ruled.* But the people of Tyre and Sidon needed to buy food from those regions. So they sent representatives together to the city of Caesarea to meet with Herod. They persuaded Blastus, who was one of Herod's important officials, to tell Herod that they wanted to live peacefully with him. 21 On the day that Herod had planned to meet with the representatives of Tyre and Sidon*, he did some things to impress them*. He put on very expensive clothes and he sat on his royal throne. Then he formally addressed all the people who had gathered there. 22 Those who were listening to him shouted repeatedly, "King Herod speaks so well that he must be a god, not a man!" 23 Herod accepted the praise of the people instead of telling them they should praise God. So while the people were still praising Herod, the Lord God sent an angel to punish him. That angel punished him severely: Worms ate him and he died.

24 The believers continued telling God's message to people in many places, and the number of people who believed in Jesus was continually increasing.

25 Barnabas and Saul finished delivering the money to help the Jewish believers in the province of Judea. They returned to the city of Jerusalem. They brought John, whose other name was Mark, with them.

13 At that time in the group of believers in the city of Antioch there were prophets and teachers. They were: Barnabas; Simeon, whose other name was Niger; Lucius, who was from the city of Cyrene; Manaen, who had grown up with Herod Antipas when he was the ruler of Galilee; and Saul. 2 While the believers in Antioch were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke to them. He said, "I want you to let Barnabas and Saul serve me in a particular way. I want you to send them on a special mission that I have chosen them to do." 3 So the believers fasted and prayed some more. Then they put their hands on Barnabas and Saul *to show that they approved of them going on this special mission*. Then they sent them off to do what the Holy Spirit had commanded.

4 The Holy Spirit gave Barnabas and Saul instructions about where to go. So they went from Antioch to the city of Seleucia, which is by the sea. From there they went by ship to the city of Salamis on the island of Cyprus. 5 While they were in Salamis, they went to the Jewish meeting places. There they proclaimed the message God had told them to share about Jesus. John Mark went with them and was helping them.

6 The three of them crossed from one side of the island to the other *and shared the gospel message in each town they passed through*. Eventually they came to the city of Paphos. There they met a sorcerer whose name was Bar Jesus. He was a Jew who falsely claimed to be a prophet. 7 He was often in the company of the governor of the island, Sergius Paulus, who was a sensible man. The governor sent someone to ask Barnabas and Saul to come to him because he wanted to hear what God had told them to say. 8 However, Bar Jesus, who also called himself Elymas, contradicted what Barnabas and Paul were saying. (The name Elymas means "the Sorcerer.") He kept trying to persuade the governor not to believe in Jesus. 9 Saul was using his Roman name, Paul, because he was visiting a Roman official. The Holy Spirit gave Paul boldness and insight. He looked steadily at the sorcerer. 10 Paul said, "You are constantly lying to people and doing things to deceive them! You are serving the devil! You try to stop everything that is good! You must stop trying to keep people from living in the way that God wants! 11 Right now the Lord God is going to punish you! You will become blind and you will not even be able to see the sun until God decides to let you see again." At once Elymas could no longer see clearly. Then he could not see at all. He wandered around, searching for someone to take him by the hand and lead him. 12 When Sergius Paulus saw what had happened to Elymas, he believed in Jesus. The truth and power of what Paul and Barnabas were teaching about Jesus amazed him.

13 After that, Paul and the people with him traveled by sailboat from Paphos to the city of Perga in the province of Pamphylia. At Perga, John Mark left them and returned to his home in Jerusalem. 14 Then Paul and Barnabas traveled by land from Perga and arrived in the city of Antioch in the district of Pisidia *in the province of Galatia*. On the Sabbath, they entered the Jewish meeting place and sat down *as rabbis did*. 15 Someone read aloud from what Moses had written in the books of the Law. Next someone read from what the prophets had written. Then the leaders of the Jewish meeting place sent a message to Paul and Barnabas. They said, "Fellow Jews, if one of you wants to speak to the people here to encourage them, please speak to us now."

16 So Paul stood up and motioned with his hand *so that the people would listen to him*. Then he said, "Fellow Israelites and you non-Jewish people who also worship God, please listen to me! 17 God, whom we Israelites worship, chose our ancestors to be his people. He caused them to become very numerous while they were foreigners living in Egypt. Then God did powerful things to lead them out of slavery there. 18 He put up with their disobedience for about forty years while they were in the wilderness. 19 He enabled the Israelites to conquer seven people groups who were then living in the region of Canaan. He gave their land to the Israelites to live in. 20 The Israelites spent about 450 years in Egypt and in the wilderness."

"After that, God chose people to serve as judges and as leaders to rule the Israelite people. The prophet Samuel was the last of these judges to rule them. 21 Then, while Samuel

was still their leader, the people demanded that he choose a king to rule them. So God chose Saul, the son of Kish from the tribe of Benjamin, to be their king. He ruled them for 40 years. 22 After God had rejected Saul from being king, he chose David to be their king. God said about him, 'I have seen that David, son of Jesse, is exactly the kind of man who desires what I desire. He will do everything that I want him to do.'"

23 "God brought one of David's descendants, Jesus, to us Israelite people to save us. This is what he had promised David and our other ancestors that he would do. 24 Before Jesus began his work, John the Baptizer preached to all of our Israelite people who came to him. He told them that they should turn away from their sinful behavior and ask God to forgive them. Then he would baptize them. 25 When John was about to finish the work that God gave him to do, he told the crowds, 'Do not think that I am the Messiah whom God promised to send, because I am not. But listen! The Messiah will soon come. He is so much greater than I am that I do not even deserve to be his slave and take the sandals off his feet.'"

26 "My fellow Israelites who are descendants of Abraham and you non-Jewish people who also worship God, please listen! God has told all of us how he saves people. 27 The people living in Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus. They heard someone read from the writings of the prophets *in their synagogues* on every Sabbath day. *But they did not understand what the prophets were saying.* And so what the prophets predicted long ago came true when they condemned Jesus to death. 28 *Many people accused Jesus of doing wicked things.* They could not prove that he had done anything for which he deserved to die. But they still demanded that Pilate, the governor, condemn him to death. 29 They did to Jesus all the things that the prophets had written long ago that people would do to him. *They killed Jesus by nailing him to a cross.* Then they took his body down from the cross and placed it in a tomb. 30 However, God brought him back to life after he was dead. 31 For many days he repeatedly appeared to his disciples who had come along with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. Those who saw him are telling the people about him now."

32 "Right now we are proclaiming this good news to you. God made a promise to our Jewish ancestors. 33 God has kept that promise for us who are their descendants, and also for you who are not Jews, by making Jesus alive again. It is just like what David wrote in the second Psalm*, when God was speaking about sending his Son*:

> 'You are my Son;
> today I have become your Father.'

34 God has made the Messiah alive after he was dead, and God will never let him die again. God promised that to the Messiah when he said in the Scriptures,

> 'I will certainly help you, as I promised David that I would do.' 35 That is why, in another psalm, David also says:
> 'You, God, will not allow the body of your Messiah to decay.' 36 While David was living, he did what God wanted him to do. Then when he died his body was buried where his ancestors' bodies had been buried. Then David's body decayed. *So he could not have been speaking about himself in this psalm.* 37 But God made Jesus alive again after he died, and his body did not decay."

38 "So, fellow Israelites and other friends, we want you to know that God is promising to forgive your sins as a result of what Jesus has done. You could not become right with God by obeying the laws that Moses wrote because there were many laws that you were not able to obey. 39 But now God declares that all people who believe in Jesus are no longer guilty of any of the things that they have done that have displeased him. 40 So then be careful that God does not judge you, as the prophets said that God would do! 41 *God said through the prophet Habakkuk,*

> 'You who ridicule me, observe carefully what I am doing. You will certainly be amazed. Then you will die. You will be amazed because I plan to do something *terrible* while you are living. You would not believe that I would do that even if someone told you!'"

42 After Paul finished speaking, and as he and Barnabas were going away, many of the people there asked them to return on the next Sabbath and speak to them about these things again. 43 When the meeting was over, many people became disciples of Jesus, as Paul and Barnabas had encouraged them to do. These people were both Jews and non-Jews who worshiped God. Paul and Barnabas continued talking to them. They urged them to continue to trust that God kindly forgives people's sins because of what Jesus did.

44 On the next Sabbath day, most of the people in Antioch came to the Jewish meeting place to hear Paul and Barnabas speak about Jesus. 45 The leaders of the Jews saw the large crowds of people that were coming to hear Paul and Barnabas. This made them extremely jealous. So they began to contradict the things that Paul was saying. They also insulted him. 46 Then, speaking very boldly, Paul and Barnabas said to those Jewish leaders, "We had to speak the message from God about Jesus to you Jews first before we proclaim it to non-Jews, because God commanded us to do that. But you are rejecting God's message. By doing that, you have shown that you are not worthy of everlasting life. Therefore, we are leaving you, and now we will go to the non-Jewish people to tell them the message from God. 47 We are doing this because the Lord God has commanded us to do it. *He said in the Scriptures,* 'I have chosen you to reveal things about me to non-Jewish people that will be like a light to them. I have chosen you to tell people everywhere in the world the message that I want to save them.'"

48 When the non-Jewish people heard those words, they rejoiced. They praised God for the message about Jesus. All of the non-Jewish people whom God had chosen for everlasting life put their trust in Jesus. 49 At that time, many of the believers traveled around throughout that region, spreading the message about the Lord Jesus everywhere they went.

50 However, some leaders of the Jews talked to some important women who worshiped with them. They also talked to the most important men in the city. The Jewish leaders persuaded the non-Jewish city leaders to try to stop Paul

and Barnabas. So those non-Jewish people led many citizens against Paul and Barnabas, and they made them leave their region. 51 As the two apostles were leaving, they shook the dust off their feet. This was to show those leaders that God had rejected them and would punish them. Then they left the city of Antioch and went to the city of Iconium. 52 Meanwhile, the people in Antioch who had believed in Jesus were very happy and the Holy Spirit was helping them greatly.

14 At Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish meeting place. There they spoke very powerfully about the Lord Jesus. As a result, very many Jews and non-Jews believed in Jesus. 2 But some of the Jews refused to believe that message. They made some of the non-Jews angry and bitter toward the people who had put their trust in Jesus. 3 But Paul and Barnabas spent a long time there speaking boldly about Jesus. Jesus enabled them to do many miracles. In this way, he showed people the truth of the message that God saves us even though we do not deserve it.

4 The people who lived in Iconium had two different opinions. Some agreed with the Jews. Others agreed with Paul and Barnabas. 5 Then the non-Jewish people and the Jews who opposed Paul and Barnabas talked among themselves about how they could mistreat Paul and Barnabas. Some of the important men in that city agreed to help them. Together, they decided that they would kill Paul and Barnabas by throwing stones at them. 6 But Paul and Barnabas heard about their plan. They quickly went away to the district of Lycaonia. They went to the cities of Lystra and Derbe in that district and to the surrounding area. 7 While they were in that area, they continually told the people the good news about Jesus.

8 In Lystra, they saw a man who was sitting down because he was crippled in his legs. When his mother gave birth to him, he had crippled legs, so he had never been able to walk. 9 He listened as Paul was speaking about Jesus. Paul looked directly at him and could see in the man's face that he believed that Jesus could make him well. 10 So Paul shouted out to him, "Stand up straight!" When the man heard that, his legs became strong. He immediately jumped up and began to walk around.

11 When the crowd saw Paul heal the crippled man, *this made them think that Paul and Barnabas were the gods that they worshiped. So* they shouted excitedly in their own Lycaonian language, "Look! The gods have made themselves look like people and they have come down from the sky to help us!" 12 They began to say that Barnabas was probably the chief god, whose name was Zeus. And they began to say that Paul was Hermes, the messenger for the other gods. They believed this because Paul was the one who had been speaking. 13 People worshiped Zeus at a temple just outside the gates of the city. The priest who was there heard what Paul and Barnabas had done, so he came to the city gate, where many people had already gathered. He brought bulls with wreaths of flowers around their necks. The priest and the crowd of people wanted to kill the bulls as part of a ceremony to worship Paul and Barnabas. 14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard about that, they were very upset. They tore their own clothes *to show that they did not want the people to sacrifice to them*. They rushed among the people, shouting, 15 "People of Lystra, you must not kill those bulls to worship us! We are not gods! We are human beings who are just the same as you! We have come to tell you some good news about the one true God. You can stop worshiping other so-called gods, because they cannot help you. This true God made the sky, the land, the oceans, and everything that lives in them. 16 In the past, God allowed the non-Jewish people groups to worship whatever gods they wanted to worship. 17 Even so, God showed you non-Jewish people that he is a good God. He sent rain to make your crops grow. He gave you plenty of food so that you could enjoy your lives." 18 Paul and Barnabas said all these things to the people. Even so, it was very difficult for them to keep the people from sacrificing those bulls to worship them.

19 Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and convinced many of the people of Lystra that Paul had not been telling them the truth. *The people who believed what those Jews said became angry with Paul.* They let those Jews throw stones at him until he fell to the ground. They all thought that he was dead, so they dragged him outside the city and left him lying there. 20 But some of the believers in Lystra came and stood around Paul, where he was lying on the ground. Suddenly Paul stood up! He went back into the city with the believers.

The next day, Paul and Barnabas left the city of Lystra and traveled to the city of Derbe. 21 In the city of Derbe they spent several days telling the people about Jesus. Many people there became believers. After that, Paul and Barnabas started on their way back home. They went again to Lystra. Then they went from there to Iconium. Then they went to the city of Antioch in the province of Pisidia. 22 In each place, they urged the believers to keep trusting Jesus. They told the believers, "We suffer many hardships in this world when we are allowing God to rule over us." 23 Paul and Barnabas chose leaders for each congregation. Before they left each place, they gathered the believers together and spent some time praying and fasting. Then they entrusted the leaders and other believers to Jesus, in whom they had believed, in order that he would care for them.

24 After Paul and Barnabas had traveled through the district of Pisidia, they went south to the district of Pamphylia. 25 In that district, they arrived at the town of Perga. They preached God's message about Jesus to the people there. Then they went down to the seacoast at the town of Attalia. 26 There they got on a ship and went back to the city of Antioch in the province of Syria. The people there had chosen Paul and Barnabas to go to other places and preach. That was where the believers had asked God to help Paul and Barnabas do the work that they had now completed. 27 When they arrived in the city of Antioch, they called the believers together. Then Paul and Barnabas told them all that God had helped them to do. Specifically, they told them how God had enabled many non-Jewish people to believe in Jesus. 28 Then Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch with the other believers for a long time.

15 But then some Jewish believers from the province of Judea arrived in Antioch. They started telling the non-Jewish believers there, "You must receive circumcision *to show that you belong to God*, as Moses commanded in the laws that he received from God. If you do not do that, God will not save you." 2 Paul and Barnabas had a big argument with those Jews. *They could not settle their disagreement,* so the believers at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas and some of the

other believers to Jerusalem. That way they could discuss this issue with the apostles and other leaders there.

3 After the believers in Antioch had sent Paul, Barnabas, and the others on their way, they traveled through the provinces of Phoenicia and Samaria. When they stopped at different places along the way, they told the believers in those places that many non-Jews were putting their trust in Jesus. When the believers heard this, they rejoiced greatly. 4 When Paul, Barnabas, and the others arrived in Jerusalem, the apostles, elders, and other believers there welcomed them. Then Paul and Barnabas reported the things that God had enabled them to do *among non-Jewish people*.

5 But some of the Jewish believers who were Pharisees stood up *to get the attention of the other believers*. They said to them, "The non-Jews who have believed in Jesus must receive circumcision. We must also tell them to obey the laws that God gave to Moses."

6 Then the apostles and the elders met together in order to talk about this issue. 7 After they had discussed it for a long time, Peter stood up *to get everyone's attention*. He said to them, "Fellow believers, you all know that a long time ago God chose me from among you *other apostles* for an important task. He wanted me to tell the non-Jewish people the good news about Jesus. God wanted them to believe in him. 8 God knows what every person is truly like. He showed me and others that he had accepted the non-Jews as his people. He did that by giving the Holy Spirit to them just as *he gave the Holy Spirit* to us. 9 God treated them in the same way that he treated us. He forgave their sins because they trusted in Jesus. 10 Listen carefully! God has shown what he wants, so you should not be trying to promote something else. You should not be trying to force non-Jewish believers to obey our Jewish laws! That would be like putting a heavy burden on them. Our ancestors were not able to obey those laws. We Jews today have not been able to obey them either. 11 We are confident that God saves us Jews from our sins because of what the Lord Jesus did for us. And we are confident that God will save in the same way those non-Jews who believe in Jesus."

12 After Peter had spoken, Barnabas and Paul told about the many great miracles that God had enabled them to do among the non-Jewish people. *The miracles showed that God had accepted these non-Jews.* The people who heard Barnabas and Paul tell about these miracles were so fascinated that all they did was listen. None of them said anything.

13 When Barnabas and Paul had finished speaking, James, the leader of the group of believers in Jerusalem, spoke to everyone. He said, "Fellow believers, listen to me. 14 Simon Peter has told you how God previously showed that he cared about the non-Jews. God did that by choosing from among them a group of people who would belong to him. 15 What God said long ago, as we can read in the writings of one of the prophets, agrees with that:

16 Later on, I will help the Israelites again. I will restore the
kingdom of David that has been conquered
and destroyed. *I will do that by making*
one of the descendants of David the king of
Israel again. It will be as if I was rebuilding
a house after it had been torn down.
17 I will do this so that the rest of the people in the world
will want me to be their Lord. This will
include even the non-Jewish people whom I
have chosen to belong to me. You can be
certain that this will happen because I, the
Lord God, have said that I will do it.
18 I told my people long ago that I would do this."

19 James continued to speak. He said, "Therefore I think that we should not tell the non-Jewish people who are becoming disciples of Jesus that they have to obey all of our Jewish laws and rituals. 20 Instead, we should write a letter to them about only a few things. They should not eat meat that people have offered to idols. They should not have sexual relations with someone to whom they are not married. They should not eat meat from animals that people have strangled to kill them for butchering. They should not eat or drink any blood. 21 *We should tell the Gentiles not to do these things because they would be very offensive to Jews. The laws that Moses wrote forbid these things. Jews would expect Gentiles to know that God would not want them to do these things because* people read those laws aloud in the Jewish meeting places on every Sabbath day. They have done this in cities in many different places for a very long time."

22 The apostles and the elders, along with all the other believers in Jerusalem, agreed with what James said. So they decided that they should choose men from the church in Jerusalem and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Those men would let the believers there know what the leaders at Jerusalem had decided. So they chose Judas the son of Sabbas and Silas. These were both leaders of the believers at Jerusalem. 23 They wrote the following letter, which they asked Judas and Silas to take to the believers at Antioch:

"We apostles and elders who are your fellow believers
send our greetings to you. We are writing
this to you non-Jewish believers who live
in the city of Antioch and other places in
the provinces of Syria and Cilicia.
24 We have heard that some men from our church came to
you and taught you things that were different
from what you learned when you first believed
in Jesus. We have heard that what they told
you made you upset. We want you to know
that we did not send these men to you.
25 We met together and we all agreed that it would be
good to choose some men and ask them to
go to you. We are sending them along with
Barnabas and Paul, whom we love very much.
26 Those two have put their lives in danger because they
serve our Lord Jesus the Messiah.
27 We have also sent Judas and Silas to you. They will tell
you the same things that we are writing.
28 We believe that the Holy Spirit has shown us that we
should not require you to obey all of the
Jewish laws. That would be difficult and
unnecessary. Instead, we only require you to
obey the following instructions:
29 You should not eat food that people have
sacrificed to idols.

You should not eat or drink any blood.
You should not eat meat from animals that people
have killed by strangling them.
You should not have sexual relations with someone
to whom you are not married.

If you avoid doing these things, you will be doing what is right. We wish you well."

30 Then the apostles and elders sent Barnabas, Paul, Judas, and Silas on their way. They traveled from the city of Jerusalem to the city of Antioch. They assembled the believers there and read the letter to them. 31 When the believers there read the letter, they were glad, because its message encouraged them. 32 Judas and Silas were prophets. They said many things to encourage the Gentile believers. They helped them to trust in Jesus even more.

33 Judas and Silas stayed in Antioch for a long time. Then, when they were ready to return to Jerusalem, the believers at Antioch wished them well and they left. 34 [a] [But Silas thought it would be best for them to stay there. So Judas went back to Jerusalem alone.] 35 However, Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch. There they and many others taught the believers and shared the good news about Jesus.

36 After a while Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in every city where we previously proclaimed the good news about Jesus. That way we can find out how well they are continuing to believe in and obey Jesus." 37 *Barnabas agreed that it would be good to go back and visit these believers.* But Barnabas said that he wanted to take John, whose other name was Mark, along with them again. 38 However, Paul told Barnabas that he thought it was a bad idea to take Mark with them. Paul said this because Mark had left them when they were previously in the region of Pamphylia. Mark had not continued to work with them. 39 Paul and Barnabas strongly disagreed with each other about whether they should bring John Mark with them. So they separated from each other. Barnabas went on a journey of his own and took Mark with him. They sailed on a ship to the island of Cyprus. 40 Paul decided to travel with Silas. The believers in Antioch asked God graciously to help them. Then Paul and Silas departed from Antioch. 41 Paul traveled *with Silas* through the provinces of Syria and Cilicia. In those places, they helped the groups of believers to trust in Jesus even more.

16 Paul and Silas went to the cities of Derbe and Lystra and visited the believers there. Now a believer whose name was Timothy lived in Lystra. His mother was a Jewish woman who believed in Jesus. His father, however, was a Greek man. *Because this man was not Jewish, he did not observe the law of Moses*. 2 The believers in Lystra and Iconium said good things about Timothy. 3 Paul wanted to take Timothy with him when he went to other places, so he arranged for someone to circumcise Timothy. Paul did that so that the Jews who lived in those other places would accept Timothy. Those Jews knew that Timothy's non-Jewish father would not have circumcised him.

4 So Timothy went with Paul and Silas, and they traveled to many other towns. In each town they encouraged the believers to do what the apostles and elders in Jerusalem had told them to do.

5 They helped the believers in those towns to trust Jesus even more. More people became believers every day.

6 Paul and his companions wanted to share the good news about Jesus in the province of Asia. But the Holy Spirit showed them that he did not want them to do that. So they went instead through the regions of Phrygia and Galatia*, trying to discover where the Holy Spirit wanted them to share the good news*. 7 They arrived at the border of the province of Mysia. From there they wanted to go north into the province of Bithynia. But once again the Holy Spirit showed them that he did not want them to share the good news there. 8 So they went through the province of Mysia and arrived at Troas*, a city by the sea*. 9 That night God gave Paul a vision in which he saw a man from the province of Macedonia. That man was begging Paul, "Come across the sea to Macedonia and help us!" 10 *I, Luke, joined Paul and his companions in Troas.* After Paul saw that vision, we made arrangements right away to travel to Macedonia. We were certain that God had called us to share the good news about Jesus with the people there.

11 We got on a boat and sailed from Troas right to the island of Samothrace. The next day we sailed to the city of Neapolis. 12 Then we left Neapolis and went to Philippi. It was a very important city in the province of Macedonia. Many Roman citizens lived there. We decided to stay in Philippi for a while.

13 On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate and walked down to the river. *Since there was no synagogue in the city,* we knew that Jewish people would gather to pray at a place like that. When we arrived, we saw some women who had gathered to pray. So we sat down and began to tell them about Jesus. 14 A woman whose name was Lydia was one of the women who was listening to Paul. She was from the city of Thyatira, She was a merchant who sold luxurious purple cloth. She believed in the God of Israel and worshiped him. The Lord God enabled her to understand what Paul was saying*, and she trusted in Jesus*. 15 Paul baptized Lydia and the others who lived in her house. Then she said to us, "If you recognize that I believe sincerely in Jesus, please come to my house and stay there." So we accepted her invitation and stayed at her house.

16 Another day, as we were going to the place where people gathered to pray, we met a young woman who was a slave. An evil spirit was giving her the power to tell what would happen to people in the future. People paid a lot of money to the men who were her owners so that she would tell them what was going to happen to them. 17 This young woman followed Paul and the rest of us everywhere we went. She was continually shouting, "These men serve the God who is the greatest of all gods! They are telling you how God can save you!" 18 She continued to do this for many days. Finally, Paul became so upset that he turned toward the young woman and spoke to the evil spirit that was in her. He said, "In the name of Jesus the Messiah, I command you to come out of her!" Immediately the evil spirit left her. 19 Then her owners realized that she could no longer predict what would happen to people. That meant she could no longer earn money for them. That made them very angry. They grabbed Paul and Silas and took them

[a] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 34 (See: Acts 15:40).

to the open area of the city where its rulers were *so that the rulers could judge them*. 20 The owners of the young woman brought them to the city rulers. They told them, "These men are Jews, and they are greatly troubling the people in our city. 21 They are teaching that we should do things that our Roman laws do not allow us to do!" 22 Many people in the crowd joined those who were accusing Paul and Silas. *This convinced the Roman rulers that they must be bad men.* So the rulers told soldiers to tear the shirts off Paul and Silas and beat them with wooden rods. 23 So the soldiers beat Paul and Silas badly with rods. After that, they took them and put them into the prison. They told the jailer to make sure they did not get out. 24 Because the officials had told him to do that, the jailer put Paul and Silas into the room that was farthest inside the prison. There he made them sit down on the floor and stretch out their legs. Then he fastened their ankles in holes between two large pieces of wood so that Paul and Silas could not move their legs.

25 About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and praising God by singing songs. The other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was a very strong earthquake that shook the whole jail. As soon as the earthquake struck, it caused all of the doors of the jail to open and all of the chains that fastened the prisoners to fall off. 27 The jailer woke up and saw that the earthquake had opened the doors of the jail. He thought that the prisoners had left the jail. So he pulled out his sword to kill himself*, because he knew that the city rulers would kill him if the prisoners had escaped*. 28 Paul saw the jailer and shouted to him, "Do not kill yourself! We prisoners are all here!" 29 The jailer shouted to someone to bring torches. *It was midnight and dark, and he wanted to be sure that all the prisoners were still in the prison*. He hurried in *to the inner cell where he had put Paul and Silas*. The jailer was shaking with fear*, because the rulers had told him to guard them carefully. When he saw that Paul and Silas were still there,* he knelt down in front of them to honor them *for sparing his life by not escaping*. 30 Then he brought Paul and Silas out of the jail. He asked them, "Sirs, I want God to save me. What do I need to do?" 31 They answered, "If you put your trust in Jesus as your Lord, God will save you. God will also save everyone in your family if they trust in Jesus."

32 Then Paul and Silas spoke about Jesus to him and everyone in his family. 33 The jailer washed their wounds, even though it was the middle of the night. Then right away Paul and Silas baptized him and everyone in his family. 34 Then the jailer brought Paul and Silas into his house and gave them some food to eat. He and his whole family were all very happy because they had believed in God.

35 The next morning, the city rulers told some officers to go to the prison and tell the jailer, "Let those two prisoners go now!" 36 When the jailer heard this, he went and told Paul, "The city rulers have told me to let you go. So you two can leave the prison now. Do not worry, no one will arrest you again." 37 But Paul said to the jailer, with the officers listening, "The city rulers had their soldiers beat us in front of a crowd. Without convicting us of any crime, they put us in prison. They did those things to us even though we are Roman citizens. And now they want to send us away without telling anyone! We will not accept that! Those city rulers must come themselves and free us from prison." 38 So the officers went and told the city rulers that Paul and Silas were refusing to leave the prison unless the rulers came and released them personally. When the city rulers learned that they were Roman citizens, they became very afraid. *They knew that they had done the wrong thing by beating Roman citizens and putting them in prison without a trial.* 39 So the city rulers came to Paul and Silas and told them that they were sorry for what they had done to them. The city rulers brought them out of the prison and asked them to leave the city. 40 After Paul and Silas left the prison, they went to Lydia's house. There they met with her and the other believers. They encouraged the believers to continue trusting in the Lord Jesus. Then Paul, Silas, and Timothy left the city of Philippi. *I, Luke, remained there for some time.*

17 Paul, Silas, and Timothy traveled through the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia. Then they came to the city of Thessalonica. There was a Jewish meeting place there. 2 On the Sabbath day, Paul went to the meeting place as he usually did. For three weeks he went there on each Sabbath day. He proved to the people from the Scriptures *that Jesus was the Messiah*. 3 Paul showed very clearly that in the Scriptures the prophets wrote that the Messiah would have to die but then become alive again. He said, "I am telling you about Jesus. This man is the Messiah." 4 Some of the Jews in the synagogue believed what Paul said about Jesus. They began to meet with Paul and Silas. Many non-Jewish people who worshiped God and many influential women also believed the message about Jesus. They too began to meet with Paul and Silas.

5 But some leaders of the Jews became jealous *because so many people were believing what Paul taught*. So they went to the open area of the city and found some bad men to help them. They used those men to gather a crowd and cause a great disturbance in the city. The crowd ran to the house of a man named Jason, where they thought Paul and Silas were staying. They wanted to bring Paul and Silas outside to where the crowd of people was. 6 They discovered that Paul and Silas were not at the house. However, they found Jason and dragged him and some of the other believers who were with him to where the city rulers were. They told the rulers, "These men who have been disturbing the way that people live have now come here also, 7 and this man Jason has invited them to stay at his house. These other men whom we have brought to you are also friendly with them. They are all disloyal to Caesar our king. They say that another person, whose name is Jesus, is the real king!" 8 When the city rulers and the crowd of people that had gathered heard that, they became very upset. 9 The city rulers made Jason and the other believers pay a fine. *But they told them that they would give the money back to them if Paul and Silas did not cause any more trouble.* Then the city rulers let Jason and the other believers go.

10 So that same night, the believers sent Paul and Silas out of Thessalonica to the town of Berea. When Paul and Silas arrived there, they went to the Jewish meeting place. 11 Most of the Jews in Thessalonica had not been willing to listen to God's message. But the Jews who lived in Berea were very willing to listen. They listened carefully to the message about Jesus. Every day they read the Scriptures for themselves to find out whether what Paul said about Jesus was true. 12 Because of Paul's teaching, many of the Jewish people believed in Jesus,

and also some of the important non-Jewish women and many non-Jewish men believed in him.

13 But then the Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul was in Berea preaching the message from God about Jesus. So they went to Berea and said things to the people there that made them very angry with Paul. 14 So right away some of the believers in Berea took Paul to the seacoast to go to another city. But Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. 15 When Paul and the men who were taking him arrived at the coast, they got on a boat and went to the city of Athens. Then Paul said to the men who had come with him, "Tell Silas and Timothy to come to me here in Athens as soon as they can." Then those men left Athens and returned to Berea.

16 In Athens, Paul waited for Silas and Timothy to come. In the meantime, he walked around in the city. He became very distressed because there were many idols in the city. 17 So Paul went to the Jewish meeting place and talked about Jesus with the Jews there. He also spoke with the Greeks who had accepted what Jews believe. He also went every day to the open area of the city and had conversations with the people he met there.

18 Paul met some teachers who liked to talk about what people believe. Some of them called themselves Epicureans, and others called themselves Stoics. They told Paul what they believed, and they asked him what he believed. Then some of them said to one another, "He really does not know what he is talking about." But others said, "He seems to be teaching a philosophy about some gods that we have never heard of." Those others said that because Paul was telling them that Jesus had died and then had become alive again*, and they thought that Resurrection was the name of a god*.

19 So they invited Paul to come with them to the place where the philosophers in the city met. They told Paul, "Please come with us, because we would like to know what this new message is that you are teaching people. 20 You are teaching us some things that we do not understand. We want to know what they mean." 21 The people of Athens and the people from other regions who had come to live there greatly enjoyed talking about new ideas.

22 The philosophers asked Paul to stand in the middle of their group. He did, and then he said, "People of Athens, I have seen many of the things you do, and I can tell how religious you are. 23 I say that because, while I was walking through your city, I saw the things that you worship, I even saw an altar on which someone had carved these words: THIS HONORS A GOD WHOM WE DO NOT KNOW. So now let me tell you about that God whom you worship but whom you do not know.

24 He is the God who made the world and everything in it. He rules over all beings in heaven and on earth. He does not live in temples that people have built. 25 He does not need to have people do anything for him. He is the one who makes people alive. He gives them everything they need.

26 In the beginning, God created one couple, and from them God produced all the people groups that now live everywhere on the earth. God determined where and when each people group would live. 27 He wanted people to realize that they need him. Then maybe they would look for him and find him. People will find God if they sincerely look for him, because he is very close to each one of us. 28 It is because of God that we live, move, and exist, as one of you has said, 'Because we are his children.'

29 Therefore, because we are God's children, we should not think that God is like an idol that a person would design and make out of gold, silver, or stone. 30 In the past, people did not know what God wanted them to do. So God did not punish them for what they did. But now God commands all people everywhere to stop doing wrong things. 31 God tells us that on a day that he has chosen, he is going to judge all of us justly. God will have Jesus, the man he has chosen, do the judging. God has made sure that we understand this by making Jesus alive again after he died."

32 When the philosophers heard Paul say that a man had become alive again after he had died, some of them laughed at him. But others asked him to come back and tell them about it another day. 33 After they said that, Paul walked away. 34 However, some of the people went with Paul and believed the message about Jesus. Among those who believed in Jesus was a man named Dionysius who was a member of the council. Also, there were a woman named Damaris and some other people with them who believed.

18 After that, Paul left the city of Athens and went to the city of Corinth. 2 In Corinth Paul met a Jew whose name was Aquila. He was from the region of Pontus. Aquila and his wife Priscilla had recently come from the city of Rome in Italy. They left Rome because Claudius, the Roman emperor, had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul introduced himself to Aquila and Priscilla. 3 Aquila and Priscilla made tents to earn money. Paul also made tents. So he stayed with them and they worked together. 4 Every Sabbath, Paul went to the Jewish meeting place. There he conversed with both Jews and non-Jews. He helped many of them to believe in Jesus.

5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from the region of Macedonia, Paul felt strongly that he should devote all of his time to proclaiming the good news. So he kept telling the Jews sincerely that Jesus was the Messiah. 6 But the Jews argued with Paul and said bad things about him. So he shook the dust off his clothes *to show that he wanted to have nothing to do with them any more*. He said to them, "If God punishes you, it is your responsibility! I have done everything I could to show you the truth! From now on I will talk to people who are not Jewish!" 7 So Paul left the Jewish meeting place and went into a house that was next to it, and he preached there. Titius Justus, the owner of the house, was a non-Jewish man who worshiped God. 8 After that, the ruler of the Jewish meeting place, whose name was Crispus, and all of his family believed in Jesus. Many other people in Corinth heard about Crispus and his family. They also believed in Jesus and Paul baptized them.

9 One night Paul had a vision in which Jesus spoke to him. He said, "Do not be afraid *of the people who are against you*. Keep telling people about me. 10 *You can keep speaking confidently* because I will help you. No one will be able to attack you and hurt you, because there are many people in this city who love me *and will defend you*." 11 So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half. He shared the good news about Jesus with the people there.

12 Then a man named Gallio became the Roman governor of the province of Achaia. The Jewish leaders *thought he would*

take their side so they got together and seized Paul. They brought
him to the governor and made accusations against him. 13 They
said, "This man is teaching people to worship God in ways
that Roman law does not permit." 14 Paul was about to say
something to defend himself. But Gallio said to the Jewish
leaders, "If this man had done something terribly wrong that
broke our Roman laws, naturally I would listen to what you
Jews want to tell me. 15 However, you are only complaining
about things that Paul has been saying. You are arguing about
who deserves what name. These are disputes about your own
Jewish laws. So you must settle this yourselves. These are not
the kind of things that deserve my attention!" 16 After Gallio
said that, he told some soldiers to make the Jewish leaders
leave the court. 17 But instead of leaving right away, the Jewish
leaders grabbed the man who was in charge of their synagogue.
His name was Sosthenes. They beat him right there in front of
the judge's seat *because they thought Paul had persuaded him to
believe in Jesus*. Gallio did nothing to stop them.

18 Paul stayed with the believers in Corinth for many more
days. Then he got on a ship with Priscilla and Aquila and
sailed for the province of Syria. *Paul left Silas and Timothy in
Corinth.* He got his hair cut off in Cenchrea because of a vow
that he had made. 19 They arrived at the city of Ephesus, and
Priscilla and Aquila stayed there.

Paul himself entered the Jewish meeting place and had
conversations with the Jews there about Jesus. 20 They asked
him to stay longer, but he told them that he could not stay.
21 But as Paul left, he told the Jews in Ephesus, "I promise that
I will come back if God wants me to." Then Paul got on a ship
and sailed away from Ephesus.

22 When the ship came to the city of Caesarea, Paul got off.
He went from there to Jerusalem and visited with the believers
there. Then he returned to the city of Antioch*, where he had
begun his trip*.

23 Paul remained for some time with the believers in Antioch.
Then he left and traveled to many cities in the regions of Galatia
and Phrygia. He helped the believers in each city to believe
more steadfastly in Jesus.

24 While Paul was going through Galatia and Phrygia, a
Jewish man named Apollos came to Ephesus. He was from the
city of Alexandria, and he spoke very well. He had carefully
studied the Scriptures. 25 Other believers had taught Apollos
how Jesus wanted people to live. He enthusiastically taught
those things correctly to the people in Ephesus. However, he
was not teaching everything about Jesus. He only knew that
John the Baptizer had said to repent and receive baptism to
get ready for Jesus the Messiah. 26 Apollos went to the Jewish
meeting place and told the people there the things he had
learned about Jesus. When Priscilla and Aquila heard what
he taught, they asked him to come to their home. There they
taught him more about Jesus.

27 When Apollos decided that he would like to go to the
region of Achaia, the believers in Ephesus told him that it
would be good for him to do that. So they wrote a letter to the
believers in Achaia saying that they should welcome Apollos.
After he got there, he did much to help those whom God had
kindly enabled to believe in Jesus. 28 The leaders of the Jews
were denying that Jesus was the Messiah. But as many other
people listened, Apollos showed convincingly that they were
wrong. He did that by proving from the Scriptures that Jesus
was the Messiah.

19 While Apollos was still in the city of Corinth, Paul
*finished visiting the churches in Phrygia and Galatia. Then
he* traveled through the province of Asia and came to the city
of Ephesus. There he met some people who said that they
were believers. 2 He asked them, "Did you receive the Holy
Spirit when you believed God's message?" They answered,
"No, we did not. We have not even heard that there is a
Holy Spirit." 3 So Paul asked, "So when someone baptized
you, what did you know?" They replied, "We believed what
John the Baptizer taught." 4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a
sign that people were giving up their evil thoughts and deeds
and wanting to obey God. But John also told people that the
Messiah would soon appear and that they should believe in
him. He was talking about Jesus." 5 When those men heard
that, they believed in Jesus as the Messiah. Paul then baptized
them because they believed. 6 After that, Paul placed his hands
on their heads one by one, and each of them received the Holy
Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave them power to speak in languages
that they had not learned. They also spoke messages that the
Holy Spirit gave them. 7 There were about 12 men whom Paul
baptized and who received the Holy Spirit.

8 For three months after that, Paul went to the Jewish
meeting place in Ephesus on each Sabbath and preached there.
He taught the people convincingly about how God should
rule their lives. 9 But some of the Jews would not believe the
message and did not want to hear it any more. In front of
everyone in the synagogue, they said bad things about believing
in Jesus. So Paul left them and took the believers with him to
meet every day in a large room where a man whose name was
Tyrannus usually taught people. 10 For two years Paul taught
people there. In this way, most of the Jews and non-Jews who
lived in the region of Asia heard the message about Jesus.

11 God also gave Paul the power to do great miracles. 12 If
those who were sick could not come to Paul, people would
take pieces of cloth that Paul had touched and place them on
the sick people. When they did this, the sick people would
become well and the evil spirits would leave them.

13 There were some Jews who traveled from place to place,
commanding the evil spirits in those places to depart from
people. Some of them tried to make evil spirits come out
of people by commanding them to leave by the authority of
Jesus. When those Jews were with a person who had an evil
spirit, one of them would say, "I command you to come out
by the authority of the man named Jesus whom Paul teaches
about!" 14 Specifically, there were seven men who were doing
this. They were the sons of a Jewish man named Sceva, who
was a chief priest. 15 *One day two of the sons of Sceva were in
the house of a man who had an evil spirit. They tried to make the
spirit come out. But it did not come out.* Instead, the evil spirit
said to them, "I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but no one has
given you authority to make me leave this man!" 16 *After the
evil spirit said that,* suddenly it made the man jump on them.
He knocked down these two sons of Sceva and hurt them. He
tore off their clothes and wounded them. They ran out of the
house *to save their lives*. 17 Soon people throughout Ephesus,
both Jews and non-Jews, heard what had happened. They

realized that they should regard Jesus with great awe, and they spoke of him very respectfully.

18 At that time, many people in the group of believers came to their leaders. While other believers were listening, they told about the evil things that they had been doing. 19 Now many of the believers had been sorcerers. They took their scrolls that told about spells and curses and burned them in a place where everyone could see them. The believers added up how much the scrolls were worth. They were worth 50,000 silver coins.

20 In this powerful way, many people heard the message about Jesus and believed in him.

21 And after all of this happened, the Holy Spirit led Paul to decide to go to Jerusalem. Paul planned to visit the believers in the regions of Macedonia and Achaia first. He said, "After I have been to Jerusalem, I must also go to Rome." 22 So Paul sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to the province of Macedonia. But he stayed for a while in the city of Ephesus in the province of Asia.

23 But soon after that, people in Ephesus began to make a great amount of trouble because of Jesus and the teaching about him. 24 This happened because of a man in Ephesus whose name was Demetrius. He was a craftsman who worked with silver metal. He made statues of the goddess Artemis out of silver. Demetrius paid a lot of money to the workers who made these idols.

25 Demetrius called together the craftsmen and the workers who made the idols. He said to them, "You all know that we make a lot of money doing our work. 26 But you know very well that Paul has led many people in Ephesus not to buy the statues that we make. In fact, the people from many other towns in our province no longer want to buy what we make. Paul tells people that the gods that we make are not gods *and that we should not worship them*. 27 *If people keep listening to Paul,* there is a risk that we will go out of business. Even worse, people will no longer come to the temple of our great goddess Artemis. They will not believe that she is worthy to worship. They will believe that she is not a goddess at all. Yet people throughout the province of Asia and even the whole world worship her!" 28 Then all the people there became very angry at Paul when they heard what Demetrius said. They began to shout, "The goddess Artemis of the Ephesians is great!" 29 This shouting made the people in the city very confused. They ran as a crowd to the city stadium *to try to find out what was happening*. Gaius and Aristarchus, two men from Macedonia who traveled with Paul, were out in the city. Some people took hold of them and dragged them to the stadium. 30 Now Paul wanted to go into the stadium to talk to the people. However, the other believers would not let him go there. 31 Also, some city rulers who were friends of Paul heard what was happening. They sent someone to warn Paul not to go into the theater.

32 In the stadium, the people were very confused. Because they were confused, some were shouting one thing while others were shouting something else. But most of them did not even know why they were all in the stadium! 33 Then some of the Jews in the stadium pushed a man whose name was Alexander to the front of the crowd so that he could speak to the people. Some of the others there told him how he could do that. So Alexander put his hands up to get the crowd to stop shouting. He wanted to tell them that the Jews had not caused the trouble. 34 But many of the non-Jewish people knew that Alexander was a Jew. *They knew that the Jews did not worship the goddess Artemis.* So for two hours the non-Jews shouted together, "Great is the goddess Artemis of the Ephesians!"

35 Then one of the city rulers made the crowd stop shouting. He said to them, "My fellow citizens, you do not need to be concerned about the worship of Artemis. People throughout the world know that our city of Ephesus is a special place where the goddess Artemis has her temple. Indeed, the sacred image of her fell down to us from heaven! 36 These are established facts. So you should be quiet now. Do not do anything foolish. 37 You should not have brought these two men here. They work together with Paul, but they have not done anything evil. They have not gone into our temples and taken things from there, and they have not spoken evil of our goddess. 38 If Demetrius and his fellow workmen want to accuse anyone of doing anything bad, they should do it in the right way. The courts are in session. There are judges present whom the government has appointed. They can present their case before the judges in court. 39 And if you are concerned about anything else, you should ask your rulers about it when those rulers meet together. 40 You should really not have rushed here shouting, because the Roman government may accuse us of having a riot today. If the rulers ask me what you were all shouting about, I will not know how to answer them. There was no good reason for it." 41 That is what the city ruler said to the crowd. Then he told them all to go home*, and they did go to their homes*.

20 Then, after the people at Ephesus had stopped rioting, Paul called the believers together. He urged them to continue to trust in the Lord Jesus. Soon after that, he told them goodbye and left to go to the region of Macedonia. 2 Then Paul traveled through Macedonia and said many things to encourage the believers there. Then he continued on to Greece. 3 Paul then stayed in Greece for three months. He planned to return to Syria by ship. But he heard that some of the Jews there were planning to kill him as he traveled. So he decided to travel by land. Once again he went through Macedonia. 4 Now the men who were going to travel with him to Jerusalem were Sopater, the son of Pyrrhus, from the town of Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus, who were from the city of Thessalonica; Gaius, who was from the city of Derbe; Timothy, who was from the region of Galatia; and Tychicus and Trophimus, who were from the province of Asia. 5 *I, Luke, joined Paul when he came back through the city of Philippi.* Now the other seven men sailed to the city of Troas before we did, so they waited there for the two of us. 6 But Paul and I stayed in the city of Philippi until the end of the festival when Jewish people eat bread without yeast. Then we got on a ship that was going to the city of Troas. After five days we arrived there and met the other men who had traveled ahead of us. We all stayed in Troas for seven days.

7 While we were in Troas, we gathered together on the first day of the week to share a meal with the other believers. *We met on that day because it was the day when Jesus became alive again after he died.* Paul was planning to leave Troas the next day, so when he spoke to the believers, he spoke for a long time. He kept speaking until midnight. 8 We had gathered in an upstairs room. Many oil lamps were burning there. 9 Now

a young man whose name was Eutychus was in the room. He was seated on the sill of an open window. As Paul continued talking for a long time, Eutychus became sleepier and sleepier. Finally, he was sound asleep. He slipped out of the window and fell three stories down to the ground. Some of the believers went down immediately and picked him up. But he was dead. 10 Paul also went down. He lay down and stretched out on top of the young man. He also put his arms around him. Then he said to the people who were standing around, "Do not worry, because he is alive again!" 11 Then Paul went back up to the room where he was meeting with the believers. They shared a meal together. Afterwards he talked at length with the believers, until the sun came up. Then he left. 12 Before Paul left, the believers brought the young man who had fallen out the window back to the meeting. Everyone there was extremely encouraged to see that he was alive again.

13 We then went to the ship. But Paul did not get on the ship with us in Troas, because he wanted to walk by himself to the town of Assos. So the rest of us got on the ship and sailed for Assos. We planned to bring Paul on board there. 14 And when we met Paul in Assos, he got on the ship with us and we sailed to the city of Mitylene. 15 The day after we reached Mitylene, we sailed from there and arrived at a place near the island of Chios. The day after that, we sailed to the island of Samos. The next day we left Samos and sailed to the city of Miletus. 16 Paul did not want to have a delay in Asia. So he had decided we should go to Miletus, south of Ephesus and past its harbor. He was trying to travel quickly because he wanted to arrive in Jerusalem, if possible, by the time of the Pentecost festival*, and it was almost time for that festival*.

17 So when the ship arrived at Miletus, Paul sent a messenger to Ephesus to ask the elders of the group of believers there to come to talk with him.

18 When the elders came to him, Paul said to them, "You know very well how I acted among you the entire time that I was with you, from the first day when I arrived here in the province of Asia *until the day I left*. 19 *You know how* I kept serving Jesus very humbly and how I sometimes wept. *You also know* how I suffered because the Jews who were not believers often tried to harm me. 20 *You also know* that*, when I preached God's message to you,* I never left out anything that would help you. *You know that* I taught you God's message when many people were present, and I also went to your homes and taught you there. 21 I preached both to Jews and to non-Jews. I told them all that they must stop their sinful behavior and start obeying God. They must believe in our Lord Jesus."

22 "And now, I want you to know, I am going to Jerusalem. I am going because the Holy Spirit has clearly shown me that I must go there, and I must obey him. I do not know exactly what will happen to me there. 23 But I do know that in each city I have visited, the Holy Spirit has told me that in Jerusalem people will put me in prison and will cause me to suffer. 24 But I do not care even if people kill me, so long as I am first able to finish the work that the Lord Jesus has told me to do. He told me to tell people the good news that God saves us by doing for us what we do not deserve. 25 I have preached to you the message that God is reigning as king. But now, I must tell you, I know that today is the last time that you fellow believers will ever see me. 26 So I want you all to understand right now that if anyone who has heard me preach dies without trusting in Jesus, it is not my fault, 27 After all, I have told you everything that God has revealed *about how he saves us*. 28 You leaders must continue to believe and obey God's message, and you must also help all the other believers to do the same. The Holy Spirit has given you the responsibility of caring for them. Jesus died on the cross to make those who believe in him his own special people. 29 I know very well that after I leave, people who teach lies will come among you and will do great harm to the believers 30 Even some leaders from your own group will start teaching believers the wrong things. They will teach those wrong things to try to get disciples of their own. 31 So be careful that all of you keep believing the true message about Jesus! Remember that throughout the three years I was with you, I warned each one of you consistently and very sincerely that you should stay faithful to Jesus."

32 "And now as I leave you, I ask God to protect you and help you to keep believing the message that he saves us by doing for us what we do not deserve. If you continue believing that message, it will make you strong, and God will give you the good things that he has promised to all of those who belong to him.

33 As for me, I never tried to get money or fine clothing from anyone. 34 You certainly know that I worked with my hands to earn the money that my helpers and I needed. 35 In everything that I did, I showed you that we should work hard in order to have enough money to give some to those who are needy. We should remember that our Lord Jesus himself said, 'A person is happier when he gives to others than when he receives from them.'"

36 When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of the elders and prayed. 37 They all cried a lot, and they hugged Paul and kissed him. 38 They were very sad because he had said that they would never see him again. Then they all went with him to the ship.

21 Then, after we said goodbye to the elders from Ephesus, we got back onto the ship and sailed directly to the island of Cos. *There the ship stopped for the night.* The next day we sailed in the ship from Cos to the island of Rhodes. *There the ship stopped again.* The day after that, we went to the town of Patara. *The ship was going no farther than that.* 2 *At Patara we left that ship,* but we learned that there was another ship that would be leaving soon and going to the region of Phoenicia. So we got on that ship, and it left. 3 Now as we traveled across the sea, we saw the island of Cyprus. We sailed to the south of that island. We continued sailing until we arrived at the city of Tyre in the province of Syria. The ship had to stay there for several days because its workers needed to unload the cargo.

4 But we learned where the believers in Tyre lived, so we went and stayed with them for seven days. God's Spirit revealed to some of the believers that Paul would suffer if he went to Jerusalem. So they encouraged Paul not to go there. 5 But when it was time for the ship to leave again, we prepared to continue on our way to Jerusalem. When we left Tyre, all the men and their wives and children went with us to the edge of the sea. We all knelt down there on the sand and prayed. 6 Then we all said goodbye to each other. We who were traveling with Paul got onto the ship with him, and the other believers returned to where they lived in Tyre.

7 After we left Tyre, we continued on that ship to the city of
Ptolemais. There were believers there, and we greeted them
and stayed with them that night. 8 Then, on the next day, we
left Ptolemais and sailed to the city of Caesarea. There we
went to visit Philip. He had a reputation for telling others how
to become disciples of Jesus. He was one of the seven men
whom the believers in Jerusalem had chosen to take care of
the widows. He invited us to stay in his home. 9 Now he had
four daughters who were not married. Each of them frequently
spoke messages that the Holy Spirit gave them.
10 And after we had been in Philip's house for several days,
a believer whose name was Agabus arrived in Caesarea from
the district of Judea. He frequently spoke messages that the
Holy Spirit gave him. 11 Coming over to where we were, he
removed the belt from Paul's waist. He tied his own feet and
hands with it. Then he said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'The Jewish
leaders in Jerusalem will tie up the hands and feet of the owner
of this belt like this. Then they will ask the non-Jewish people
to arrest him as a criminal.'" 12 When the rest of us heard
that, we and the other believers there pled with Paul, "Please
do not go up to Jerusalem!" 13 But Paul replied, "Please stop
crying and trying to discourage me from going! You should
not cry, because I am willing to go to prison and also to die in
Jerusalem because I serve the Lord Jesus." 14 Then we realized
that Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem. So we did not
try any longer to stop him. We said, "May the Lord's will be
done!"
15 Then, after those days in Caesarea, we prepared our
possessions and left to go by land to Jerusalem. 16 Now some
of the believers from Caesarea also went with us. They took
us to stay in the house of a man whose name was Mnason. He
was from the island of Cyprus. He had believed in Jesus when
people were first beginning to hear the message about him.
17 And when we arrived in Jerusalem, a group of the
believers greeted us happily. 18 Then, the next day, Paul and
the rest of us went to speak with James. *He was the main leader
of the group of believers in Jerusalem.* All of the other leaders
were also there. 19 So Paul greeted them, and then he told
them all of the things that God had enabled him to do among
the non-Jewish people. 20 And when they heard what God had
done, James and the other elders thanked God. Then one of
them said to Paul, "Brother, you know that there are very
many thousands of us Jewish people who have believed in
the Lord Jesus. You also know that we continue very carefully
to obey the laws that Moses gave us. 21 But people have told
our fellow Jewish believers that when you are with non-Jews,
you tell the Jewish believers who live among them that they
should stop obeying the laws of Moses. People say that you
tell those Jewish believers not to circumcise their sons and not
to practice our other customs. *We do not believe that they are
telling the truth about you.* 22 But our fellow Jewish believers
will surely learn that you have come here to Jerusalem. *They
will be angry with you because of what they have heard about
you.* So you need to do something to show them that what
they have heard about you is not true. 23 So please do what we
suggest to you. There are four men among us who have made
a vow to God. 24 Go with these men to the temple courts and
do the ceremonies that are necessary for you and for them to
be able to worship in the temple. Then, when it is time for
them to offer the sacrifices that they need to offer because they
have made these vows, pay for what they offer. After that,
they can shave their heads to show that they have done what
they promised God they would do. When people see you in
the courts of the temple with those men, they will know that
what people have told them about you is not true. Instead,
they will know that you obey all our Jewish laws. 25 Now as for
the non-Jewish believers, we elders here in Jerusalem talked
about which of our laws they should obey. We wrote them
a letter telling them what we decided. We wrote that they
should not eat meat that people have offered as a sacrifice to
any idol. They should not eat any blood. They should not eat
meat from animals that people have killed by strangling them.
We also told them that they should not have sexual relations
with someone to whom they are not married." 26 *Paul agreed
to do what James and the other leaders asked him to do.* The next
day he took the four men and together they did the ceremonies
that were necessary for them to worship in the temple. After
that, Paul went to the temple courts and told the priests that
these men had done everything they had promised God they
would do. He told the priests that they just needed to offer the
sacrifices that the law required. Paul kept going to the temple
courts with the men until each one of them had offered the
necessary sacrifices.
27 Now it took seven days for the ceremonies that allowed
the men to return to their regular lives after their vows. Near
the end of that time, some Jews from the province of Asia saw
Paul in the temple courtyard. They were very upset with him,
and they made many other Jews who were there upset with
Paul as well. The Jews from Asia grabbed on to Paul. 28 They
shouted, "Fellow Israelites, come and help us to punish this
man! This is the one who is teaching people wherever he goes
that the Jewish people are not special. He teaches people that
they should no longer obey the laws of Moses and that they do
not need to respect this temple. He has even brought non-Jews
here into the court of our temple, causing this holy place to
become polluted!" 29 They said these things because they had
seen Paul walking around in Jerusalem with Trophimus. He
was a non-Jew from Ephesus. *The Jews did not permit non-Jews
to be in certain parts of the temple courtyard.* These Jews from
the province of Asia thought that Paul had brought Trophimus
into the temple courtyard that day. 30 People all over the city
heard that there was trouble at the temple courtyard and they
came running there. The crowd seized Paul and dragged him
outside of the temple area. The temple guards quickly shut
the gates to the temple courtyard so that the people could not
do anything violent inside the temple area.
31 While they were trying to kill Paul, someone ran to the
fortress near the temple and told the Roman commander that
many people in Jerusalem were rioting at the temple. 32 The
commander quickly gathered some officers and a large group
of soldiers. They ran down the fortress steps to the temple area
where the crowd was. When the crowd of people who were
yelling at Paul and beating him saw the commander and the
soldiers coming, they stopped beating him.
33 Then the commander came to where Paul was and took
hold of him. He commanded soldiers to fasten a chain to
each of Paul's arms. Then he asked the people in the crowd,
"Who is this man, and what has he done?" 34 But some of the
many people there were shouting one thing and some were
shouting something else. And because the situation was so

confused, the commander could not find out who Paul was. So he commanded that Paul be taken into the fortress that was connected with the temple court so that he could question him there. 35 The soldiers led Paul to the steps of the fortress. But many people followed them, still trying to kill Paul. So the commander told the soldiers to carry Paul up the steps into the fortress. 36 The commander knew that Paul was in danger because the crowd that was following the soldiers kept shouting, "Kill him! Kill him!"

37 And as the soldiers were about to bring Paul into the fortress, he said *in Greek* to the commander, "May I speak with you?" And the commander said, "I am surprised that you can speak Greek! 38 That must mean that you are that man from Egypt who rebelled against the Roman government not long ago. He took 4,000 violent men with him out into the desert *so that we could not catch him*." 39 Paul said in reply, "I am a Jew. I was born in Tarsus, which is an important city in the province of Cilicia. I request that you let me speak to the people." 40 Then the commander permitted Paul to speak. So Paul stood on the steps that led up to the fortress. He motioned with his hand for the crowd to be quiet. And after the people in the crowd became very quiet, Paul spoke to them in their own Hebrew language.

22 Paul said, "Jewish elders and my fellow Jews, please listen to me now while I answer your accusations." 2 When the crowd of people heard Paul speaking to them in their own Hebrew language, they became even quieter and listened. Then Paul said to them, 3 "I am a Jew, as are all of you. I come from the city of Tarsus in the province of Cilicia, but I grew up here in Jerusalem. When I was young, I learned the laws that Moses gave to our ancestors. Gamaliel was my teacher, and he taught me very accurately. I have obeyed those laws because I have wanted to obey God. I am sure that all of you here also obey those laws. 4 That is why I tried to arrest those who believed the message of God about Jesus. I even looked for ways to kill them. Whenever I found men or women who believed the message, I arrested them and had the authorities put them in jail. 5 The high priest knows this, and so do the other men who belong to our Jewish council. They gave me letters to take to their fellow Jews in the city of Damascus. Those letters gave me the power to go there and arrest people in that city *who believed in Jesus*. I could then take them as prisoners to Jerusalem so that the Jewish authorities could punish them.

6 So I went to Damascus. About noon, as I got near to Damascus, suddenly a bright light from the sky flashed all around me. 7 *The light was so bright that* I fell to the ground. Then I heard the voice of someone speaking to me *from up in the sky*. It said, 'Saul! Saul! Stop doing things to hurt me!' 8 And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' He replied, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, the one you are hurting.' 9 Now the men who were traveling with me saw the bright light, but they did not understand what the voice was saying to me. 10 Then I asked, 'Lord, what do you want me to do?' And the Lord told me, 'Get up and go into Damascus. A man there will tell you all that I have planned for you to do.' 11 After that, I could not see, because that bright light had caused me to become blind. So the men who were with me took me by the hand and led me to Damascus. 12 Then a man whose name was Ananias came to see me. He was a man who honored God and obeyed the Jewish laws. The Jews living in Damascus said very good things about him. 13 He came and stood beside me. He said to me, 'Saul, my friend, see again!' Instantly I could see and I saw him standing beside me. 14 Then he said: 'The God whom we worship and whom our ancestors worshiped has chosen you for a special purpose. He will show you what he wants you to do. He has allowed you to see Jesus the Messiah, *gloriously alive again*. You have heard him speak to you himself. 15 He wants you to tell people everywhere what you have seen and heard from him. 16 So please do not delay! Let me baptize you right now. Pray to the Lord Jesus and ask God to forgive you for your sins!'"

17 "Then later I returned to Jerusalem. One day I went to the temple courtyard and while I was praying there, I saw a vision. 18 In my vision I saw Jesus as he said to me, 'Leave Jerusalem quickly, because the people here will not believe what you tell them about me!' 19 But I said to him, 'Lord, they know that I went from one synagogue to another looking for people who believed in you. I was putting them in jail, and I was even beating them. 20 They remember that when people killed Stephen because he said you were the Messiah, I stood there watching and approving of what they were doing. I even guarded the outer clothes that those who were murdering him had thrown aside!' 21 But Jesus said to me, 'Leave Jerusalem, because I am going to send you far away from here to tell non-Jews about me!'"

22 The people listened to what Paul was saying until he talked about Jesus sending him to non-Jews. Then they began shouting, "Kill him! A man like him does not deserve to live any longer!" 23 And while they were shouting, they took off their robes and threw dirt into the air. 24 So the commander told his soldiers to take Paul into the fortress. He told them to whip Paul to make him admit what he had done that had made the Jews so angry with him. 25 Then they stretched his arms out and tied them so that they could whip him on his back. But Paul said to the officer near him, "You will be acting unlawfully if you whip me. I am a Roman citizen, and no one has declared me guilty of anything!" 26 When the officer heard that, he went to the commander and reported it to him. He said to the commander, "This man is a Roman citizen! Surely you would not command us to whip him!" 27 *The commander was surprised when he heard that.* He went into the prison and said to Paul, "Tell me, are you really a Roman citizen?" Paul answered, "Yes, I am." 28 Then the commander said, "I too am a Roman citizen. I paid a lot of money to become a Roman citizen." But Paul said, "I have been a Roman citizen for my whole life." 29 The soldiers were about to whip Paul and to ask him questions about what he had done. But when they heard what Paul said, they immediately backed away from him. The commander also became afraid. He knew that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had broken the law when he commanded the soldiers to tie up Paul's hands.

30 The commander still wanted to know for sure why the Jews were accusing Paul. So the next day he told the soldiers to take the chains off Paul. He also called the chief priests and the other council members to meet. Then he brought Paul down the stairway to the temple courts. He took him to where the council was meeting and told him to stand in front of them.

23 So Paul looked at the Jewish council members and said, “My fellow Jews, throughout my life I have lived respecting our God. I do not know of anything that I have done that I knew was wrong.” 2 When Ananias the high priest heard what Paul said, he told the men who were standing near Paul to hit him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to Ananias, “God will punish you for that, you hypocrite! You sit there and judge me, using the laws that God gave Moses. But you yourself disobey those laws! You commanded those men to strike me without proving that I have done anything wrong!” 4 But the men who were standing near Paul said to him, “You should not speak badly to God’s high priest!” 5 Paul replied, “My fellow Jews, *I am sorry that I said that.* I did not know that the man who told one of you to hit me was the high priest. *If I had known that, I would not have talked badly about him.* I know that we can read in the Law of Moses, ‘Do not speak badly about any of your leaders.’”

6 Now Paul knew that some of the council members were Sadducees and others were Pharisees. So he called out in the council hall, “My fellow Jews, I am a Pharisee. My ancestors have been Pharisees as well. You have put me on trial here because I am sure that one day God will cause those who have died to live again.” 7 And when he said that, the Pharisees and Sadducees started to argue with one another *about whether people who have died will become alive again*. The two groups strongly disagreed with each other. 8 They disagreed so strongly because Sadducees do not believe that after people die, they will become alive again. They also do not believe that there are angels or other kinds of spirits. But Pharisees do believe those things. 9 Then both groups started shouting at one another as they argued. Some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up. One of them insisted, “We think that this man has done nothing wrong. We believe that an angel or some other spirit spoke to him. *So we must all agree that he is innocent!*” 10 Then the Pharisees and Sadducees became very violent with one another. The commander became concerned that they would hurt Paul badly. So he told soldiers to come down from the fortress into the temple courtyard. He told them to take Paul away from the council members and bring him up into the barracks.

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

12 The next morning some of the Jews who hated Paul met and talked about how to kill him. To make sure that they killed him, they all promised that they would not eat or drink anything before they had killed Paul. They asked God to kill them if they did not do what they promised. 13 Now there were more than 40 men who agreed to kill Paul. 14 They went to the chief priests and Jewish elders and told them, “God has heard us promise that we will not eat or drink anything before we have killed Paul. 15 So to help us, we request that you go to the commander and ask him, on behalf of the whole Jewish council, to bring Paul down from the fortress to meet with you again. Tell the commander that you want to talk to Paul some more. We will be waiting to kill Paul while he is on the way here.”

16 But the son of Paul’s sister heard what they were planning to do, so he went into the fortress and told Paul. 17 When Paul heard about the plan to kill him, he called one of the officers and said to him, “Please take this young man to the commander. He needs to tell him something.” 18 So the officer took Paul’s nephew to the commander. The officer told the commander, “Paul, whom we are guarding here, asked to speak with me. He said, ‘Please take this young man to the commander, because he needs to tell him something important.’” 19 So the commander took Paul’s nephew by the hand and led him off by himself. Then he asked him, “What do you have to tell me?” 20 Then Paul’s nephew replied, “There are some Jews who are going to ask you tomorrow to bring Paul down from the fortress to meet with their council again. They will say that they want to ask him some more questions. *But that is not true.* 21 So do not do what they ask you to do. There are actually more than 40 Jewish men who will be hiding and waiting to kill Paul when he passes by on his way to the council. They have even promised God that they will not eat or drink anything until they have killed Paul. They are ready to do it. They are just waiting for you to agree to do what they are asking.” 22 The commander warned Paul’s nephew, “Do not tell anyone that you have told me about their plan.” Then he sent him away.

23 Then the commander called two of his officers and told them, “Get a group of 200 soldiers ready to travel. Take along 70 soldiers riding horses and 200 other soldiers carrying spears. All of you must be ready to leave at nine o’clock tonight and go to the city of Caesarea. 24 Take along horses for Paul to ride, and escort him to the palace of Governor Felix.” 25 Then the commander wrote a letter to send to the governor. This is what he wrote: 26 “Your Excellency, Governor Felix, this is Claudius Lysias writing to you. I send you my greetings. 27 I am sending you a man whose name is Paul. Certain Jews had seized him and were about to kill him. But I learned that he was a Roman citizen, so I and my soldiers went and rescued him. 28 I wanted to know what those Jews were saying that he had done wrong, so I took him to their Jewish council. 29 I listened while they asked this man questions and he answered them. The accusations they made against him had to do with their Jewish laws. But Paul has not disobeyed any of our Roman laws. So our officials should not execute him or even put him in prison. 30 Then someone told me that some Jews were planning to kill this man. So I sent him to you right away so that you could give him a fair trial there. I have also commanded the Jews who have accused him to go there to Caesarea and tell you why they are accusing him. Goodbye.”

31 So the soldiers did what the commander told them. They got Paul and took him with them during the night to the city of Antipatris. 32 The next day, the foot soldiers returned to Jerusalem and the soldiers who rode horses continued traveling to Caesarea with Paul. 33 When the soldiers who rode horses arrived in the city of Caesarea, they gave the letter to the governor and they brought Paul to him. 34 So the governor read the letter. Then he asked Paul, “What province are you from?” Paul answered, “I am from Cilicia.” 35 Then the governor said, “When the people who have accused you arrive, I will listen to what each of you says and then I will judge your case.” Then he commanded his soldiers to guard Paul in the palace that King Herod the Great had built.

24 Then, five days after the Roman soldiers brought Paul to Caesarea, the Jewish high priest Ananias traveled

there from Jerusalem. He brought some other Jewish elders with him. They also brought a man who spoke well and knew the Roman laws well. His name was Tertullus. The Jewish leaders wanted him to persuade the governor that he should punish Paul. 2 So the governor commanded his soldiers to bring Paul in. When Paul arrived, Tertullus started arguing that Felix should punish him. He said to the governor, "During the time that you have ruled us, we have lived well. By planning wisely, you have made many things better for our Jewish people. 3 Therefore, Honorable Governor Felix, we continually thank you for everything that you have done for us, wherever you have done those things. 4 But so that I do not use too much of your time, I will speak briefly. Please listen to what I have to say. I know you will make the right decision about this case. 5 Now we can assure you that this man causes trouble wherever he goes. He encourages all the Jews to rebel against you Romans. He leads a radical group within Judaism. The members of that group call themselves the Nazarenes. 6 He even tried to make our temple in Jerusalem no longer holy. And that is why we arrested him.[a] [And we wanted to judge him according to our law. 7 [b] But Lysias, the commander of the Roman fortress, came with his soldiers and took him away from us, 8 [c] sending us to you.] If you question him yourself about all these matters, you will be able to learn that everything I am saying about him is true." 9 Then the Jewish leaders who had come to Caesarea accused Paul too. They insisted that what Tertullus said about him was true.

10 Then the governor signaled with his hand that he wanted Paul to speak. So Paul spoke to defend himself. He said, "Governor Felix, I know that you have governed this Jewish province for many years. Therefore I am eager to defend myself to you *because I know that you will listen to me and will judge me fairly*. 11 You can easily confirm that I went to Jerusalem to worship God just 12 days ago. 12 No one can say truthfully that they saw me arguing with anyone in the temple courts, because I did not do that. No one can say truthfully that they saw me causing people to riot in any Jewish synagogue or causing trouble anywhere else in Jerusalem, because I did not do that. 13 So they cannot prove to you the things of which they are now accusing me. 14 But I admit to you that this is true: I live as Jesus taught us to live. They claim that makes me different from other Jews, but that is how I obey the God whom our Jewish ancestors worshiped. I also believe everything that Moses wrote in the laws that God gave him and everything that the prophets wrote in their books. 15 I believe, just as these men also believe, that some day God will cause everyone who has died to live again. God will do this both for those who were good and for those who were wicked. 16 Because I believe that day will come, I always try to do what pleases God and what other people think is right. 17 Let me tell you why I was in Jerusalem. After I had been in other places for several years, I returned there to bring some money to help my fellow Jews who were poor. While I was there, I also offered sacrifices in the temple courtyard. 18 Some Jews from Asia saw me offering those sacrifices in the temple courtyard. I had completed the ritual that allowed me to worship God there. There was no crowd with me. I was not causing anyone to riot. 19 No, it was those Jews from the province of Asia who caused the people to riot! And they should really be here in your court to accuse me if they think that I have done anything wrong. 20 But if they do not want to do that, these Jewish men who are here should tell you what they think I did that was wrong when I defended myself in their council. 21 They might say that I did this one thing wrong: When I was in their council, I shouted, 'You are judging me today because I believe that God will cause all the people who have died to live again.'"

22 Now Felix already knew much about the group people called the Way, and so he stopped the trial. He said to the Jewish leaders, "Later, when Commander Lysias comes here, I will decide this case." 23 Then Governor Felix told the officer who was guarding Paul to take Paul back to the prison. But he told him to allow Paul to do things freely in the prison. He also said that if Paul's friends came to visit him, the officer should allow them to help Paul in any way that they wanted to.

24 But several days later Felix came back with his wife Drusilla. She was a Jew. Felix called for Paul to speak with him. He *and Drusilla* listened to what Paul said about trusting in Jesus the Messiah. 25 Paul talked about what God wants people to do in order to please him. Paul also explained how people should control how they act. Paul said that there would be a time when God would judge all people. Felix became afraid after hearing those things. So he said to Paul, "That is all I want to hear now. But when I have time, I will ask you to come to me again." 26 Felix was also hoping that Paul would give him some money. So he sent for Paul to come to him many times. Paul talked with Felix every time*, but he did not give him any money, so Felix did not tell his soldiers to release Paul from prison*.

27 This went on for about two years. Then a man named Porcius Festus replaced Felix as the governor. And since Felix wanted to please the Jewish leaders, he left Paul in prison.

25 Then Festus began to rule as the governor of the province of Judea. Three days later, he left the city of Caesarea and traveled to Jerusalem. 2 In Jerusalem, the chief priests and some important Jewish leaders insisted urgently to Festus that Paul had done things that were very wrong. 3 They asked Festus to help them pursue their case against Paul. They asked him to order his soldiers to bring Paul to trial in Jerusalem. But they were really planning to attack him on the road and kill him. 4 But Festus replied, "Paul is in prison in Caesarea. Now I myself plan to travel back to Caesarea very soon." 5 "So," he said, "those of you who are able should travel there with me. If you want to accuse Paul of doing anything wrong, you can accuse him there."

6 Festus remained in Jerusalem with the Jewish leaders for about another week. Then he returned to the city of Caesarea. The next day, Festus commanded his soldiers to bring Paul to the hall where he was sitting in the judge's seat. 7 So the soldiers brought Paul to Festus. The Jewish leaders who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him. They accused him of doing many bad things. But they were not able to prove any of them. 8 Then Paul spoke for himself. He said, "I have not

[a] Some ancient manuscripts include the end of verse 6, verse 7, and the first part of verse 8. [b] See the note on the previous verse. [c] See the note on verse 6.

broken any of the Jewish laws. I have not broken any of the rules about who can enter the temple. I have not broken any of the Roman laws." 9 Festus, however, wanted to please the Jewish leaders. So he asked Paul, "Are you willing to travel to Jerusalem so that I can judge your case there?" 10 But Paul replied, "No, right now you are judging me, and you represent the Emperor. This is the right place for my trial. I have done nothing wrong to the Jewish people. You know that is the truth. 11 If I deserved to die for something I had done wrong, I would accept dying as my punishment. They are accusing me of many things, but I do not deserve to die for anything I have done. So no one can condemn me just to satisfy them. I claim my right to have Caesar himself judge me." 12 Festus conferred with the officials who advised him. Then he told Paul, "You have asked Caesar to try your case, and so I will send you to Caesar."

13 Then, after several days, King Herod Agrippa arrived at Caesarea. His sister Bernice came with him. They were making a formal visit to welcome Festus as the new governor. 14 Since King Agrippa and Bernice stayed in Caesarea for several days, *they had time to speak with Festus about many things*. At one point Festus told Agrippa about Paul. He said, "There is a man here whom Felix kept in prison. 15 When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and the Jewish elders accused him of many things. They asked me to condemn him to death. 16 But I told them that when people accuse someone of a serious crime, we Romans do not condemn that person just to satisfy the accusers. Instead, we allow him to meet in person with his accusers and defend himself against what they say about him. 17 So when those Jews came here to Caesarea, I did not delay the trial at all. The day after they arrived, I convened the court and ordered the guards to bring in the prisoner. 18 I thought that the Jewish leaders would accuse Paul of doing many wrong things. But when they made their accusations against him, none of the accusations were serious. 19 Instead, they argued with him about what Jews should believe. They also argued about a man whose name was Jesus. He had died, but Paul said he was alive. 20 I did not know how I could investigate this case from Caesarea. So I asked Paul, 'Are you willing to go to Jerusalem so that I can judge you there about these things?' 21 But Paul asked to stay in Caesarea until the emperor himself could judge his case. So I ordered my soldiers to keep him under guard until I could send him to Caesar." 22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "Personally I would like to hear what this man has to say." Festus answered, "I will arrange for you to hear him tomorrow."

23 So the next day Agrippa and Bernice entered the hall of judgment. The people there showed them much honor. Some Roman commanders and some of the important people of Caesarea came with them. Then Festus commanded the guards to bring Paul in. 24 After Paul entered, Festus said, "King Agrippa and all the rest of you who are here with us, you see this man! Many leaders of the Jews, both in Jerusalem and here, have protested to me about him. They have demanded that I put him to death immediately. 25 But I found that he had done nothing to deserve being killed. Even so, he has asked Caesar to judge his case. So I have decided to send him to Rome. 26 But I do not know exactly what to write to the emperor about him. That is why I have brought him here to speak to all of you, and especially to you, King Agrippa. You can question him. Then I will know what to write to the emperor. 27 After all, it makes sense that when I send a prisoner to the emperor in Rome, I should say exactly what wrong things people say he has done."

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You may now speak on your own behalf." Then Paul held out his hand to show that he was about to speak. He defended himself by saying, 2 "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that I can explain myself to you today. I will tell you why the Jewish leaders are wrong when they say that I have done bad things. 3 I am especially fortunate because you know so much about the customs of us Jews and the questions that we argue about. So please listen to me as I tell my whole story.

4 My fellow Jews know how I have lived my life since the time I was a child. They know that I have always lived among Jews and that I received my education in Jerusalem. 5 They have known me since I was young. They could tell you, if they were willing, that as a Pharisee, I obeyed the most rigid customs of our religion very carefully. 6 Today I am on trial because I am confidently expecting that God will do what he promised to our ancestors. 7 Our 12 Jewish tribes are also waiting confidently for God to do what he promised. That is why they continue to honor him and worship him so diligently. And yet, Honored King, these Jewish leaders are saying that I have done wrong because I too am waiting confidently. 8 None of you should find it hard to believe that God would cause people who had died to live again.

9 But I will admit that I too once found it hard to believe. I was sure that I should do everything that I could to stop people from believing in Jesus from the town of Nazareth. 10 So that is what I did when I lived in Jerusalem. I put many of the believers in prison. The chief priests there had given me the power to do that. And when the Sanhedrin was deciding whether to kill believers, I voted in favor of that. 11 I continually punished believers in Jesus in every synagogue where I could find them. I tried to force them to say that they did not believe in Jesus. I was so angry with them that I even went to foreign cities to find them.

12 Because I told them I wanted to arrest believers in Damascus, the chief priests gave me the power to do that. So I traveled to Damascus. 13 While I was on my way there, O King, I saw a bright light in the sky. Even though it was around noon, this light was even brighter than the sun! It shone all around me and also around those who were traveling with me. 14 We all fell to the ground. Then I heard the voice of someone speaking to me in the Hebrew language. He said, 'Saul, Saul, you should not be fighting against me. You are harming yourself, like an animal that is kicking against a sharp prod.' 15 Then I said, 'Please tell me who you are.' And the person who was speaking to me said, 'I am Jesus! I am the one you are fighting against. 16 But get up off the ground now. I have appeared to you in order to make you my servant. I want you to tell other people who I am, now that you have seen me. I will show you more about myself later, and I want you to tell others about that too. 17 I am sending you both to Jewish people and to non-Jewish people. I will protect you from them. 18 I want you to help them recognize who I really am. I want you to help them to live in a way that pleases God. I want them to know that God can make them free from the

devil's influence. I want them to know that God will forgive their sins. I want them to receive the good things that people whom God saves because they believe in me will have forever.'

19 So, King Agrippa, I did what God told me to do when he gave me that vision. 20 First, I spoke to the Jews in Damascus. Then I spoke to the Jews in Jerusalem and in the countryside of Judea. I also spoke to the non-Jews there. I told them that they should stop sinning and ask God to help them live in the right way. I told them they should do things that showed they had stopped sinning.

21 It is because I preached this message that some Jews seized me when I was in the temple courtyard and tried to kill me. 22 Because God has been helping me, I have been able to keep proclaiming these things to this very day. I have continued to tell people, regardless of their status, exactly what the prophets and Moses said would happen. 23 They said that the Messiah would suffer and die. They said that he would be the first person to live again after he had died. They also said that he would tell people how God was able to save them. He would tell this, both to his own Jewish people and to non-Jewish people."

24 Before Paul could say anything further to defend himself, Festus shouted out loudly, "Paul, you are crazy! You have studied too much, and that has made you crazy!" 25 But Paul answered, "Your Excellency, Governor Festus, I am not insane! On the contrary, what I am saying is true and quite sane! 26 I can assure you that I am not crazy, because King Agrippa is familiar with the things I have been talking about so enthusiastically to him. I am very sure that he is aware of all of these things. They all happened very publicly. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe what the prophets wrote? I know that you believe those things." 28 Then Agrippa answered Paul, "I would need to hear much more than this to decide to become a Christian!" 29 Paul replied, "Perhaps you need to hear more, or perhaps you could decide now. But either way, I pray to God that you and all of the others who are listening to me today will become like me, except for these chains!" 30 Then King Agrippa stood up. The governor, Bernice, and all the other important people who had come in with them also got up 31 and left the room. After they left, they said to each other, "We should not execute this man or keep him in prison. He has done nothing to deserve that." 32 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "If this man had not appealed to Caesar, you could have released him."

27 Soon the governor decided it was time to send Paul by ship to Italy. *I, Luke, traveled with him.* He put Paul and some other prisoners under the control of a military officer whose name was Julius. This man was part of a group of soldiers who reported directly to the emperor. 2 So Julius put us aboard a ship from the city of Adramyttium in the province of Asia. This ship was about to sail to various places along the coast of Asia. In this way we began our journey by sea. Aristarchus, a man from the city of Thessalonica in the province of Macedonia, went with us. 3 The next day we arrived at the city of Sidon. There Julius treated Paul generously. He gave him permission to go see his friends in Sidon so they could help him with whatever he needed. 4 Then the ship sailed away from Sidon. We went along the coast of Cyprus, which was sheltered from the wind, because the wind was against us. 5 After that, we crossed over the sea close to the coasts of Cilicia and Pamphylia. The ship arrived at the city of Myra in the province of Lycia. We got off the ship there. 6 In Myra, Julius found a ship that had come from the city of Alexandria. It would soon sail to Italy. So he arranged for us to go aboard that ship and we left. 7 *The winds were still against us, so* we sailed slowly for many days. It was difficult, but we finally reached the city of Cnidus. From there the wind was so strong that the ship could not sail straight westward. So we sailed along the coast of the island of Crete instead*, where the wind was not blowing strongly.* We sailed past Cape Salmone, an area of land sticking out into the water. 8 The wind was still strong, and it prevented the ship from moving ahead fast. So we moved slowly along the coast of Crete. We eventually arrived at a port whose name was Fair Havens. It was near the city of Lasea.

9 *Because the wind was blowing from the west,* the journey from Caesarea to Fair Havens had taken much more time than the captain and centurion had planned. It had become dangerous to sail because it was late in the year and the stormy season was approaching. So Paul said to the men on the ship, 10 and said to them, "Friends, God has shown me that if we continue sailing, we will suffer harm and lose many things. A great storm will destroy the ship and its cargo and kill all of us." 11 But the Roman officer did not believe what Paul said. Instead, he believed the pilot and the captain when they told him the ship would be safe. 12 The harbor of Fair Havens did not protect the ships in it very well from winter storms. So most of the sailors recommended leaving Fair Havens. They hoped that they could reach Phoenix and spend the winter there. Phoenix is a city on the island of Crete with a good harbor. The harbor protects ships well from winds that blow from the southwest and northwest. 13 Because only a gentle wind was blowing from the south, the ship's crew thought that they could reach Phoenix safely. So they lifted the ship's anchor up out of the sea and sailed the ship close to the coastline of the island of Crete. 14 After a little while, however, a stormy wind blew down from the island. It was the kind of wind that the sailors called the Northeast Wind. 15 This stormy wind blew so strongly against the front of the ship that we could not sail into it. So the sailors decided to sail in the direction that the wind was blowing. It pushed us across the sea very quickly. 16 However, the sailors were able to sail the ship on the side of a small island that was sheltered from the wind. The name of the island was Cauda. It was very difficult, but the sailors were finally able to gain control of the lifeboat. 17 The sailors hoisted the lifeboat up onto the ship. Then they wound its ropes around the hull of the ship. They became concerned that they would get stuck in the soggy sand at Syrtis. So they took down the sails *to go more slowly*. This meant they could not steer the ship, and it went wherever the wind blew it. 18 But the wind and the waves continued to toss the ship about roughly. So on the next day, the sailors began to throw overboard the things that the ship was carrying. 19 Then, on the third day of the storm, the sailors threw overboard most of the ship's sails, ropes, and poles. They did this deliberately *in order to make the ship lighter*. 20 But the wind continued to blow very strongly against the ship. The sky was always full of dark clouds so that the sailors could not see the sun or the stars to navigate. After all this we lost hope that we would even survive.

21 None of us on the ship had eaten for many days. Then
one day, Paul stood up in front of us and said, “Friends, you
should have listened to me when I said that we should not
set sail from Crete. Then, we would not have suffered all this
damage. 22 But now please do not be afraid, because none of
us will die. The storm will destroy the ship but it will not
destroy us. 23 I know this because last night an angel came and
stood by me. The God who protects me and who told me to
tell others about him sent this angel. 24 The angel said to me,
‘Paul, do not be afraid. You will reach Rome safely and have
the opportunity to testify to the emperor. I want you to know
that God is being kind to you. He will make sure that everyone
who is traveling with you will also survive.’ 25 So cheer up,
my friends, because I believe that God will make this happen
exactly as the angel told me. 26 However, the ship will crash
on some island, and we will go ashore there.”

27 Now on the fourteenth night after the storm began, the
storm was still blowing the ship across the open sea. At about
midnight, the sailors thought that the ship was getting close
to land. 28 So the sailors lowered a rope with a weight on the
end to measure how deep the water was. When they pulled the
rope up again, they measured it and saw that the water was 40
meters deep. A little later, they measured again and found that
the water was 30 meters deep. 29 *Because the water was getting
shallower,* the sailors were afraid that the ship might crash onto
some rocks. So they threw four anchors into the water from the
end of the ship. Then they prayed that it would soon become
light *so that they could see where the ship was going*. 30 Some of
the sailors were planning to escape from the ship. They did
not want anyone to know what they planned to do. So they
pretended that they needed to put the lifeboat in the water so
they could use it to lower some anchors from the ship’s front.
31 But Paul said to the Roman officer and the soldiers, “If the
sailors do not stay in the ship, you will not survive.” 32 So the
soldiers cut the ropes and the lifeboat dropped into the sea.

33 Just before dawn, Paul encouraged everyone on the ship
to eat something. He said, “For the past 14 days you have
been waiting and watching and not eating anything. 34 So now
I urge you to eat some food, because you must do this to
live. The storm will not kill any of you*, but if you do not eat,
you will die*.” 35 Then after Paul said that, while everyone was
watching, he took some bread and thanked God for it. Then
he broke the bread into pieces and began to eat some of it.
36 Then they all cheered up and ate some food. 37 Altogether
there were 276 of us on the ship. 38 When everyone had eaten
enough, the sailors made the ship lighter by throwing the rest
of the wheat into the water.

39 At dawn we could see land, but the sailors did not know
what it was. However, they could see a bay that had a beach.
They decided to try to run the ship up onto this wide area of
sand at the water’s edge. 40 So they cut the ropes that attached
the anchors to the ship and let the anchors fall loose into the
water. They also untied the ropes that held the rudders to the
ship. They raised a sail to the top of the mast so that the wind
would blow into it. Then they steered the ship toward the
shore. 41 But the ship sailed into turbulent waters and ran onto
a sandbank that was just under the waves. The front of the
ship stuck there and could not move. Big waves beat against
the back of the ship and it began to break apart.

42 The soldiers wanted to kill all the prisoners so that none
of them could swim away and escape. 43 But the Roman officer
wanted to save Paul. So he stopped the soldiers from killing
the prisoners. Instead, he commanded everyone who could
swim to jump off the ship first into the water and swim to
shore. 44 Then he told the ones who could not swim to hold
onto something that would float and drift toward the shore.
Some held onto wooden boards that the waves had broken
loose from the ship. Some held onto articles from the ship that
would float. We did what he said, and in that way all of us
made it safely to the shore.

28 After we had arrived safely on the shore, we learned
that we were on an island whose name was Malta.
2 The people who lived there took care of us very generously.
It was cold and it was starting to rain. So they lit a fire and
invited all of us to come and warm ourselves. 3 Now Paul *was
helping by* collecting a bundle of pieces of wood to burn. When
he put them on the fire, a poisonous snake came out from the
bundle to escape from the heat of the fire. It bit Paul on his
hand and clung to it. 4 Now the people from the island saw
the snake dangling from Paul’s hand. They said to each other,
“This man has probably murdered someone. He has escaped
from drowning in the sea. But the goddess Justice is punishing
him anyway. He will die from this snake bite.” 5 But Paul
shook his hand hard so that the snake would fall off his hand
and back into the fire. The snake fell off and Paul was not
hurt at all. 6 Still, some of the people of the island expected
that Paul’s body would soon swell up because of the snake
bite. Others thought he would suddenly fall down and die.
But they waited a long time and did not see either of those
things happen to him. So the people decided they had been
wrong about who Paul was. They said to one another, “This
man is not a murderer. He must be a god*, because that snake
bite would have killed any human being*!”

7 Now the people of the island had built the fire near some
fields that belonged to a man whose name was Publius. He was
the chief official on the island. He invited us to come and stay
in his home. He took very good care of us for three days. 8 At
that time Publius’ father had fever and a stomach illness. He
was lying sick in bed. So Paul visited him and prayed for him.
Then Paul placed his hands on him and healed him. 9 After
Paul healed Publius’ father, the rest of the people on the island
who were sick came to him and he healed them too. 10 The
island people also brought us gifts and showed in other ways
that they greatly respected us. Later on, when we were ready
to leave, they brought us food and other things that we would
need on the ship.

11 We stayed on Malta for a total of three months. Then we
left on a ship that had spent the winter there. The ship was
from Alexandria and was going to Italy. On the front of the
ship there were carved images of the twin gods whose names
were Castor and Pollux. 12 When we arrived at the city of
Syracuse, we stayed there three days. 13 Then we sailed away
from Syracuse and arrived at the city of Rhegium in Italy.
The next day, the wind began to blow from the south. So in
only two more days, we reached the town of Puteoli. *There
we got off the ship and went the rest of the way to Rome by land.*
14 In Puteoli we met some fellow believers who asked us to

stay with them for seven days. After that, we continued on to Rome.

15 Some fellow believers in Rome had heard that we were coming and they came to meet us. Some of them met us at the place on the Appian Road whose name was the Market. Others met us at the place whose name was the Three Inns. When Paul saw those believers, he thanked God and felt brave.
16 After we arrived in Rome, the authorities there permitted Paul to live in a home rather than in prison. But a soldier was always there to guard him.

17 Now after Paul had been in Rome for three days, he sent a message to the Jewish leaders to come and talk with him. And when they arrived, Paul said to them, "My dear kinsmen, I have not opposed our people or spoken against the customs of our ancestors. *But some Jews in Jerusalem seized me and tried to kill me. A Roman commander rescued me and later* sent me as a prisoner to the city of Caesarea so that the Roman authorities could put me on trial. 18 The Roman authorities questioned me and wanted to release me because I had not done any bad thing for which I should be executed. 19 But the Jewish leaders argued that the Romans should not set me free, So I had to request that the emperor judge me here in Rome. But I did not do that because I wanted to accuse our leaders of doing anything wrong. 20 So I asked you to come here so that I could tell you why I am a prisoner. It is because I believe in what we Jews confidently expect that God will do for us." 21 Then the Jewish leaders replied, "We have not received any letters from our fellow Jews in Judea about you. And none of our fellow Jews who have come here from Judea have said anything bad about you. 22 But we would appreciate you telling us what you think about this group that you belong to. Please tell us, because we are aware that in many places people are speaking against it."

23 So they decided that they would come back on another day. On that day, even more people than before came to where Paul was staying to hear Paul speak. Paul explained many things to them. He talked about how God would rule everyone. He also talked about how various places in the Scriptures foretold that Jesus would come. Paul talked for that entire day with the people who had come to his house. 24 Paul was able to persuade some of those Jews that the things he said about Jesus were true. But some others would not believe that they were true. 25 The two groups argued with each other. When they were about to leave, Paul told them one more thing. He said, "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said something through Isaiah the prophet.

26 He said, 'Go to the people of Israel and say to them:
"You seem to be listening but you never really
understand what God is saying.
You seem to be looking but you never really
recognize the things that God is doing."
27 These people do not understand because
they have become stubborn.
It is as if they have become deaf.
It is as if they have closed their eyes.
It is as if they have done this because they do
not want to see well,
and they do not want to hear well,
and they do not want to understand well.
If they did pay attention to me and understand what I
am telling them, they would stop sinning
and live in the right way again.
If they did that, I would restore them.'

28 Therefore, you should know that God is offering to save the non-Jews, and many of them will accept his offer." 29 [a] [When he had said these things, the Jews went away. They were having a great dispute among themselves.]

30 After that, Paul stayed in Rome for two whole years in a house that he rented. Many people came to see him. He received each of them gladly and spoke with them. 31 He preached about how God would rule over everyone. He also taught people about the Lord Jesus the Messiah. He spoke about these things very openly. No one tried to stop him.

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[a] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 29.