

# The Holy New Covenant

---

## Acts of the Delegates of Jesus

---

### Chapter 1

<sup>01</sup> Dear Theophilus, The first book which I wrote was about everything that Jesus did and taught <sup>02</sup> from the beginning until the day when he was carried up into heaven. He talked to the delegates whom he had chosen. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus told them what they must do. <sup>03</sup> After his death he showed that he was alive. Jesus proved this by doing many convincing things. The delegates saw him several times during 40 days. Jesus was talking about the kingdom of God.

<sup>04</sup> Once, when he was together with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem. He said, "Wait here for the Father's promise that you heard me talk about. <sup>05</sup> John immersed people in water but in a few days you will be immersed in the Holy Spirit." <sup>06</sup> The delegates were all together. They asked Jesus, "Lord, is this the time for you to rebuild the kingdom for Israel?" <sup>07</sup> Jesus said to them, "The Father is the only One who has the authority to decide such dates and times. It is not for you to know these things. <sup>08</sup> However, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will receive power. You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the world."

<sup>09</sup> After Jesus said these things, he was lifted up into the sky. While the delegates were watching, Jesus went into a cloud; they could not see him anymore. <sup>10</sup> As Jesus was going away, the delegates were staring into the sky. Suddenly, two angels stood beside them. They were dressed in white clothes. <sup>11</sup> The two angels said, "Men from the Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? This Jesus, who was carried away from you into heaven, will return in the same way that you saw him go."

<sup>12</sup> Then the delegates went back to Jerusalem from the Hill of Olives. (This hill is about 1.2km from Jerusalem.) <sup>13</sup> The delegates entered the

city. They went to the place where they were staying; this was in an upstairs room. The delegates were: Peter, John, Jacob, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, Jacob (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (known as the Revolutionary), Judas (the son of Jacob). <sup>14</sup> They were all together. They were constantly praying with the same purpose. Jesus' brothers, some women, and Mary (the mother of Jesus) were also there.

<sup>15</sup> During those days there was a meeting. (There were about 120 people present.) Peter stood up among them and said,

<sup>16-17</sup> "Brothers and sisters, the Scriptures must come true which the Holy Spirit spoke ahead of time through David's lips. He was talking about Judas Iscariot who was one of our group; he had a part in this work. The Spirit said that Judas would guide men to arrest Jesus. <sup>18</sup> Judas was paid money for doing this. (However, Judas fell on his head, and his body broke open in the middle. All of his intestines poured out.) His dishonest money was used to buy a field for his body. <sup>19</sup> All of the people who lived in Jerusalem learned about this. That is why they named that field Akeldama. (In Aramaic, Akeldama means 'Blood Land'.) <sup>20</sup> In the book of Psalms, this is written about Judas: 'People should not go near his property; no one should live there!' and, 'Let another man take his work of overseeing.'

<sup>21-22</sup> "So now, another man must join us and be a witness that Jesus arose from death. This man must be one of those men who was part of our group during the whole time that the Lord Jesus was among us. It is necessary that this man has been with us from the time when John started to immerse people until the day when Jesus was carried away from us to heaven."

<sup>23</sup> They found two men. One was Joseph Barsabbas. (He was also called Justus.) The other man was Matthias. <sup>24-25</sup> The delegates prayed, "Lord, You know the hearts of all men. Show us which one of these two men You choose to be a delegate and to do this work. Judas turned away from it and went where he belongs." <sup>26</sup> Then the delegates gave the two men lots. The lots showed that Matthias was the one; therefore he became a delegate like the other eleven.

---

## Chapter 2

<sup>01</sup> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>02</sup> Suddenly a noise came from the sky. It sounded like a strong wind blowing. This noise filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>03</sup> They saw something, which looked like flames of fire separating and staying over each one of them. <sup>04</sup> They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak different languages; the Spirit was giving them the power to do this.

<sup>05</sup> There were some devout Jewish men staying in Jerusalem at this time. These men were from every country in the known world. <sup>06</sup> A large group of them came together because they heard the noise. They were confused. The delegates were speaking, and every man heard in his own language. <sup>07</sup> The Jewish people were all amazed at this. They did not understand how the delegates could do this. They said, "Look! These men whom we hear speaking are all from the Galilee!" <sup>08</sup> But each of us is hearing them in our own native language. Among us are: <sup>09</sup> Parthians, Medes, Elamites, those living in Mesopotamia, from Judea, from Cappadocia, from Pontus, from Asia, <sup>10</sup> from Phrygia, from Pamphylia, from Egypt, from parts of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome, <sup>11</sup> Cretans, Arabians. Some of us were born Jews. Others are converts to Judaism. We can hear these men in our own languages! We can all understand the wonderful things they are saying about God."

<sup>12</sup> The people were all amazed but confused. They asked each other, "What does this mean?" <sup>13</sup> Other people were laughing at the delegates. They were claiming that the delegates were drunk.

<sup>14</sup> Then Peter stood up with the other eleven delegates. He spoke loudly—"My Jewish brothers and all of you who are staying in Jerusalem, listen to me. I will tell you something you need to know. Listen carefully. <sup>15</sup> These men are not drunk, as you think; it is only nine o'clock in the morning! <sup>16</sup> This is the same thing which God said through the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> "God says: 'In the last days, I will pour out My Spirit upon all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will have special dreams. <sup>18</sup> At that time, I will pour out My Spirit upon My slaves, both men and women, and they will prophesy. <sup>19</sup> I will show amazing things in the sky above. I will do miracles on the earth below. There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun will be changed into darkness, and the moon will become red like blood. Then the great and glorious day of the Lord

will come. <sup>21</sup> And every person who trusts in the name of the Lord will be saved.'

<sup>22</sup> "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a very special man. God clearly showed this to you. God proved this by the powerful and amazing things, which He did through Jesus among you. You know this is true. <sup>23</sup> You killed this man Jesus by handing him over to lawless men. They nailed him to a cross. But God knew ahead of time that all this would occur; it was part of His plan, which He made long ago. <sup>24</sup> Jesus suffered the pains of death, but God set him free. God raised Jesus up from death. It was impossible for death to hold him.

<sup>25</sup> "This is what David said about Jesus: 'I always saw the Lord before me, because He is at my right side to keep me secure. <sup>26</sup> So my heart was glad and my mouth spoke with joy. Yes, even my body will live with hope <sup>27</sup> because You won't abandon my soul in death. You will not allow the body of Your Holy One to decay in the grave. <sup>28</sup> You taught me how to live. You came near me and I felt great joy.'

<sup>29</sup> "My Jewish brothers, I can tell you plainly about David, our ancestor. He died and was buried. His grave is still here with us today. <sup>30</sup> David was a prophet. God vowed to David that one of his descendants would sit upon David's throne. <sup>31</sup> David knew this before it took place. That is why David said this: 'He will not be left in death. His body will not decay in the grave.' David was talking about the Messiah rising from death. <sup>32</sup> So Jesus, not David, is the one whom God raised from death! We are all eye-witnesses of this! <sup>33</sup> Jesus was lifted up to heaven. Now Jesus is with God – at His right side. The Father has now given the promise of the Holy Spirit to Jesus. So now Jesus poured out this that you see and hear.

<sup>34</sup> "David did not go up to heaven. It was Jesus. David himself said: 'The Lord God said to my Lord. "Sit at My right side <sup>35</sup> until I put your enemies under your feet.'" <sup>36</sup> Therefore all the people of Israel can be sure of this one thing: God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah, this man whom you nailed to the cross!"

<sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they felt a sharp, cutting pain in their conscience. They asked Peter and the other delegates, "What should we do, brothers?" <sup>38</sup> Then Peter answered, "Change your hearts and each one of you must be immersed by the authority of Jesus the Messiah so that your sins may be forgiven. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> This promise is for you and for your children. It is also for

people who are far away, for everyone whom the Lord our God may call."

<sup>40</sup> Peter was warning them with many other words; he was encouraging them, saying, "Be saved from this wicked generation of people!" <sup>41</sup> Then those people who accepted what Peter said were immersed. On that day about 3,000 people were added to the called out people.

<sup>42</sup> After this, they dedicated themselves to learning the teaching of the delegates, to sharing with each other, to eating the supper of the Lord, and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> God was using the delegates to do many powerful and amazing things; every person felt great respect for God. <sup>44</sup> All of the believing ones stayed together. They shared everything. <sup>45</sup> They sold their property and the things they owned and they were dividing the money, giving it to anyone who needed it.

<sup>46</sup> Every day they met together with the same purpose in the temple courtyard. They ate together in their homes, eating their food with joyful hearts. They were very happy. <sup>47</sup> They were praising God. All of the people liked them. More and more people were being saved every day; the Lord was adding them to the group of called out people.

---

## Chapter 3

<sup>01</sup> One day Peter and John went up to the temple courtyard. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. (This was the time for prayer.) <sup>02</sup> A man was there who had been crippled all his life. He couldn't walk, so some friends carried him to the temple every day. They put him beside one of the gates outside the temple. It was called Beautiful Gate. There the man begged for money from the people who were going into the temple area. <sup>03</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to go in, he began to ask them for money. <sup>04</sup> They looked straight at the crippled man and answered, "Look at us!" <sup>05</sup> He looked at them thinking that they might give him some money. <sup>06</sup> But Peter said, "I do not have any silver or gold, but I do have something else I can give you: by the authority of Jesus the Messiah from Nazareth – walk!" <sup>07</sup> Then Peter took hold of the man's right hand and lifted him up. Immediately the man's feet and legs became strong.

<sup>08</sup> He jumped up and stood on his feet and he began to walk around. He went into the temple courtyard with them. He was walking and jumping and praising God. <sup>09-10</sup> All of the people recognized him. The people knew he was the beggar who always sat by the temple's Beautiful Gate. Now they saw him walking and praising God. They were shocked and amazed. They could not understand how this could have happened. <sup>11</sup> The man was holding onto Peter and John. All of the people were stunned. They ran to Peter and John under Solomon's Porch.

<sup>12</sup> When Peter saw this, he said to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you surprised at this? You are staring at us as though our power made this man walk. Do you think this was done because we are good? <sup>13</sup> No! God did it! He is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob – the same God of all our ancestors. He gave glory to Jesus, His special servant, but you handed Jesus over to evil men. You rejected him in front of Pilate after Pilate had already decided to let him go free. <sup>14</sup> Jesus was holy and innocent but you said you did not want him. You told Pilate to give you a murderer instead of Jesus. <sup>15</sup> And so you killed the one who gives life, but God raised him from death. We saw this with our own eyes.

<sup>16</sup> "It was the authority of Jesus which made this crippled man well. This happened because we trusted in the power of Jesus. You can see this man and you know him. He was made completely well because of trusting in Jesus. You all saw it happen!

<sup>17</sup> "My brothers, I know you did those things to Jesus because you did not know what you were doing. Your leaders did not understand either. <sup>18</sup>

God said that these things would happen. All of the prophets who spoke for God long ago said that His Messiah would suffer and die. I have told you how God made this happen. <sup>19</sup> So change your hearts! Come back to God so that He may wipe out your sins. <sup>20</sup> Then the Lord will give you times of spiritual rest. He will send you the Messiah – the one appointed – Jesus.

<sup>21</sup> "But Jesus must stay in heaven until the time when all things will be made whole again. God told about these things long ago when He spoke through His holy prophets. <sup>22</sup> Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you who is like me. He will come from among your own people. You must obey everything he tells you. <sup>23</sup> If any person does not obey that prophet, he will die, cut off from God's people.' <sup>24</sup> Samuel and all of the other prophets after Samuel who spoke for God talked about these days.

<sup>25</sup> "You are the sons of the prophets. You have received the covenant, which God set up with our ancestors. God said to Abraham, our ancestor, 'I will bless all nations of the earth. I will use one of your descendants to do this.' <sup>26</sup> God has raised up His special servant. God sent him to you first, to bless you by turning each one of you away from doing evil things."

---

## Chapter 4

<sup>01</sup> While Peter and John were speaking to the people, some men came to them. There were some Jewish priests, the officer of the temple police, and some Sadducees. <sup>02</sup> They were upset because the two delegates were teaching the people. Peter and John were preaching that people can rise from death through the power of Jesus. <sup>03</sup> They arrested Peter and John and put them in jail. It was already evening so they kept Peter and John in jail until the next day.

<sup>04</sup> But many of the people, who had heard Peter and John preach, believed the things that they said. There were now about 5,000 men in the called out people.

<sup>05</sup> The next day the Jewish leaders, the elders, and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. <sup>06</sup> Annas (who was the high priest), Caiaphas, John, Alexander and everyone from the high priest's family were there. <sup>07</sup> They made Peter and John stand in the center. The Jewish leaders asked them again and again, "How did you make this crippled man well? What name did you use? By whose authority did you do this?"

<sup>08</sup> Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. He said to them, "You elders and leaders of the people, <sup>09</sup> are you questioning us today about the good thing which was done to this crippled man? Are you asking us who made him well? <sup>10</sup> We want all of you and all the people of Israel to know that this man was made well by the authority of Jesus from Nazareth, the Messiah! Although you nailed him to the cross, God raised him from death. This man who was crippled is now well and able to stand here before you because of Jesus! <sup>11</sup> Jesus, 'the stone which you builders thought was worthless, has become the cornerstone.' <sup>12</sup> Jesus is the only one who can save people. His authority is the only power given to the world by which we can be saved."

<sup>13</sup> The Jewish leaders saw that Peter and John were not afraid to speak. They were amazed because they understood that the two men had no education or training. Then they realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup> When they saw the man standing there beside the two delegates — that he was healed — they could find nothing to say against the delegates. <sup>15</sup> So the Jewish leaders ordered them to go outside. The Jewish Council wanted to talk among themselves. <sup>16</sup> They asked, "What shall we do with them? Everyone who lives in Jerusalem knows that these men have performed a great miracle! That is clear. We cannot deny

it. <sup>17</sup> However, we must make them afraid to talk to anyone about this man. Then this problem will not spread among the people."

<sup>18</sup> So the Jewish leaders called Peter and John in again. They warned the delegates not to say anything or to teach anything by the authority of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John answered them, "What do you think is right? What would God want? Should we obey you or God? <sup>20</sup> We are not able to be silent. We must tell people about the things we saw and heard." <sup>21-22</sup> The Jewish leaders could not find a way to punish the delegates because all of the people were praising God for what had been done. (This miracle was a proof from God. The man who was healed was more than 40 years old!) So the Jewish leaders threatened them again and then let them go free.

<sup>23</sup> Peter and John left the meeting of the Jewish leaders and went to their own people. They told the group everything, which the most important priests and the Jewish elders had said to them. <sup>24</sup> When the group heard this, they prayed to God with one purpose, "Master, You are the One who made the land, the sea, the sky, and everything in the world. <sup>25</sup> Our ancestor, David, was Your servant. With the help of the Holy Spirit he wrote these words: 'Why were the nations so mad? Why did the people of the world plan things against God? That is hopeless! <sup>26</sup> The kings and the rulers of the earth come together against the Lord God and against His Messiah!' <sup>27</sup> These words came true when Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate, the nations of the world, and the Jewish people all 'came together' against Jesus here in Jerusalem. Jesus is Your holy servant, the one You made Messiah. <sup>28</sup> These people who 'came together' against Jesus made Your plan come true; it happened because of Your power and Your will. <sup>29</sup> And now, Lord, listen to what they are saying. They are trying to make us afraid! Lord, we are Your slaves. Help us to speak the things You want us to say without fear. <sup>30</sup> Show your power: make sick people well, give proofs, and cause miracles to take place by the power of Jesus, Your holy servant."

<sup>31</sup> While the called out people were praying, the place where they were meeting shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak God's message without being afraid. <sup>32</sup> The called out people were joined in their hearts and they were united in spirit. No one in the group said that the things he had were his own. Instead, they shared everything. <sup>33</sup> The delegates used great power to give evidence that the Lord Jesus has been raised from death. All of them felt very thankful for God's great help in time of need. <sup>34</sup> They all received the things they needed. Everyone who owned fields or houses sold them. Then they

brought the money <sup>35</sup> and gave it to the delegates. Each person was given the things he needed.

<sup>36</sup> One of the believers was named Joseph. The delegates called him Barnabas. (This name means "a person who encourages others".) He was a Levite, born in Cyprus. <sup>37</sup> Joseph owned a field. He sold and brought the money and gave it to the delegates.

---

## Chapter 5

<sup>01</sup> There was a man named Ananias. His wife's name was Sapphira. Ananias sold some land which he had <sup>02</sup> and, from the sale, he gave some of the money to the delegates. But he kept back part of the money for himself. His wife knew this. <sup>03</sup> Peter asked him, "Ananias, why did you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit. You misused the sale price of the land. <sup>04</sup> Before you sold the field, it belonged to you. Even after you sold it, you could have used the money any way you wanted. Why did you think of doing this evil thing? You lied to God, not to men!" <sup>05-06</sup> When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. Some young men came and wrapped up his body. Then they carried it out and buried it. Everyone who heard about this was filled with awesome respect.

<sup>07</sup> About three hours later, the wife of Ananias came in, but she did not know what had happened to her husband. <sup>08</sup> Peter said to her, "Tell me, how much money did you receive for your field? Was it this much?" Sapphira answered, "Yes, that was all we got for the field." <sup>09</sup> Peter asked her, "Why did you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! Do you hear those footsteps? The men who buried your husband are at the door! They will carry you out in the same way." <sup>10</sup> At that moment Sapphira fell down at Peter's feet and died. The young men came in and saw that she was dead. The men carried her out and buried her next to her husband. <sup>11</sup> The whole called out people and all of the other people who heard about these things were filled with awesome respect.

<sup>12</sup> The delegates did many miracles and powerful things among the people. The delegates were together in Solomon's Porch; they all had the same purpose. <sup>13</sup> None of the other people dared to join the delegates, but all of the people were saying good things about them. <sup>14</sup> And more and more believers, both men and women were added to the Lord.

<sup>15</sup> People began to bring their sick into the streets. They put their sick on little beds and mattresses for Peter's shadow to touch them when he came by. <sup>16</sup> They were coming from all the towns around Jerusalem. They brought their sick and those who were bothered by evil spirits. All of these people were healed.

<sup>17</sup> The high priest and all of his friends (a sect called the Sadducees) became very jealous. <sup>18</sup> They grabbed the delegates and put them in the public jail <sup>19</sup> but, during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the gates

of the jail. The angel led the delegates outside and said, <sup>20</sup> "Go and stand in the temple courtyard. Tell the people all the words about this Life."

<sup>21</sup> When the delegates heard this, they went into the temple courtyard. It was early in the morning. The delegates began to teach the people. The high priest and his friends came together. They called a meeting of the Jewish leaders and all the important older men of the sons of Israel. They sent some men to the jail to bring the delegates to them. <sup>22</sup> When the guards came to the jail, they could not find the delegates there. So they went back and told this to the Jewish leaders. <sup>23</sup> They said, "The jail was shut and locked. The guards were standing at the gates but when we opened the doors, no one was in there!" <sup>24</sup> The captain of the temple guards and the most important priests heard this. They were confused. They wondered, "What will happen because of this?"

<sup>25</sup> Then another man came and told them, "Listen! The men you had put in jail are standing in the temple courtyard. They are teaching the people!" <sup>26</sup> Then the captain and his men went out and brought the delegates back. However, the soldiers did not use force because they were afraid of the people. The people might become angry and kill the soldiers with stones.

<sup>27</sup> The soldiers brought the delegates to the Jewish Council and made them stand before their leaders. The high priest questioned the delegates. <sup>28</sup> He said, "We warned you never to teach with this man's authority, but look what you've done! You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching. You are trying to put the blame on us for the death of this man Jesus."

<sup>29</sup> Peter and the other delegates answered, "We must obey God, not men! <sup>30</sup> The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus from death. He is the one you killed, having hung him upon a cross of wood. <sup>31</sup> Jesus is the one whom God raised to His right side to be our Leader and Savior. God did this so that Israel could have the opportunity to change their hearts. Then God could forgive their sins. <sup>32</sup> We saw all of these things happen. The Holy Spirit has shown you that we are telling you the truth! God has given the Spirit to those who obeyed Him."

<sup>33</sup> When the Jewish leaders heard these words, they became very angry. They started to make plans to kill the delegates. <sup>34</sup> One of the Pharisees in the Jewish Council stood up. His name was Gamaliel. He was a teacher of the law and all of the people respected him. He ordered the men to take the delegates outside for a few minutes. <sup>35</sup> Then he said to them, "Men of Israel, be careful of what you are about to do to these men! <sup>36</sup> Remember when Theudas appeared? He claimed that he was an

important man. About 400 men joined him, but he was killed. And all of the men who followed him were scattered. They were never able to do anything. <sup>37</sup> Later, a man named Judas came from the Galilee. It was at the time of the registration. He also led a group of students away but he was destroyed and all his students were scattered. <sup>38</sup> So now I tell you: stay away from these men! Leave them alone. If this plan or this effort comes from men, it will fail. <sup>39</sup> But if this is from God, then you will not be able to stop them. You might even be fighting against God Himself!" The Jewish leaders then agreed with what Gamaliel said.

<sup>40</sup> They called in the delegates again. They whipped the delegates and commanded them not to talk to the people ever again about the name of Jesus. After that they let them go free.

<sup>41</sup> The delegates left the Jewish Council, but they were happy because they were given the honor of suffering dishonor for the name of Jesus. <sup>42</sup> The delegates did not stop teaching people. They kept on telling the people the Good News that Jesus is Messiah. Every day they did this in the temple courtyard and in homes.

---

## Chapter 6

<sup>01</sup> More and more people were becoming students of Jesus. But during this same time, the Greek-speaking Jewish students had an argument with the Aramaic-speaking students. They claimed that their widows were not getting their share of the things, which the widows received each day. <sup>02</sup> The twelve delegates called the whole community of students together. They said to them, "It is wrong for us to quit teaching God's message to serve tables instead. <sup>03</sup> So, brothers, pick out seven of your own men. They must be known to be full of wisdom and full of the Spirit. We will confirm them to be over this work. <sup>04</sup> Then we will use all of our time to pray and to teach the message of God."

<sup>05</sup> The whole community liked this idea. So they chose these men: Stephen (a man of great faith and full of the Holy Spirit), Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, Nicolas (a man from Antioch who had become a Jew). <sup>06</sup> Then they put these men before the delegates who prayed and placed their hands on them.

<sup>07</sup> God's message was influencing more and more people. The community of students in Jerusalem became larger and larger. Even many of the Jewish priests were obedient to the faith. <sup>08</sup> Since Stephen was full of God's help in time of need and power, he was working miracles among the people to show great proofs from God. <sup>09</sup> But some Jews stood up and argued with Stephen. They were from a house of worship called "A house of worship for Freed Men." (This house of worship was also for Jews from the cities of Cyrene and Alexandria.) Jews from Cilicia and Asia were with them. They all came and argued with Stephen <sup>10</sup> but the Spirit was helping Stephen speak with wisdom. His words were so powerful that the Jews could not argue with him.

<sup>11</sup> So they secretly paid some men to say, "We heard Stephen say some evil things against Moses and against God!" <sup>12</sup> In this way they stirred up the people, the Jewish elders, and the teachers of the law. They became so angry that they came and grabbed Stephen. Then they took him to the Jewish Council. <sup>13</sup> They brought some men into the meeting. These men were told to tell lies about Stephen. The men said, "This man always says things against this holy place and against the law of Moses. <sup>14</sup> We heard him say that Jesus from Nazareth will destroy this place. He also said that Jesus would change the customs which Moses passed down to us." <sup>15</sup> Everyone sitting in the Jewish Council stared at Stephen. They saw that his face looked like the face of an angel.

---

## Chapter 7

<sup>01</sup> Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these things true?" <sup>02</sup> Stephen answered, "My Jewish fathers and brothers, listen to me. Our glorious God appeared to Abraham, our ancestor, while he was in Mesopotamia. This was before he lived in Haran. <sup>03</sup> God said to Abraham, 'Leave your country and your relatives! Go to another country. I will show you where to go.'

<sup>04</sup> "So Abraham left the country of Chaldea and went to live in Haran. After Abraham's father died, God sent him to this same land where you live now. <sup>05</sup> But God did not give Abraham any of this land — not even a foot of it! God promised that in the future He would give this land to Abraham and his descendants; it would belong to them. (This was before Abraham had any children.) <sup>06</sup> This is what God said to him: 'Your descendants will live as strangers in another country. The people there will make them slaves and do evil things to them for 400 years. <sup>07</sup> I will judge that nation which will make them slaves.' And God also said, 'After those things happen, your children will come out of that country to worship Me in this place.'

<sup>08</sup> God set up a covenant with Abraham; the sign was circumcision. And so when Abraham had a son, Abraham circumcised him when he was eight days old. His son's name was Isaac. Isaac also circumcised his son Jacob and Jacob did the same for his sons. These sons later became the twelve fathers.

<sup>09</sup> "These fathers, Joseph's brothers, became jealous of him. They sold Joseph to be a slave in Egypt; but God was with him. <sup>10</sup> Joseph had many troubles there but God rescued him from them all. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, liked Joseph and respected him because of the wisdom and help in time of need, which God gave Joseph. Pharaoh gave Joseph the job of being governor of Egypt. He even allowed Joseph to rule over all the people in Pharaoh's house. <sup>11</sup> But the whole land of Egypt and the land of Canaan became dry. It became so dry that crops could not grow there. This made the people suffer terribly. Our ancestors could find nothing to eat. <sup>12</sup> But Jacob heard that there was wheat stored in Egypt. So he sent our ancestors there. (This was their first trip to Egypt.)

<sup>13</sup> "Then they went there a second time. On this visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was. And Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph sent some men to invite Jacob, his father, to come to Egypt. He also invited all of his relatives (75 persons altogether). <sup>15</sup> So Jacob

went down to Egypt. He and our ancestors died there. <sup>16</sup> Later their bodies were moved to Shechem. They were placed in a grave there. (It was the same grave in Shechem that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor. He paid them with silver.)

<sup>17</sup> "In Egypt, our nation grew larger in number. (The promise, which God made to Abraham, was soon to come true.) There were more and more of our people in Egypt. <sup>18</sup> Then a different king began to rule over Egypt. He knew nothing about Joseph. <sup>19</sup> He persecuted our ancestors; he forced them to put their babies outdoors to die. <sup>20</sup> During this time Moses was born. He was no ordinary baby. For three months they took care of Moses in his father's house. <sup>21</sup> When they put Moses outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him in. She raised him as if he were her own son. <sup>22</sup> The Egyptians taught Moses everything they knew. He was powerful in the things he said and did.

<sup>23</sup> "When Moses was about 40 years old, he thought it would be good to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel. <sup>24</sup> One day Moses saw an Egyptian man doing wrong to a Hebrew brother. So he defended him. Moses punished the Egyptian for hurting that brother. Moses hit the Egyptian so hard that the man died. <sup>25</sup> Moses was thinking his brothers would understand that God was using him to save them, but they did not understand. <sup>26</sup> The next day Moses saw two of the sons of Israel fighting. He tried to make peace between them. He said, 'Men, you are brothers! Why are you doing wrong to one another?' <sup>27</sup> The man who was doing wrong to the other man pushed Moses away. He said to Moses, 'Who made you our ruler and judge? <sup>28</sup> Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian man yesterday?' <sup>29</sup> When Moses heard him say this, he ran away from Egypt. He went to live in the land of Midian where he was a stranger. While he lived there, he had two sons.

<sup>30</sup> "After 40 years Moses was in the desert on Mount Sinai. An angel appeared to him in the flame of a burning bush. <sup>31</sup> When Moses saw this, he was amazed. He went nearer to look at it more closely. He heard a Voice; it was the Lord's. <sup>32</sup> The Lord God said, 'I am the same God of your ancestors — the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.' Moses began to shake with fear. He was afraid to look at the bush. <sup>33</sup> The Lord said to him, 'Take off your shoes, because the place where you are now standing is holy ground. <sup>34</sup> I have seen My people suffer much in Egypt. I have heard My people moaning. I have come down to rescue them. And now, Moses, I am sending you back to Egypt.'

<sup>35</sup> "This Moses was the same man the people of Israel had rejected. They had asked him, 'Who made you a ruler and judge over us?' Moses is the same man whom God sent to be a ruler and deliverer. God sent Moses with the help of an angel. This was the angel that Moses saw in the burning bush.

<sup>36</sup> "So Moses led the people out. He did powerful things and miracles in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the desert for 40 years. <sup>37</sup> This is the same Moses who said these words to the sons of Israel: 'God will raise up for you a prophet who is like me. He will come from among your own brothers.' <sup>38</sup> This is the same Moses who was with the called out people in the desert at Mount Sinai. He was with the angel that spoke to him and with our ancestors. There at Mount Sinai Moses received commands from God, which still live. Moses gave us these commands.

<sup>39</sup> "But our ancestors did not want to obey Moses. They rejected him. In their hearts, they wanted to go back to Egypt. <sup>40</sup> Our ancestors said to Aaron, 'Make us some gods to lead us! Moses brought us out of Egypt but we do not know what has happened to him.' <sup>41</sup> So the people made an idol, which looked like a calf. Then they brought sacrifices to it. The people were very happy with what they had made with their own hands! <sup>42</sup> But God turned against them. He stopped trying to change their hearts. They were worshipping the sun, the moon, and the stars. This is what is written in the writings of the prophets; God says: 'People of Israel, you killed animals and offered sacrifices in the desert for 40 years, but these sacrifices were not for Me. <sup>43</sup> You carried with you the tent for Moloch and the image of the star of your god, Rephan – statues which you made to worship. So I will send you away beyond Babylon.'

<sup>44</sup> "God spoke to our ancestors in a special tent; it was with the people in the desert. God commanded Moses how to make this tent. He made it like the pattern, which God showed him.

<sup>45</sup> Later, Joshua led our fathers to capture the lands of the other nations. Our people went in and God drove those people out. When our people went into this new land, they took this same tent with them. They had received it from their ancestors. They kept it until the time of David.

<sup>46</sup> "God was very pleased with David. David asked God to allow him to build a house for Him, the God of Jacob, <sup>47</sup> but Solomon was the one who actually built it. <sup>48</sup> However, the Highest One does not live in houses, which men build with their hands. This is what the prophet Isaiah wrote: <sup>49</sup> 'The Lord God says, "Heaven is My throne. The earth is a place to rest

My feet. What kind of house could you build for Me? There is no place where I need to rest! <sup>50</sup> Remember, I made all these things!"

<sup>51</sup> Stephen continued speaking: "You stubborn leaders! Your hearts are not circumcised! You won't listen to God! You are always against what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell you. Your ancestors did this, and you are just like them! <sup>52</sup> Your ancestors persecuted every prophet who ever lived. Those prophets said long ago that the one that is right would come, but your ancestors killed the prophets. And now you have turned against this one that is right and murdered him. <sup>53</sup> You are the people who received the law of Moses, the commands which God gave through the angels – but you do not obey the law!"

<sup>54</sup> When the Jewish leaders heard Stephen say these things, they became very angry. They were so mad that they were grinding their teeth at Stephen. <sup>55</sup> Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit. He looked up into the sky and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at God's right side. <sup>56</sup> He said, "Look! I see heaven open. And I see the Son of Man standing at God's right side!" <sup>57</sup> Then they all shouted with a loud voice. They covered their ears with their hands. Together they all ran at Stephen.

<sup>58</sup> They took him out of the city to stone him to death. The men, who told lies against Stephen, gave their robes to a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup> They began to throw stones at Stephen but Stephen was praying. He said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" <sup>60</sup> He fell on his knees and shouted this: "Lord, don't blame them for this sin!" After Stephen said that, he died. Saul approved of the killing of Stephen.

---

## Chapter 8

<sup>01-03</sup> Some good men buried Stephen. They cried very loudly for him. On that day there was a fierce attack on the called out people in Jerusalem. Saul was also trying to destroy them. He even went into their homes. He dragged out men and women and put them in jail. All of the called out people had to leave Jerusalem; only the delegates stayed there. They all went to different places in Judea and Samaria. <sup>04</sup> They were scattered everywhere. And everywhere they went, they told people The Word.

<sup>05</sup> Philip went to the city of Samaria. He was preaching about Messiah. <sup>06</sup> The crowds there heard Philip and they saw the miracles that he was doing. With a single purpose they all listened very carefully to the things Philip said. <sup>07</sup> Many of these people had evil spirits. The spirits came out of them; they made a loud noise. There were also many paralyzed and crippled people. Philip healed them. <sup>08</sup> This made the people in that city very happy.

<sup>09</sup> However, there was in that city a man named Simon who did magic tricks before Philip came. He amazed all the people of Samaria with these tricks. Simon boasted and called himself a great man. <sup>10</sup> All of the people – the least important and the most important – had listened closely to Simon. The people said, "This man is the power of God which is called 'The Great Power'!" <sup>11</sup> Simon had amazed the people with his magic tricks for so long that the people became his students. <sup>12</sup> But Philip told the people the Good News about the kingdom of God and the authority of Jesus the Messiah. Men and women believed Philip and were immersed. <sup>13</sup> Simon himself also believed and was immersed. Simon stayed near Philip. He saw the miracles and the very powerful things, which Philip did. Simon was amazed.

<sup>14</sup> The delegates were still in Jerusalem. They heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God's message. So the delegates sent Peter and John to the people in Samaria. <sup>15</sup> When Peter and John arrived, they prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>16</sup> (These people had been immersed by the authority of the Lord Jesus, but the Holy Spirit had not yet come down on any of them.) <sup>17</sup> The two delegates put their hands on the people. Then the people received the Holy Spirit.

<sup>18</sup> Simon saw that the gifts of the Spirit were given to people when the delegates put their hands on them. So Simon offered the delegates some money. <sup>19</sup> Simon said, "Give me this power so that when I put my hands on a person, he will receive the Holy Spirit." <sup>20</sup> Peter said to Simon, "You

and your money should both be destroyed! You thought you could buy God's gift with money. <sup>21</sup> Your heart is not right before God. You cannot have a part with us or a share in this work. <sup>22</sup> Change your heart! Turn away from this evil thing, which you have done. Pray to the Lord God. Perhaps He will forgive you for thinking this in your heart. <sup>23</sup> I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and bound by sin." <sup>24</sup> Simon answered, "Both of you pray to the Lord God for me! Pray that the things you have said will not happen to me!"

<sup>25</sup> Then the two delegates told the people the things, which they had seen Jesus do. The delegates preached the message of the Lord. Then they went back to Jerusalem. On the way they went through many Samaritan villages and preached the Good News to the people.

<sup>26</sup> An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip. The angel said, "Get ready and go south. Go to the road which leads down to the town of Gaza from Jerusalem — the road that is not used much now." <sup>27</sup> So Philip got ready and went. On the road he saw a man from the country of Ethiopia. This man was an important eunuch in the service of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He was responsible for taking care of all her money. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship. <sup>28</sup> Now he was on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot and reading from the book of Isaiah, the prophet. <sup>29</sup> The Spirit said to Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." <sup>30</sup> So Philip ran toward it, and he heard the man reading aloud. He was reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup> The man answered, "How can I understand? I have no one to explain it to me?" Then he invited Philip to climb in and sit with him. <sup>32</sup> He was reading this part of Scripture: "He was like a sheep when it is taken away to be killed. He was like a lamb, which makes no sound when someone cuts off its wool. <sup>33</sup> He was shamed; all his rights were taken away. His life on earth was ended. There will be no story about his descendants." <sup>34</sup> The officer asked Philip, "Please tell me, whom is the prophet talking about? Is he talking about himself or about someone else?"

<sup>35</sup> Philip began to speak. He started with this same Scripture and told the man the Good News about Jesus.

<sup>36</sup> While they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The officer said, "Look! Here is water! What is stopping me from being immersed?" <sup>37</sup> And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." <sup>38</sup> Then the officer gave a command for the chariot to stop. Both Philip and

the officer went down into the water, and Philip immersed him. <sup>39</sup> When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away; the officer did not see him. The officer continued on his way home. He was very happy.

<sup>40</sup> Philip appeared in a town called Azotus. He was preaching the Good News about Jesus in all the towns along the way from Azotus to Caesarea.

---

## Chapter 9

<sup>01</sup> In Jerusalem, Saul was still trying to scare the students of the Lord Jesus, threatening to kill them. So he went to the high priest. <sup>02</sup> Saul asked him to write letters to the Jews of the houses of worship in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the authority to find people in Damascus who were students of the Way. If he found any there, men or women, he would tie them up and bring them back to Jerusalem.

<sup>03</sup> So Saul went to Damascus. When he came near the city, a bright light from the sky suddenly shined all around him. <sup>04</sup> Saul fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying to him: "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" <sup>05</sup> Saul asked, "Who are you, Sir?" The voice answered, "I am Jesus. I am the one you are persecuting. <sup>06</sup> Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do." <sup>07</sup> The men traveling with Saul stood there. They said nothing. The men heard the voice but they saw no one. <sup>08</sup> Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes but he could not see anything. So the men with Saul held his hand and led him into Damascus.

<sup>09</sup> For three days Saul could not see; he did not eat or drink. <sup>10</sup> There was a student of Jesus in Damascus. His name was Ananias. The Lord Jesus spoke to Ananias in a vision, saying: "Ananias!" Ananias answered, "Here I am, Lord." <sup>11</sup> The Lord said to Ananias, "Get up and go to Straight Street. Find the house of Judas. Ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. He is there now, praying. <sup>12</sup> In a vision a man named Ananias came to him and put his hands on him so that he could see again."

<sup>13</sup> But Ananias answered, "Lord, many people have told me about this man Saul. They told me about how many terrible things he did to your saints in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> Now he has come to Damascus. The ruling priests have given him the authority to arrest all people who trust in your name." <sup>15</sup> But the Lord Jesus said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. He will carry my name to kings, to the Jewish people, and to other nations. <sup>16</sup> I will show Saul the things he must suffer for my name."

<sup>17</sup> So Ananias left and went to the house of Judas. He put his hands on Saul and said, "Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the one you saw on the road when you came here. He sent me so that you may see again and so that you may be filled with the Holy Spirit." <sup>18</sup> Immediately something, which looked like fish scales, fell off Saul's eyes.

Saul could see again! He got up and was immersed. <sup>19</sup> Then he ate some food and began to feel strong again. Saul stayed with the students of Jesus in Damascus for a few days.

<sup>20</sup> Very soon he began to preach about Jesus in the houses of worship, "Jesus is the Son of God!" <sup>21</sup> Everyone who heard Saul was surprised. They were saying, "This is the same man who was in Jerusalem. He was trying to destroy the people who trust in this name! He had come here to do the same thing, to arrest the students of Jesus and take them back to Jerusalem to the ruling priests."

<sup>22</sup> But Saul became more and more powerful. He proved that Jesus is the Messiah. His proofs were so strong that the Jewish leaders who lived in Damascus did not know how to answer him. <sup>23</sup> After many days the Jewish leaders made plans to kill Saul. <sup>24</sup> The Jews were watching the city gates day and night. They wanted to kill him, but Saul learned about their plan. <sup>25</sup> One night some students, whom Saul had taught, helped him leave the city. The students put him in a basket. Then they lowered him down through a hole in the city walls.

<sup>26</sup> Then Saul went to Jerusalem. He was trying to join the group of students but they were all afraid of him; they did not believe that Saul truly was a student of Jesus. <sup>27</sup> But Barnabas accepted him and brought him to the delegates. Barnabas told them that Saul had seen the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. He explained to the delegates how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Then he told them how, in Damascus, Saul had preached to the people in the name of the Lord without fear. <sup>28</sup> And so Saul stayed with the students. He went everywhere in Jerusalem preaching with the authority of the Lord Jesus without being afraid. <sup>29</sup> Saul often talked with the Jewish people who spoke Greek. He had arguments with them so they were trying to kill him. <sup>30</sup> When the brothers learned about this, they took Saul to the city of Caesarea. From Caesarea they sent Saul to the city of Tarsus.

<sup>31</sup> Everywhere in Judea, the Galilee, and Samaria, God's called out people had a time of peace. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the community became stronger and stronger. They showed that they had awesome respect for the Lord by the way they lived. Because of this, the called out people grew larger and larger.

<sup>32</sup> Peter was traveling through all of the towns around Jerusalem. He visited the saints who lived in the town of Lydda. <sup>33</sup> In Lydda he met a paralyzed man named Aeneas. Aeneas had not been able to leave his bed

for the past eight years. <sup>34</sup> Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed! You can do this for yourself now!" Aeneas got up immediately. <sup>35</sup> All of the people living in Lydda and on the Plain of Sharon saw him. These people turned to the Lord Jesus. <sup>36</sup> In the town of Joppa there was a student of Jesus named Tabitha (in Aramaic). (Her Greek name, Dorcas, means "a deer".) She always did good things for people. She always gave to people in need. <sup>37</sup> While Peter was in Lydda, Tabitha became sick and died. They washed her body and put it in an upstairs room. <sup>38</sup> The students in Joppa heard that Peter was in Lydda. (Lydda is near Joppa.) So they sent two men to Peter. They begged him, "Hurry, please come quickly!" <sup>39</sup> Peter got ready and went with them. When he arrived, they took him to the upstairs room. All of the widows stood around Peter. They were crying. They showed him the shirts and robes which Dorcas had made while she was still alive. <sup>40</sup> Peter sent everyone out of the room. He kneeled down and prayed. Then he turned to Tabitha's body and said, "Tabitha, get up!" She opened her eyes. When she saw Peter, she sat up. <sup>41</sup> He gave her his hand and helped her stand up. Then he called the saints and the widows into the room. He showed them Tabitha; she was alive! <sup>42</sup> People everywhere in Joppa learned about this. Many of these people believed in the Lord Jesus.

<sup>43</sup> Peter stayed in Joppa for many days. He stayed with a man named Simon who was a leather-worker.

---

## Chapter 10

<sup>01</sup> In the city of Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius. He was an officer in the "Italian" regiment of the Roman army. <sup>02</sup> Cornelius was a good man. He and everyone who lived in his home had awesome respect for the true God. He gave much of his money to the poor people. Cornelius always prayed to God. <sup>03</sup> One afternoon about three o'clock, Cornelius clearly saw a vision. In the vision an angel of God came to him and said, "Cornelius!" <sup>04</sup> Cornelius stared at the angel. He became afraid and asked, "What do you want, sir?" The angel said to Cornelius, "God has heard your prayers. He has seen your gifts to the poor people. God has not forgotten the things you have done. <sup>05</sup> Send some men now to the town of Joppa. Send for a man named Simon. He is also called Peter. <sup>06</sup> Simon is staying with another man named Simon, who is a leather-worker. He has a house beside the sea."

<sup>07</sup> The angel who spoke to Cornelius left. Then Cornelius called two of his household slaves and a soldier. This soldier was a good man. They always stayed close to Cornelius. <sup>08</sup> Cornelius explained everything to these three men. Then he sent them to Joppa.

<sup>09</sup> The next day these men came near Joppa. At that time Peter was going up to the roof to pray. It was about noon. <sup>10</sup> Peter was hungry and wanted to eat. But while they were preparing the food for Peter to eat, a vision came to him. <sup>11</sup> He saw something coming down through the open sky. It looked like a big sheet coming down to the ground. It was being lowered to the ground by its four corners. <sup>12</sup> Every kind of animal was in it — animals, which walk on four feet, animals, which crawl on the ground, and birds, which fly in the air.

<sup>13</sup> Then a Voice said to Peter, "Get up, Peter; kill any one of these animals and eat it." <sup>14</sup> But Peter said, "I would never do that, Lord! I have never eaten food which is unholy or not pure." <sup>15</sup> But the voice said to him the second time, "God has made these things pure. Do not call them 'unholy'!"

<sup>16</sup> This happened a third time. Then the whole thing was taken back up into the sky immediately. <sup>17</sup> Peter was wondering what this vision meant. Then the men whom Cornelius had sent found Simon's house. They were standing at the gate. <sup>18</sup> They asked, "Is Simon Peter staying here?" <sup>19</sup> While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Listen, three men are looking for you. <sup>20</sup> Get up and go downstairs. Go with these men and do not have any doubts. I have sent them to you."

<sup>21</sup> So Peter went downstairs to the men. He said, "I am the man you are looking for. Why did you come here?" <sup>22</sup> The men answered, "A holy angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house. Cornelius is a Roman army officer. He is a good man; he has awesome respect for the true God. All of the Jewish people respect him. The angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house so that he may listen to the words you have to say."

<sup>23</sup> Peter asked the men to come in and stay for the night. The next day Peter got ready and went away with the three men. Some of the Jewish brothers from Joppa went with Peter. <sup>24</sup> The next day they came into the city of Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them. He had already called in his relatives and close friends. <sup>25</sup> When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him. Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet and worshipped him. <sup>26</sup> But Peter made him get up. Peter said, "Stand up! I am only a man, like you."

<sup>27</sup> Peter continued talking with Cornelius. Then Peter went inside and saw a large group of people there. <sup>28</sup> Peter said to them, "You people understand that it is forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit any non-Jewish person. But God has shown me that I should not call any person 'unholy' or 'unclean'. <sup>29</sup> That is why I did not argue when the men invited me to come here. Now please tell me why you sent for me."

<sup>30</sup> Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting. It was at this same time, three o'clock in the afternoon, when I was praying. Suddenly there was a man standing before me. He was dressed in shining clothes. <sup>31</sup> The man said, 'Cornelius! God has heard your prayer. He has seen your gifts to the poor people. God has not forgotten the things you have done. <sup>32</sup> So send someone to the city of Joppa. Ask Simon Peter to come. Peter is staying in the house of another man named Simon, who is a leather-worker. His house is beside the sea.' <sup>33</sup> So I sent for you immediately. It was very good of you to come here. Now we are all here in the presence of God. We want to hear everything that the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

<sup>34</sup> Peter began to speak, "Now I understand! God treats everyone the same. <sup>35</sup> God accepts any person who worships Him and does what is right. It does not matter what race a person comes from. <sup>36</sup> God has spoken to the sons of Israel. He sent them the message, that peace has come through Jesus the Messiah, who is the Lord of all men! <sup>37</sup> You know what occurred all over Judea. It began in the Galilee after John preached to the people about immersion. <sup>38</sup> You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power. Jesus went everywhere doing good things for people. He healed everyone who was

ruled by the devil. God was with Jesus. <sup>39</sup> We saw all of the things that he did in Judea and in Jerusalem. But Jesus was killed; they put him on a cross made of wood.

<sup>40</sup> "However, on the third day after his death, God raised Jesus to life! God allowed a few people to see him clearly. <sup>41</sup> Jesus was not seen by all of the people; only the witnesses whom God had already chosen – they saw him. We are those witnesses! We ate and drank with Jesus after he was raised from death. <sup>42</sup> Jesus commanded us to preach to the people. He told us to tell them that he is the one whom God chose to be the judge of all people, living or dead. <sup>43</sup> Every person who commits himself to Jesus will be forgiven through the authority of Jesus. All of the prophets say that this is true..."

<sup>44</sup> While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those people who were listening to his speech. <sup>45</sup> The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed. They were shocked because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on people who were not Jewish. <sup>46</sup> These Jewish believers heard them speaking different inspired languages and praising God. Then Peter said, <sup>47</sup> "Can we refuse to allow these people to be immersed in water? They have received the Holy Spirit the same as we did!" <sup>48</sup> So Peter commanded that Cornelius and his relatives and friends be immersed by the authority of Jesus the Messiah. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

---

## Chapter 11

<sup>01</sup> The delegates and the brothers in Judea heard that non-Jewish people had also accepted God's message. <sup>02</sup> However, there were some Jewish believers who argued with Peter when he came back to Jerusalem. <sup>03</sup> They said, "You went into the homes of men who are not Jewish! You even ate with them!"

<sup>04</sup> Then Peter began to explain the whole story to them. <sup>05</sup> He said, "I was in the town of Joppa. While I was praying, a vision came to me. In the vision I saw something coming down from the sky. It looked like a big sheet. It was being lowered to the ground by its four corners. It came down and stopped very near to me. <sup>06</sup> After staring, I looked inside it and I saw animals, both tame and wild. I saw animals which crawl and birds, which fly in the air. <sup>07</sup> I heard a voice say to me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill any of these animals and eat!' <sup>08</sup> But I said, 'I would never do that, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is unholy or not pure.' <sup>09</sup> But the voice from the sky answered a second time, 'God has made these things pure. Do not call them unholy!' <sup>10</sup> This happened a third time. Then the whole thing was pulled back up into the sky.

<sup>11</sup> "Suddenly three men came to the house where I was staying. These three men were sent to me from the city of Caesarea. <sup>12</sup> The Spirit told me to go along with them without doubts. These six brothers here also went with me. We went into the house of Cornelius. <sup>13</sup> Cornelius told us about the angel that he had seen standing in his house. The angel said to him, 'Send someone to Joppa. Invite Simon Peter to come. <sup>14</sup> He will tell you words by which you and everyone in your group will be saved.'

<sup>15</sup> "After I began my speech, the Holy Spirit came upon them, the same as He did upon us in the beginning. <sup>16</sup> Then I remembered the words of the Lord Jesus when he used to say: 'John immersed people in water, but you will be immersed in the Holy Spirit!' <sup>17</sup> God gave the same gift to these people that He gave to us who believed in the Lord Jesus, the Messiah. So could I stop God?"

<sup>18</sup> When the group heard these things, they stopped arguing. They gave glory to God and said, "Then God is allowing non-Jewish people to change their hearts and have life too!" <sup>19</sup> The believers were scattered by the persecution, which occurred after Stephen was killed.

Some of the believers went to places far away, like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch in Syria. They told the message in these places, but they told it only to Jews.

<sup>20</sup> However, some of these believers came to the city of Antioch. They were men from Cyprus and Cyrene. These men were also talking to non-Jews, telling them the Good News, that Jesus is Lord. <sup>21</sup> The Lord was helping the believers. A large group of people believed and turned to the Lord. <sup>22</sup> The called out people, which were in Jerusalem heard about them in Antioch in Syria. So they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

<sup>23-24</sup> Barnabas was a good man. He was full of the Holy Spirit and full of faith. When Barnabas went to Antioch, he saw how much God had blessed them with help in time of need. This made him very happy. He began to encourage all the believers in Antioch. He told them, "Never lose your faith. Always obey the Lord with all your hearts." A large number of people became students of the Lord Jesus. <sup>25</sup> Then Barnabas left for the city of Tarsus. He was looking for Saul. <sup>26</sup> When he found Saul, Barnabas brought him to Antioch. Saul and Barnabas taught a large crowd. For a whole year they met with the called out people. In Antioch, the students were called "Christ-like people" for the first time.

<sup>27</sup> About that same time, some prophets went down from Jerusalem to Antioch. <sup>28</sup> Agabus stood up and spoke. With the help of the Holy Spirit, he said, "A very bad time is coming to the whole world. There will be very little food for people to eat." (This famine occurred during the time when Claudius was Caesar.) <sup>29</sup> The students of Jesus decided that they would all try to help their brothers and sisters who lived in Judea. Each of them planned to send as much as they could. <sup>30</sup> They gathered the money and gave it to Barnabas and Saul. Then Barnabas and Saul brought it to the elders.

---

## Chapter 12

<sup>01</sup> During that same time, King Herod Agrippa I began to persecute some members of the called out people. <sup>02</sup> He ordered that Jacob be killed with a sword. (Jacob was the brother of John.) <sup>03</sup> Herod saw that the Jewish leaders liked this. So he decided to arrest Peter too. (This happened during the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.) <sup>04</sup> Herod had Peter arrested and put in jail. He turned Peter over to a group of 16 soldiers to guard him. Herod wanted to wait until after the Passover Festival. Then he planned to bring Peter before the people. <sup>05</sup> So Peter was kept in jail, but the called out people were constantly praying to God for Peter.

<sup>06</sup> Peter was sleeping between two of the soldiers. He was bound with two chains. More soldiers were guarding the jail entrance. It was at night and Herod planned to bring Peter out to the people the next day. <sup>07</sup> Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood there. A light shined in the cell. The angel touched Peter on the side and woke him up. The angel said, "Hurry, get up!" Then the chains fell off of Peter's hands. <sup>08</sup> The angel said to Peter, "Get dressed and put your shoes on." So Peter did this. Then the angel said, "Put on your robe and follow me." <sup>09</sup> Then the angel went out and Peter followed. Peter did not know if the angel was really doing this. He kept thinking that he might be seeing a vision. <sup>10</sup> Peter and the angel went past the first guard and the second guard. Then they came to the iron gate, which separated them from the city. The gate opened for them by itself. Peter and the angel went through it and walked about a block. Then the angel suddenly left.

<sup>11</sup> Then Peter realized what had happened. He thought, "Now I know that the Lord really did send his angel to me. He rescued me from Herod and everything which the Jewish people were expecting." <sup>12</sup> When Peter realized this, he went to Mary's house. She was the mother of John. (John was also called Mark.) Many people were gathered there; they were all praying. <sup>13</sup> Peter knocked on the outside door. A servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. <sup>14</sup> Rhoda recognized Peter's voice. She was so happy she even forgot to open the door. Instead, she ran inside and told the group, "Peter is at the door!" <sup>15</sup> They said to Rhoda, "You are crazy!" But she kept insisting that it was true. So they said, "It must be Peter's angel." <sup>16</sup> Peter continued to knock. When they opened the door, they saw Peter. They were amazed.

<sup>17</sup> Peter made a sign with his hand to tell them to be quiet. He explained to them how the Lord led him out of jail. He said, "Tell Jacob and the other brothers what happened." Then Peter left to go to another place.

<sup>18</sup> The next day the soldiers were very upset. They wondered what had happened to Peter. <sup>19</sup> Herod looked everywhere for Peter but could not find him. Herod asked the guards many questions and tortured them. Then he gave the order that the guards be killed. Later, Herod left Judea. He went down to the city of Caesarea and stayed there for a while.

<sup>20</sup> Herod was very angry with the people from the cities of Tyre and Sidon. However, they were able to get Blastus on their side. (Blastus was the king's personal servant.) They came to Herod with one purpose in mind: they wanted peace, because their country needed food from Herod's country. <sup>21</sup> Herod decided on a day to meet with them. On that day Herod was wearing a beautiful royal robe. He sat on his throne and made a speech to the people. <sup>22</sup> The people shouted, "This is not a man; it is the voice of a god!" <sup>23</sup> But Herod did not give the glory to God. So an angel of the Lord caused him to become sick. He was soon eaten by worms inside of him and he died.

<sup>24</sup> The message of God was spreading and influencing more and more people. <sup>25</sup> After Barnabas and Saul finished their work in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch. John Mark went along with them.

---

## Chapter 13

<sup>01</sup> In the called out people at Antioch in Syria, there were some prophets and teachers. They were: Barnabas, Simeon (also called Black), Lucius (from the city of Cyrene), Manaen (who had grown up with Herod Antipas, the ruler), and Saul. <sup>02</sup> They were all serving the Lord and fasting. The Holy Spirit said to them, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul for My service; I have chosen them to do a special work." <sup>03</sup> So they fasted and prayed. They put their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them out.

<sup>04</sup> Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They went to the city of Seleucia. Then they sailed from Seleucia to the island of Cyprus. <sup>05</sup> When Barnabas and Saul came to the city of Salamis, they were preaching God's message in the Jewish houses of worship. (John Mark went along to help them.)

<sup>06</sup> They went across the whole island to the town of Paphos. In Paphos, they met a Jewish man who did tricks of magic. His name was Barjesus. He said he was a prophet, but he was not. <sup>07</sup> Barjesus always stayed closed to Sergius Paulus, the governor. Sergius Paulus was a wise man. He asked Barnabas and Saul to come to him; he wanted to hear God's message. <sup>08</sup> But Elymas, the magician, (the name for Barjesus in the Greek language) opposed Saul and Barnabas. Elymas tried to turn the governor away from the faith.

<sup>09</sup> However, Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Saul's other name was Paul.) Paul looked straight at Elymas <sup>10</sup> and said, "You son of the devil! You are an enemy of everything, which is right! You are full of evil tricks and lies. You always try to turn the Lord's truths into lies! <sup>11</sup> Now the Lord will touch you and you will be blind. For a time you won't be able to see the light which comes from the sun." Then everything quickly became dark for Elymas. He walked around lost, trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. <sup>12</sup> When the governor saw this, he believed. He was amazed at the teaching of the Lord.

<sup>13</sup> Paul and those who were with him sailed away from Paphos. They came to Perga, a town in Pamphylia. But John Mark left them; he went back home to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> They continued their trip from Perga and went to Antioch, a city in Pisidia. In Antioch, on the Sabbath day, they went into the Jewish house of worship and sat down.

<sup>15</sup> The law of Moses and the writings of the prophets were read. Then the leaders of the house of worship sent a message to Paul and Barnabas:

"Brothers, if you have something to say which will help the people here, please speak."

<sup>16</sup> Paul stood up. He raised his hand and said, "Men of Israel, and you other people who have awesome respect for the true God, please listen to me! <sup>17</sup> The God of our people, Israel, chose our ancestors. God made His people great during the time that they lived in Egypt as strangers. God brought them out of that country with great power. <sup>18</sup> For 40 years in the desert God was patient with them. <sup>19</sup> He destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, giving their land to His people.

<sup>20</sup> "All of this happened in about 450 years. After this, God gave judges to our people until the time of Samuel, the prophet. <sup>21</sup> Then the people asked for a king. God gave them Saul, the son of Kish. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. He was king for 40 years. <sup>22</sup> After God removed Saul, He made David their king. God vouched for David: 'David, the son of Jesse, is the man I like. He will do all the things I want him to do.' <sup>23</sup> God has brought one of David's descendants to Israel to be their Savior; he is Jesus. God had promised to do this.

<sup>24</sup> "Before Jesus came, John preached to all the people of Israel. John told the people to change their hearts and to be immersed. <sup>25</sup> As John was finishing his work, he always used to say, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the Messiah. He is coming later. I'm not worthy to untie his shoes!'

<sup>26</sup> "My brothers, sons in the family of Abraham, and you non-Jews who also have awesome respect for the true God, listen! The news about this safety from danger has been sent to us. <sup>27</sup> The Jews living in Jerusalem and the Jewish leaders did not realize it. The words that the prophets wrote about the Messiah were read to the Jews every Sabbath day, but they did not understand. The Jewish leaders condemned the Messiah. When they did this, they made the words of the prophets come true! <sup>28</sup> They could not find any real reason why he should die, yet they asked Pilate to kill him. <sup>29</sup> These Jews did all the things that the Scriptures said about him. Then they took him down from the cross of wood and put him in a tomb. <sup>30</sup> But God raised him up from death!

<sup>31</sup> "After this, for many days, Jesus was seen by the people who had gone with him from the Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people. <sup>32-33</sup> We are telling you the Good News: God made a promise to our fathers. We are their descendants and God has made this promise come true for us. God did this by raising Jesus from death. We also read about this in Psalm 2: 'You are My Son. Today I have become your Father.'

<sup>34</sup> "God raised Jesus from death. Jesus will never go back to the grave and decay. So God said: 'I will give you the sure and holy promises which I made to David.' <sup>35</sup> But in another place God says: 'You will not let the body of Your Holy One decay in the grave.' <sup>36</sup> But David did God's will during his own generation. Then he died. David was buried with his fathers and his body did decay! <sup>37</sup> However, the one whom God raised from death did not decay!

<sup>38-39</sup> "Brothers, you must understand what we are telling you: you can have forgiveness of your sins through this man. The law of Moses could not make you right with God, but everyone who believes is made right. <sup>40</sup> The prophets said something would take place. Be careful! Don't let this happen to you: <sup>41</sup> 'Look, you people who doubt! Wonder and die! During your time, I will do something, which you will not believe. You would not believe it even if someone were to explain it to you!'"

<sup>42</sup> While Paul and Barnabas were leaving the house of worship, the people were begging them to come back on the next Sabbath day and tell them more about these things. <sup>43</sup> After the meeting, many converts to the Jewish faith (who worshipped the true God) and many of the Jews followed Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas were persuading them to continue living in the help in time of need of God.

<sup>44</sup> On the next Sabbath day almost all the people in the city came together to hear the message of the Lord. <sup>45</sup> The Jewish leaders saw the crowds there. So they became very jealous. They said some terrible things and argued against the words, which Paul said. <sup>46</sup> But Paul and Barnabas were very bold. They said, "It was necessary that we speak God's message to you Jews first, but you will not listen. You are deciding that you are unworthy of having eternal life! Therefore we will now go to the people of other nations! <sup>47</sup> This is what the Lord God commanded us to do: 'I have made you a light for other nations so that you may show the way of safety from danger to people all over the world.'"

<sup>48</sup> When the non-Jewish people heard Paul say this, they were happy. They gave honor to the Lord's message, and many of the people believed the message. These were the people appointed to have eternal life. <sup>49</sup> And so the message of the Lord was spreading through the whole country.

<sup>50</sup> But the Jewish leaders stirred up some of the important religious women and the leaders of the city to oppose Paul and Barnabas. They were angry. These people persecuted them and threw them out of town. <sup>51</sup> So Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet. Then they went to

the town of Iconium. <sup>52</sup> The students of Jesus in Antioch were happy and full of the Holy Spirit.

---

## Chapter 14

<sup>01</sup> When Paul and Barnabas went to the town of Iconium, they entered the Jewish house of worship. (This is what they did in every town.) They spoke to the people there in such a way that many Jews and non-Jews believed what they said. <sup>02</sup> However, some of the Jews did not believe. These Jews stirred up the non-Jewish people and made them persecute the brothers. <sup>03</sup> The Lord helped Paul and Barnabas to be bold, and they stayed in Iconium a long time. Paul and Barnabas preached boldly for the Lord. The Lord was proving what they said was true; He helped them do miracles and wonders.

<sup>04</sup> But some of the people in the town agreed with the Jews; other people in the town believed Paul and Barnabas — so the town was divided. <sup>05</sup> Some non-Jewish people, some Jews and their Jewish leaders tried to hurt Paul and Barnabas. These people wanted to stone them to death. <sup>06</sup> When Paul and Barnabas learned about this, they left that town. They went to Lystra and Derbe, towns in Lycaonia, and to the surrounding area. <sup>07</sup> They told the Good News there too.

<sup>08</sup> In Lystra there was a man whose feet were paralyzed. He had been born crippled; he had never walked. This man was sitting there <sup>09</sup> and listening to Paul speak. Paul looked straight at him. Paul saw that the man believed that God could heal him. <sup>10</sup> So Paul shouted, "Stand up on your feet!" The man jumped up and began walking around. <sup>11</sup> When the crowd saw what Paul did, they shouted in their own Lycaonian language. They said, "The gods have become like men! They have come down to us!" <sup>12</sup> The people began to call Barnabas "Zeus". They called Paul "Hermes" because he was the main speaker.

<sup>13</sup> The temple of Zeus was near the town. The priest of this temple brought some bulls and flowers to the town gates. The priest and the crowds wanted to give an offering to worship Paul and Barnabas. <sup>14</sup> But when the delegates, Barnabas and Paul, understood what the people were doing, they ripped their own clothes. Then they ran in among the crowd and shouted to them, <sup>15</sup> "Men, why are you doing these things? We are not gods! We have the same feelings you have! We came to tell you the Good News. We are telling you to turn away from these worthless things. Turn to the true living God. He is the One who made the land, the sea, the sky, and everything which is in them. <sup>16</sup> In the past, God let all the nations do what they wanted. <sup>17</sup> But God did things to prove that He is real: He does good things for you. He gives you rain from the sky and

good harvests at the right times. He gives you plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."

<sup>18</sup> Paul and Barnabas told the crowds these things. The people still wanted to offer sacrifices to worship them, but Paul and Barnabas stopped them. <sup>19</sup> Then some Jews came from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium. They persuaded the people to oppose Paul. And so the people stoned Paul and dragged him out of the town. The people thought that they had killed him. <sup>20</sup> The students of Jesus gathered around Paul and he got up and went back into town. The next day he and Barnabas left and went to the town of Derbe.

<sup>21</sup> Paul and Barnabas told the Good News in the town of Derbe too. Many people became students of Jesus. Paul and Barnabas went back to the towns of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia. <sup>22</sup> In those cities they made the students of Jesus stronger. They helped them to stay in the faith. They said, "We must suffer many things on our way into God's kingdom." <sup>23</sup> They appointed elders in every called out group. They fasted and prayed for these men. These men had put their trust in the Lord Jesus. So Paul and Barnabas put them in the Lord's care.

<sup>24</sup> Paul and Barnabas went through the country of Pisidia. Then they came to the country of Pamphylia. <sup>25</sup> They preached the Word in the town of Perga and then they went down to the town of Attalia. <sup>26</sup> And from there Paul and Barnabas sailed away to Antioch in Syria. This is the city where they had begun this work. They had sent them out with God's help in time of need. Now their trip was over.

<sup>27</sup> When Paul and Barnabas arrived, they gathered the called out people together. Paul and Barnabas told them all about the things which God had done with them. They said, "God opened the door of faith so that non-Jewish people could believe too!" <sup>28</sup> They stayed there a long time with the students of Jesus.

---

## Chapter 15

<sup>01</sup> Then some men came down to Antioch in Syria from Judea. They began teaching non-Jewish brothers: "You cannot be saved if you are not circumcised. Moses told us to do it." <sup>02</sup> Paul and Barnabas were very opposed to this teaching. They argued with these men about it.

So the group decided to send Paul, Barnabas, and some other men to Jerusalem. These men were going there to talk more about this issue with the delegates and elders. <sup>03</sup> They called out people who helped the men with what they needed for the trip. These men went through the provinces of Phoenicia and Samaria. In these countries they told all about how non-Jewish people had turned to the true God. This made all the brothers very happy.

<sup>04</sup> Paul, Barnabas, and the others arrived in Jerusalem. The delegates, the elders, and the entire church welcomed them. Paul, Barnabas, and the others told about all the things which God had done with them. <sup>05</sup> Some of the believers in Jerusalem had belonged to the Pharisee sect. They stood up and claimed, "The non-Jewish believers must be circumcised. We must command them to obey the law of Moses!" <sup>06</sup> Then the delegates and the elders gathered to study this problem. <sup>07</sup> There was a long debate.

Then Peter stood up and said to them, "My brothers, I know you remember what happened in the early days. At that time God chose me from among you to preach the Good News to non-Jewish people and they believed it. <sup>08</sup> God knows the hearts of all men and He accepted these non-Jewish people. He showed this to us by giving them the Holy Spirit too. <sup>09</sup> God did the same thing for them that He did for us. When they made a commitment, God made their hearts pure.

<sup>10</sup> "So now why are you testing God? You are putting a heavy load around the necks of the non-Jewish brothers. Neither we nor our ancestors were strong enough to carry it! <sup>11</sup> No, we believe that both we and these people will be saved by the help in time of need of the Lord Jesus!"

<sup>12</sup> Then the whole group became quiet. They were listening to Paul and Barnabas tell all the miracles and wonders that God did through them among non-Jewish people.

<sup>13</sup> After a time of silence, Jacob spoke. He said, "My brothers, listen to me. <sup>14</sup> Simon Peter has told us how God showed His concern for non-Jewish people. For the first time, God accepted non-Jewish people and made them His own people. <sup>15</sup> The written words of the prophets agree with this too: <sup>16</sup> 'I will return later. I will build David's house again. It has fallen down but I will build it up again. I will restore it.

<sup>17</sup> Then all men can look for the Lord God. All the other nations will search for Him. They can be My people too. The Lord God said this.' And He is the One who does all these things. <sup>18</sup> These things have been known from the beginning of time.

<sup>19</sup> "So I think we should not bother non-Jewish brothers who have turned to God. <sup>20</sup> Instead, we should write them a letter to tell them these things: 'Do not eat food, which has been given to idols. Do not commit any kind of unlawful sexual intercourse. Do not eat animals, which have been strangled. Do not taste blood.' <sup>21</sup> There are those in every town who teach the law of Moses. The words of Moses have been read in the house of worship every Sabbath day for generations long past."

<sup>22</sup> The delegates, the elders, and the whole group of called out people wanted to send some men with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch in Syria. The called out community decided to choose some of their own men. They chose Judas, Barsabbas, and Silas. These men were respected by the brothers in Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup> The called out people sent the letter with these men. The letter said: "From the delegates and elders, your brothers. To all non-Jewish brothers in the city of Antioch and in the countries of Syria and Cilicia: "Dear Brothers, <sup>24</sup> We have heard that some men have come to you from our community. The things they said have troubled and upset you, but we did not tell them to do this! <sup>25</sup> We have all agreed to choose some men and send them to you. They are with Barnabas and Paul, to whom we give ourselves, for their good, expecting nothing in return. <sup>26</sup> Paul and Barnabas have given their lives to serve the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>27</sup> So we have sent Judas and Silas with them. They will tell you the same things.

<sup>28</sup> "The Holy Spirit thinks you should have no more burdens. We agree. You only need to do these things: <sup>29</sup> Do not eat any food, which has been given to idols. Do not taste blood. Do not eat any animals, which have been strangled. Do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse. If you stay away from these things, you will do well. Now we say goodbye."

<sup>30</sup> So Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas left Jerusalem. They went down to Antioch in Syria. They gathered the called out people and gave them the letter. <sup>31</sup> When they read it, they were happy. It encouraged them. <sup>32</sup> Judas and Silas were prophets too. They said many things to help the brothers and make them stronger. <sup>33</sup> After Judas and Silas stayed there for a while, they left with a blessing of peace from the brothers. Judas went back to the brothers in Jerusalem who had sent them. <sup>34</sup> But Silas decided to stay there.

<sup>35</sup> But Paul and Barnabas were staying on in Antioch. They and many others were preaching and teaching the people the word of the Lord. <sup>36</sup> A few days later, Paul said to Barnabas, "We spoke the Lord's message in many towns. We should go back to all of those towns to visit the brothers and see how they are doing." <sup>37</sup> Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark along with them too. <sup>38</sup> But John Mark had left them at Pamphylia; he did not continue with them in the work. So Paul did not think it was such a good idea to take him along. <sup>39</sup> Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement about this. They separated and went different ways. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed to the island of Cyprus.

<sup>40</sup> Paul chose Silas to go with him. The brothers in Antioch put Paul into the Lord's help in time of need and sent him out. <sup>41</sup> Paul and Silas went through the countries of Syria and Cilicia, helping the called out people grow stronger.

---

## Chapter 16

<sup>01</sup> Paul went to the towns of Derbe and Lystra. A student of Jesus named Timothy was there. Timothy's mother was a Jewish believer. His father was not a Jew. <sup>02</sup> The brothers in the towns of Lystra and Iconium respected Timothy. They said good things about him. <sup>03</sup> Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him, but all of the Jewish people living in that area knew that Timothy's father was not Jewish. Therefore, Paul took Timothy and circumcised him to please the Jews.

<sup>04</sup> Then Paul and Timothy were traveling through other towns. They gave the believers the rules and decisions from the delegates and elders in Jerusalem. Paul and Timothy told the believers to obey these rules. <sup>05</sup> So the called out people were becoming stronger in the faith and they were growing every day.

<sup>06</sup> Paul and Timothy went through the countries of Phrygia and Galatia. The Holy Spirit did not allow them to preach the Good News in the country of Asia. <sup>07</sup> They went near the land of Mysia. They wanted to go into the country of Bithynia but the Spirit of Jesus did not let them go in. <sup>08</sup> So they passed by Mysia and went down to the city of Troas.

<sup>09</sup> That night Paul saw a vision. In this vision a man from the country of Macedonia appeared to Paul. The man stood there begging him, "Come across to Macedonia. Help us!" <sup>10</sup> After Paul had seen the vision, immediately we prepared to leave for Macedonia. We understood that God had called us to tell the Good News to those people. <sup>11</sup> We left Troas by ship and sailed to the island of Samothrace. The next day we sailed to the town of Neapolis. <sup>12</sup> Then we went to Philippi. Philippi is an important city in that part of Macedonia. It is a city for Romans. We stayed there for a few days.

<sup>13</sup> On the Sabbath day we went through the city gate to the river. At the river we thought we might find a special place for prayer. Some women had gathered there. So we sat down and talked with them. <sup>14</sup> There was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira. Her job was selling purple cloth. She worshipped the true God. Lydia listened to Paul. The Lord opened her heart and she believed the things, which Paul said. <sup>15</sup> She and all of the people living in her house were immersed. Then Lydia invited us into her home. She said, "If you think I am truly faithful to the Lord Jesus, then come stay in my house." She persuaded us.

<sup>16</sup> Once we were going to the place for prayer. A slave-girl met us. She had an evil spirit in her. This spirit gave her the power to tell what would happen in the future. By doing this she earned a lot of money for the men who owned her. <sup>17</sup> This girl followed Paul and us everywhere. She said loudly, "These men are slaves of the Highest God! They are telling you how you can be saved!" <sup>18</sup> She continued doing this for many days. This bothered Paul, so he turned and said to the spirit, "By the authority of Jesus Christ, I order you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit came out. <sup>19</sup> The men who owned the slave-girl saw this. These men knew that they could no longer use her to make money. So they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them into the meeting place of the city. The city officials were there.

<sup>20</sup> The men brought Paul and Silas to the leaders and said, "These men are Jews who are making trouble in our city.

<sup>21</sup> They are telling the people to do things, which are not right for us. We are Roman citizens and cannot do these things." <sup>22</sup> The crowd was against Paul and Silas. Then the leaders tore off the clothes of Paul and Silas and ordered some men to beat them with rods. <sup>23</sup> The men beat them many times. Then the leaders threw Paul and Silas in jail. The leaders commanded the jailer, "Guard them very carefully!" <sup>24</sup> The jailer heard this special order. So he put Paul and Silas into the inner prison far inside the jail. He locked their feet in wooden stocks.

<sup>25</sup> About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. <sup>26</sup> Suddenly there was a great earthquake. It was so strong that it shook the foundations of the jail. Then all the doors of the jail quickly opened. All prisoners were freed from their chains. <sup>27</sup> The jailer woke up. He saw that the jail doors were open. He thought that the prisoners had escaped. So the jailer took his sword and was ready to kill himself. <sup>28</sup> But Paul shouted, "Do not hurt yourself! We are all here!" <sup>29</sup> The jailer told someone to bring a light. Then he ran inside. He was shaking. He fell down in front of Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup> Then he brought them outside and asked, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup> They said to him, "Commit yourself to the Lord Jesus and you will be saved – you and all the people living in your house." <sup>32</sup> So Paul and Silas told the story of the Lord Jesus to the jailer and to all the people in his house. <sup>33</sup> It was late at night, but the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. The jailer and all of his people were immersed right away. <sup>34</sup> After this, the jailer took Paul and Silas and gave them some food. All of the people were very happy because they now trusted in God.

<sup>35</sup> The next morning, the leaders sent some soldiers to tell the jailer this: "Let these men go free!" <sup>36</sup> The jailer said to Paul, "The leaders have sent these soldiers to set you free. You may leave now. Go in peace." <sup>37</sup> But Paul said to the soldiers, "Your leaders did not prove that we did anything wrong, yet they beat us in public and put us in jail. We are Roman citizens. Now the leaders want to make us go away quietly. No! The leaders must come and bring us out!"

<sup>38</sup> The soldiers told the leaders what Paul had said. When the leaders heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were afraid. <sup>39</sup> So the leaders came and told Paul and Silas how sorry they were. The leaders led them out of jail and kept asking them to leave the city. <sup>40</sup> But when they came out of the jail, they went to Lydia's house. They saw some of the brothers there and encouraged them. Then Paul and Silas left.

---

## Chapter 17

<sup>01</sup> Paul and Silas traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia. Then they came to the city of Thessalonica. In that city there was a Jewish house of worship. <sup>02</sup> According to Paul's custom, he went to them in this house of worship, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures. <sup>03</sup> Paul explained and clearly showed that the Messiah must die and then rise from death. Paul said, "This Jesus, whom I announce to you, is the Messiah!" <sup>04</sup> Some of the Jews believed Paul and Silas and joined them. There were many Greeks among them.. They worshipped the true God. There were also many important women. They joined Paul and Silas too.

<sup>05</sup> But the Jews who did not believe became jealous. They hired some evil men from the city to gather many people and make trouble in the city. The people went to Jason's house looking for Paul and Silas. The men wanted to bring them out to the people. <sup>06</sup> But the group didn't find them. So the people dragged Jason and some of the other brothers to the leaders of the city. The people all cried out, "These men have made trouble everywhere in the world. And now they have come here too! <sup>07</sup> Jason is keeping them in his house. All of them do things against the laws of Caesar. They say that there is another king named Jesus." <sup>08</sup> The leaders of the city and the crowd heard these things. They became very upset. <sup>09</sup> They made Jason and the other brothers post bond. Then they let them go free.

<sup>10</sup> That same night the brothers sent Paul and Silas to another town named Berea. In Berea Paul and Silas went to the Jewish house of worship. <sup>11</sup> These Jews were better people than the ones in Thessalonica. These Jews were very happy to listen to the things which Paul and Silas said. They wanted to know whether these things were true or not. They studied the Scriptures every day. <sup>12</sup> Many of these Jews believed. Many important Greek men and women also believed.

<sup>13</sup> But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was telling God's message in Berea, they came to Berea too. The Jews from Thessalonica made the people in Berea upset and they caused trouble. <sup>14</sup> So the believers quickly sent Paul away to the sea, while Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea.

<sup>15</sup> The brothers who went with Paul took him to the city of Athens. These brothers carried a message from Paul back to Silas and Timothy. It said, "Come to me as soon as you can!" <sup>16</sup> Paul was waiting for Silas and

Timothy in Athens. Paul felt deeply troubled because he saw that the city was full of idols. <sup>17</sup> In the house of worship Paul debated with the Jews and the Greeks who worshipped the true God. Every day he also debated with some people in the business district of the city, with people who just happened to be there.

<sup>18</sup> Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers argued with him. Some of them said, "This man doesn't really know what he is talking about. What is he trying to say?" Paul was telling them the Good News about Jesus rising from death. So they said, "He seems to be telling us about some other gods." <sup>19</sup> They got Paul and took him to a meeting of the Areopagus Council. They said, "Please explain to us this new idea which you have been teaching. <sup>20</sup> The things that you are saying are so new to us. We have never heard these things before. We want to know what this teaching means." <sup>21</sup> (All the people of Athens and the people from other countries who lived there always used their time to talk about any new idea.)

<sup>22</sup> Then Paul stood before the meeting of the Areopagus Council. Paul said, "Men of Athens, I can see that you are very religious in all things. <sup>23</sup> I was going through your city and I saw the things you worship. I found an altar, which had these words, written on it: TO THE GOD WHO IS NOT KNOWN. You worship a God you do not know. This is the God I am telling you about!"

<sup>24</sup> "He is the God who made the whole world and everything in it. He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. He does not live in temples, which men build! <sup>25</sup> This God is the One who gives men life, breath, and everything else. He is not served by human hands; God has everything He needs.

<sup>26</sup> "God started with one man. He made all the different people in the world to live everywhere. God decided exactly when and where they must live. <sup>27</sup> He wanted the people to look for Him. Perhaps they could search all around for Him and find Him — He is not far from any of us: <sup>28</sup> 'In Him we live, we walk, we are.' Some of your own writers have said: 'For we are God's children.' <sup>29</sup> Therefore we are God's children. So you must not think that God is something like what man imagines or makes out of silver or stone.

<sup>30</sup> "In the past, although man did not understand God, God ignored this, but now God calls every person in the world to change his heart. <sup>31</sup> God has set a day when He will judge the whole world. He will be fair, using

a man to do this. He chose this man a long time ago. God proved it to everyone by raising that man from death!"

<sup>32</sup> When the people heard about Jesus rising from death, some of them began to laugh at Paul. The people said, "We will hear more about this from you later." <sup>33</sup> Paul left them. <sup>34</sup> However, some of the people did believe Paul and joined him. One of them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus Council. Another was a woman named Damaris. There were some others too.

---

## Chapter 18

<sup>01</sup> Later, Paul left Athens and went to the city of Corinth. <sup>02</sup> In Corinth he met a Jewish man named Aquila. Aquila was born in the country of Pontus. Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, had recently moved to Corinth from Italy. They left Italy because Claudius the Emperor had commanded all Jews to get out of Rome. Paul went to visit Aquila and Priscilla. <sup>03</sup> They were tentmakers, the same as Paul. Paul was staying there and working with them.

<sup>04</sup> Every Sabbath day Paul debated with the Jews and Greeks in the house of worship. He tried to persuade them to believe. <sup>05</sup> Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia to Paul in Corinth. After this, Paul used all his time to tell people the Word of God. He showed the Jews that Jesus is Messiah. <sup>06</sup> But the Jews would not accept Paul's teaching. They said some terrible things. So Paul shook off the dust from his clothes. He said to the Jews, "If you are not saved, it will be your own fault! I have done all that I can do! After this I will go to non-Jewish people!"

<sup>07</sup> Paul left the house of worship and moved into the home of Titius Justus. This man worshipped the true God. His house was next door to the house of worship. <sup>08</sup> Crispus was the leader of that house of worship. Crispus and all of the people who were living in his house trusted in the Lord Jesus. Many other people in Corinth also listened to Paul. They too believed and were immersed.

<sup>09</sup> Paul had a vision during the night. The Lord said to him, "Don't be afraid! Keep on talking to people; don't be quiet! <sup>10</sup> I am with you. No one will be able to hurt you. I have many people in this city." <sup>11</sup> Paul stayed there for a year and a half, teaching God's message to the people. <sup>12</sup> Some of the Jews came together with only one thing in mind – to stop Paul. They took him to court. Gallio had become the governor of the country of Achaia. <sup>13</sup> The Jews said to Gallio, "This man is influencing people to worship God in a way that is against our law!" <sup>14</sup> Paul was ready to say something, but Gallio spoke to the Jews. Gallio said, "I would listen to you Jews if you were complaining about a terrible crime or some wrong. <sup>15</sup> But the things you are claiming are only questions about words and names – arguments about your own law. You must solve this problem yourselves. I do not want to be a judge over these matters." <sup>16</sup> Then Gallio made them leave the courtroom. <sup>17</sup> So they all grabbed Sosthenes. (Sosthenes was now leader of the house of worship.) They were beating him in front of the courthouse, but this did not bother Gallio at all.

<sup>18</sup> Paul stayed with the brothers for many days. Then he left and sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were also with him. At Cenchrea, Paul cut off his hair. This showed that he had made a vow to God. They arrived in Ephesus. <sup>19</sup> Then he left Priscilla and Aquila and went into the house of worship and debated with the Jews.

<sup>20</sup> The Jews asked Paul to stay longer but he said no. <sup>21</sup> As Paul was leaving them, he said, "I will come to you again if God wants me to." And so Paul sailed away from Ephesus.

<sup>22</sup> Paul went down to the city of Caesarea. Then he went up and greeted the called out people in Jerusalem. After that he went down to the city of Antioch in Syria. <sup>23</sup> Paul stayed in Antioch for a while. Then he left Antioch and went through the countries of Galatia and Phrygia. He traveled from town to town in these areas. He made all of the students of Jesus stronger.

<sup>24</sup> A Jewish man named Apollos came to Ephesus. Apollos was born in the city of Alexandria. He was an educated man. His knowledge of the Scriptures was very powerful. <sup>25</sup> He had been taught the way of the Lord Jesus. Apollos was always very enthusiastic when he talked to people about Jesus. The things he taught about Jesus were correct, but the only immersion that he knew was the immersion, which John taught. <sup>26</sup> Apollos began to speak very boldly in the house of worship. Priscilla and Aquila heard him speak. They took him home and helped him understand the way of God better. <sup>27</sup> Apollos wanted to go to the country of Achaia. So the brothers in Ephesus helped pay his expenses. They wrote a letter to the students of Jesus in Achaia. In the letter they asked them to accept Apollos. The students of Jesus in Achaia had believed in Jesus through God's help in time of need. When Apollos went there, he helped them very much. <sup>28</sup> He argued very convincingly in public against the Jews. Apollos clearly proved that they were wrong. He used the Scriptures to show that Jesus is the Messiah.

---

## Chapter 19

<sup>01</sup> While Apollos was in the city of Corinth, Paul was visiting some places along the northern route to the city of Ephesus. In Ephesus Paul found some students of John. <sup>02</sup> Paul asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" These students answered him, "We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit!" <sup>03</sup> Paul asked, "What immersion did you receive?" "John's immersion," they replied. <sup>04</sup> Paul said, "John immersed people after they changed their hearts. John told people to trust in the one who would come after him. That person is Jesus." <sup>05</sup> When these students of John heard this, they were immersed by the authority of the Lord Jesus. <sup>06</sup> Then Paul put his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them. They began speaking different inspired languages and prophesying. <sup>07</sup> In this group there were about twelve men.

<sup>08</sup> Paul went into the house of worship and began to speak very boldly. Paul did this for three months. He debated with the Jews and he tried to persuade them to believe in the kingdom of God <sup>09</sup> but some of the Jews became stubborn. They refused to believe. They said some terrible things about the Way. The people heard these things. So Paul left and took the students of Jesus with him. He went to a place where a man named Tyrannus had a school. There he reasoned with people every day. <sup>10</sup> He did this for two years. Because of this work, every Jew and Greek in the country of Asia heard the message of the Lord.

<sup>11</sup> God was using Paul to perform some very unusual miracles. <sup>12</sup> Some people carried handkerchiefs and clothes, which Paul had worn. The people put these things on sick people. When they did this, the sick people were healed and evil spirits left them. <sup>13-14</sup> Some wandering Jews were also trying to make evil spirits go out of people. The seven sons of Sceva were doing this. (Sceva was an important Jewish priest.) These Jews were using the name of the Lord Jesus to do this. They all said, "By the same Jesus whom Paul proclaims, I order you to come out!" <sup>15</sup> One time an evil spirit said to these Jews, "Jesus I know, and Paul I am acquainted with, but who are you?" <sup>16</sup> Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on these Jews. He was much stronger than they were. He beat them up and tore off their clothes. They ran away from that house. <sup>17</sup> All of the people who lived in Ephesus, Jews and Greeks, learned about this. They all began to have awesome respect for the true God. The people were giving more and more honor to the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>18</sup> Many of the believers began to admit all of the evil things they had done. <sup>19</sup> Some of the believers had used magic. These believers brought

their books of evil magic and burned them up before everyone. Those books were worth hundreds of kilograms of silver. <sup>20</sup> This is how the message of the Lord was influencing more and more people in a powerful way.

<sup>21</sup> After these things, Paul made plans to go to Jerusalem. Paul planned to go through the countries of Macedonia and Achaia, and then go to Jerusalem. Paul thought, "After I visit Jerusalem, I must also visit Rome."

<sup>22</sup> Timothy and Erastus were two of Paul's helpers. Paul sent them ahead to the country of Macedonia but he stayed in Asia for a while.

<sup>23</sup> However, during that time, there was some bad trouble in Ephesus. It was about the Way. This is how it all happened: <sup>24</sup> there was a man named Demetrius, a silver-worker. He made little silver models, which looked, like the temple of the goddess Artemis. The men who did work like this made lots of money from it. <sup>25</sup> Demetrius had a meeting with some other men who did the same kind of work. Demetrius told them, "Men, you know that we make a lot of money from our business. <sup>26</sup> But Paul has influenced many people. He has done this in Ephesus and all over the whole country of Asia! Look at what this man Paul is doing! Listen to what he is saying! He says that the gods which men make are fake. <sup>27</sup> This might turn the people against our work. But there is also another danger: people will begin to think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is not important! Her greatness will be destroyed. Artemis is the goddess that everyone in Asia and the whole world worships."

<sup>28</sup> When the men heard this, they became very angry. The men shouted, "Artemis, the goddess of the city of Ephesus, is great!" <sup>29</sup> All the people in the city became very upset. The people grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, men from Macedonia. (These men always traveled with Paul.) Then all the people ran together to the stadium with a single purpose.

<sup>30</sup> Paul wanted to go in and talk to the people but the students of Jesus wouldn't let him go. <sup>31</sup> Also, some leaders of the country were friends of Paul. These leaders sent him a message, begging him not to come into the stadium. <sup>32</sup> Some people were yelling one thing and others were yelling something else. The meeting was very confused. Most of the people didn't even know why they had come there. <sup>33</sup> The Jews had a man stand before the people. His name was Alexander. The Jews told him what to do. Alexander waved his hand because he wanted to explain things to the people. <sup>34</sup> But when the people realized that Alexander was a Jew,

they all continued shouting together for two hours. They shouted, "Great is Artemis of Ephesus! Great is Artemis of Ephesus...!"

<sup>35</sup> Then the main city official made the crowd be quiet. He said, "Men of Ephesus, everyone knows that Ephesus is the city which keeps the temple of the great goddess, Artemis, and her holy rock. <sup>36</sup> No one can say that this is not true. So you should be quiet. You must stop and think before you do anything wrong. <sup>37</sup> They have not stolen anything from her temple or said anything bad about her. <sup>38</sup> We have courts of law and there are judges. Do Demetrius and those men who work with him have a charge against anyone? They should go to the courts! That is where they can accuse each other!

<sup>39</sup> "Is there anything else you want to talk about? Then come to the regular town meeting of the people. It can be decided there. <sup>40</sup> I say this because someone might see this trouble today and say that we were rioting. We could not explain all of this trouble because there is no real reason for this mob."

<sup>41</sup> After the official said these things, he told the people to go home. Then all of the people left.

---

## Chapter 20

<sup>01</sup> When the trouble stopped, Paul invited the students of Jesus to come visit him. He wanted to encourage them. Then Paul said goodbye and left. He went to the country of Macedonia. <sup>02</sup> He encouraged the students in the different places on his way through Macedonia. He told the students many things. Then Paul went to Achaia.

<sup>03</sup> He stayed there three months. He was ready to sail for Syria but some Jews were planning something evil against him. So Paul decided to go back to Syria through Macedonia. <sup>04</sup> Some men were with him. They were: Sopater (the son of Pyrrhus, from the town of Berea), Aristarchus and Secundus (from the city of Thessalonica), Gaius (from the town of Derbe), Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus (from Asia). <sup>05</sup> They went first, ahead of Paul. They were waiting for us in the city of Troas.

<sup>06</sup> We sailed from the city of Philippi after the Jewish Festival of Unleavened Bread. We met these men in Troas five days later. We stayed there for seven days. <sup>07</sup> On the first day of the week, we all met together to eat the supper of the Lord. Paul was talking with the group. He was ready to leave the next day. Paul continued his speech until midnight. <sup>08</sup> There were many torches in the room where we were gathered. The room was upstairs. <sup>09</sup> There was a young man named Eutychus sitting in the window. As Paul talked on and on, Eutychus became sleepier and sleepier. Finally Eutychus went to sleep and fell out of the window. He fell to the ground from the third floor. When they got to him, he was dead. <sup>10</sup> Paul went down to Eutychus. He kneeled down and hugged him. Paul said to the others, "Don't worry. He is alive now." <sup>11-12</sup> They brought the young man inside. He was alive and they were very much comforted. Paul went upstairs again. After he broke off some of the bread and ate it, Paul spoke to them a long time. When he finished talking, it was early morning.

<sup>13</sup> We sailed for the town of Assos. We went first, ahead of Paul. He planned to meet us in Assos and join us on the ship there. Paul told us to do this because he wanted to walk to Assos. <sup>14</sup> Later we met Paul at Assos and there he came onto the ship with us. Then we all went to the town of Mitylene. <sup>15</sup> The next day we sailed away from Mitylene and came to a place near the island of Chios. The next day we sailed to the island of Samos. A day later we came to the town of Miletus.

<sup>16</sup> Paul had already decided not to stop at Ephesus. He didn't want to stay in Asia too long. He was hurrying because he wanted to be in

Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost if that were possible. <sup>17</sup> Paul sent a message back to Ephesus from Miletus. He invited the elders of the called out people in Ephesus to come to him. <sup>18-19</sup> When the elders came, Paul said to them, "Do you remember when I came to you on my first day in Asia? I stayed with you the whole time. The Jewish leaders planned evil things against me. Although this troubled me very much (sometimes I even cried), I always served the Lord. I never thought about myself first. <sup>20</sup> I always did what was best for you, teaching you everything about Jesus in public and also in your homes. <sup>21</sup> I told both Jewish and non-Jewish people to change their hearts and turn to God. I told them all to trust in our Lord Jesus.

<sup>22</sup> "But now I must obey the Holy Spirit and go to Jerusalem. I do not know what will happen to me there. <sup>23</sup> I only know that, in every town, the Holy Spirit warns me that troubles and even jail wait for me. <sup>24</sup> My life does not matter. The most important thing is that I finish the race — the work which the Lord Jesus gave me to do, telling people the Good News about God's help in time of need. <sup>25</sup> And now listen to me. I know that none of you will ever see my face again! During the whole time I was with you, I was preaching to you about the kingdom of God. <sup>26</sup> So today I can tell you one thing that I am sure of: I'm not to blame if some of you will not be saved! <sup>27</sup> I can say this because I know I told you everything that God wants you to know.

<sup>28</sup> "Watch out for yourselves and for all the people God has given you. The Holy Spirit chose you to guard this flock. You must shepherd the called out people of God whom he bought with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after I leave, some men will come into your groups. They will be like vicious wolves, trying to destroy the flock. <sup>30</sup> Also, men from your own group will begin to teach things, which are wrong, leading some students away from the truth. <sup>31</sup> So be alert! Always remember: I was with you for three years. During this time I never stopped warning each one of you. I taught you night and day. I often cried over you.

<sup>32</sup> "Now I am giving you to God. I am depending on the message of God's help in time of need to make you strong. That message is able to give you the blessings, which God gives to all His saints.

<sup>33</sup> "When I was with you, I never wanted anybody's money or fine clothes. <sup>34</sup> You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. <sup>35</sup> I always showed you that you should work as I did and help people who are weak. I taught

you to remember the words of the Lord Jesus. Jesus once said, 'You will be happier when you give than when you receive.'

<sup>36</sup> When Paul finished saying these things, he kneeled down and they all prayed together. <sup>37-38</sup> They all cried and cried. They were especially sad because Paul had said that they would never see his face again. They hugged Paul and kept on kissing him. They went with him to the ship to say goodbye.

---

## Chapter 21

<sup>01</sup> After we all said goodbye to the elders, we sailed away, straight for Cos Island. The next day we went to the island of Rhodes. From Rhodes we went to Patara. <sup>02</sup> At Patara we found a ship, which was going to Phoenicia. We went aboard the ship and sailed away. <sup>03</sup> We sailed near the island of Cyprus. We could see it on the north side but we did not stop. We sailed to the country of Syria. We stopped at the city of Tyre because the ship needed to unload its cargo there.

<sup>04</sup> In Tyre we found some students of Jesus, and we stayed with them for seven days. They warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem because of what the Holy Spirit had told them. <sup>05</sup> But when we finished our visit, we left and continued our trip. All the students of Jesus, including the women and children, came outside the city with us to say goodbye. We all knelt down on the beach and prayed. <sup>06</sup> Then we said goodbye to one another. We went aboard the ship and they went back home.

<sup>07</sup> We continued our trip from Tyre and went to the city of Ptolemais. We greeted the brothers there and stayed with them one day. <sup>08</sup> The next day we left Ptolemais and went to the city of Caesarea. We went into the home of Philip and stayed with him. Philip was a preacher of the Good News. He was one of the seven servants. <sup>09</sup> He had four virgin daughters. These daughters had the gift of prophesying.

<sup>10</sup> After we had stayed there for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>11</sup> He came to us and borrowed Paul's belt. Then Agabus used the belt to bind his own hands and feet. Agabus said, "The Holy Spirit tells me. 'This is how the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the man who wears this belt. Then they will hand him over to non-Jewish people.'" <sup>12</sup> We all heard these words; so we and the local students of Jesus kept begging Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> But Paul asked, "Why are you crying? Why are you making me so sad? I am ready to be bound in Jerusalem. I am even ready to die for the name of the Lord Jesus!" <sup>14</sup> We could not persuade him to stay away from Jerusalem. So we stopped trying and said, "We pray that what the Lord wants will be done."

<sup>15</sup> After this, we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup> Some of the students of Jesus from Caesarea went with us. These students took us to the home of Mnason, a man from Cyprus. Mnason was one of the first people to become a student of Jesus. They took us to his home so that we could stay with him.

<sup>17</sup> Later we arrived in Jerusalem; the brothers there were very happy to see us. <sup>18</sup> The next day Paul went with us to visit Jacob. All of the elders were there too. <sup>19</sup> Paul greeted all of them. Then he told them exactly how God had used him to do many things among non-Jewish people. <sup>20</sup> When the leaders heard these things, they gave glory to God. Then they said to Paul, "Brother, you can see that thousands of Jews have become believers, and they all think it is very important to obey the law of Moses. <sup>21</sup> These Jews have heard that you tell Jews who live in other countries among non-Jews to abandon the law of Moses. They heard that you tell those Jews not to circumcise their children and not to obey Jewish customs. <sup>22</sup> Therefore, what should we do? The Jewish believers here will learn that you have come. <sup>23</sup> We advise you to do this: four of our men have made a vow to God. <sup>24</sup> Take these men with you and share in their washing ceremony.

Pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads. Do this and it will prove to everyone that the things they have heard about you are not true. They will see that you yourself respect the law of Moses in your own life. <sup>25</sup> "But as for non-Jewish believers, we have already sent a letter. The letter said: 'Do not eat food, which has been given to idols. Do not taste blood. Do not eat animals, which have been strangled. Do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse.'

<sup>26</sup> Then Paul took the four men with him. The next day Paul shared in the washing ceremony. Then he went to the temple. He announced the time when the days of the cleansing ceremony would be ended. On the last day an offering would be given for each of the men. <sup>27</sup> The seven days were almost over but some Jews from Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd. They grabbed Paul <sup>28</sup> and shouted, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who is teaching things, which are against the law of Moses, against our people, and against this place. This man is teaching these things to all people everywhere. And now he has even brought some non-Jewish men into the temple! He has made this holy place unclean!"

<sup>29</sup> (These Jews said this, because they had seen Trophimus with Paul in Jerusalem. Trophimus was a non-Jewish man from the city of Ephesus. They thought that Paul had taken him into the temple.) <sup>30</sup> All of the people in Jerusalem became very upset. They all ran together and grabbed Paul. They dragged him out of the temple courtyard. Immediately the temple gates were closed. <sup>31</sup> The people were trying to kill Paul. Then the commander of the Roman army in Jerusalem learned that there was much confusion in the whole city of Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup> Right

away the commander ran down to the place where the people were. He brought some officers and soldiers with him. The people saw the commander and his soldiers. Then they stopped beating Paul. <sup>33</sup> The commander went to Paul and arrested him. He ordered his soldiers to bind Paul with two chains. Then the commander asked, "Who is this man? What has he done wrong?" <sup>34</sup> Some people there were yelling one thing and other people were yelling something else. Because of all this confusion and shouting, the commander could not learn the truth about what had happened. So the commander ordered the soldiers to take Paul to the fortress.

<sup>35-36</sup> All of the people were following them. When the soldiers came to the steps, they had to carry Paul. They did this to protect him because the people were so wild. The people shouted, "Kill him!" <sup>37</sup> The soldiers were ready to take Paul into the fortress, but Paul spoke to the commander. Paul asked, "Do I have the right to say something to you?" The commander said, "Oh! Do you speak Greek?" <sup>38</sup> Then you are not the man I thought you were. I thought you were the Egyptian man who started some trouble against the government not long ago. He led 4,000 murderers out to the desert."

<sup>39</sup> Paul said, "No, I am a Jew from Tarsus, in the country of Cilicia. I am a citizen of that important city. Please, let me speak to the people." <sup>40</sup> The commander allowed Paul to speak to the people. So Paul stood on the steps. He made signs with his hands so that the people would be quiet. The people became even quieter when Paul used the Hebrew language to speak to them.

---

## Chapter 22

<sup>01</sup> Paul said, "My brothers and fathers, listen to me! I will make my defense to you now." <sup>02</sup> The Jews heard Paul speaking in Hebrew, so they became very quiet. Paul said, <sup>03</sup> "I am a Jew. I was born in Tarsus in the country of Cilicia. I grew up in this city of Jerusalem. I was a student of Gamaliel. He carefully taught me everything about the law of our ancestors. I was very serious about serving God, the same as all of you here today. <sup>04</sup> I persecuted the people who believed in the Way. Some of them were killed because of me. I arrested men and women, and I put them in jail. <sup>05</sup> The high priest and the whole council of the Jewish elders can tell you that this is true! One time these leaders gave me some letters. The letters were to the Jewish brothers in the city of Damascus. I was going there to arrest the students of Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

<sup>06</sup> "However, something happened to me on my way to Damascus. It was about noon when I came close to the city. Suddenly, a bright light from the sky shined all around me. <sup>07</sup> I fell to the ground. I heard a voice saying to me: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' <sup>08</sup> I asked, 'Who are you, Sir?' The voice answered, 'I am Jesus from Nazareth, the one you are persecuting.' <sup>09-10</sup> I said, 'What should I do, Sir?' The Lord Jesus answered, 'Get up and go into Damascus. There you will be told about all of the things I have planned for you to do.' The men who were with me did not understand the voice, but they saw the light. <sup>11</sup> I could not see because the bright light had blinded me. So the men led me into Damascus.

<sup>12</sup> "In Damascus, a man named Ananias came to me. He was a devout man; he obeyed the law of Moses. All of the Jews who lived there respected him. <sup>13</sup> Ananias came to me, stood over me, and said, 'Brother Saul, you can see again!' At that moment I was able to see him. <sup>14</sup> Ananias told me, 'The God of our ancestors chose you a long time ago to know His plan. God wanted you to see the one that is right and to hear words from his mouth. <sup>15</sup> You will be his witness to all men. You will tell men about the things you have seen and heard. <sup>16</sup> Now don't wait any longer. Rise up, you yourself be immersed and have your sins washed away, trusting in his name.'

<sup>17</sup> "Later I came back to Jerusalem. I was praying in the temple courtyard, and I saw a vision. <sup>18</sup> I saw Jesus, and he said to me: 'Hurry! Leave Jerusalem now! The people here will not accept the truth about me.' <sup>19</sup> I said, 'But Lord, the people know that I was the one who put the believers

in jail and beat them. I went through all the houses of worship to find and arrest those who believe in you. <sup>20</sup> The people also know that I was there when Stephen, your witness, was killed. I stood there and agreed that they should kill him. I even held the robes of the men who were killing him!' <sup>21</sup> But Jesus said to me, 'Leave now. I will send you far away to non-Jewish people.'

<sup>22</sup> The people stopped listening when Paul spoke this last sentence. They all shouted, "Kill him! Get him out of the world! A man like this should not be allowed to live!" <sup>23</sup> They yelled and threw off their robes. They threw dust into the air.

<sup>24</sup> Then the commander ordered the soldiers to take Paul into the fortress. He told the soldiers to beat Paul. The commander wanted to force Paul to tell him why the people were shouting against him like this. <sup>25</sup> As the soldiers were tying Paul, preparing to beat him, Paul asked an officer who was standing there, "Do you have the right to beat a Roman citizen who has not been proven guilty?" <sup>26</sup> When the officer heard this, he went to the commander and told him about it. The officer asked, "Do you know what you are doing? This man is a Roman citizen!"

<sup>27</sup> The commander came to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you really a Roman citizen?" Paul answered, "Yes." <sup>28</sup> The commander said, "I paid a lot of money to become a Roman citizen." But Paul said "I was born a citizen." <sup>29</sup> The men who were preparing to torture Paul moved away from him immediately. The commander was afraid because he had already bound Paul and Paul was a Roman citizen.

<sup>30</sup> The next day the commander decided to learn why the Jews were accusing Paul. So he commanded the most important priests and the entire Jewish Council to meet together. Then he brought Paul out and took his chains off. Then he made Paul stand before their meeting.

---

## Chapter 23

<sup>01</sup> Paul looked straight at the Jewish Council and said, "My Jewish brothers, I have always lived my life before God in all good conscience, and that includes today!" <sup>02</sup> Ananias, the high priest, was there. Ananias heard Paul and told the men who were standing near Paul to hit him on the mouth. <sup>03</sup> Paul said to Ananias, "God will hit you too! You are like a dirty wall, which has been painted white! You sit there and judge me, using the law of Moses, yet you are telling them to hit me. That is against the law!" <sup>04</sup> The men standing near Paul said to him, "You must not talk like that to God's high priest!" <sup>05</sup> Paul said, "Brothers, I did not know this man was the high priest. It is written in the Scriptures, 'You must not say evil things about a ruler of your people.'"

<sup>06</sup> Some of the men in the meeting were Sadducees and some others were Pharisees. Paul knew this. Therefore, he said to them, so that everyone could hear, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee and my father was a Pharisee! I am on trial here because I believe that people will rise from death!" <sup>07</sup> When Paul said this, it caused a big argument between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The group was divided. <sup>08</sup> (The Sadducees believe that after people die, they cannot live again. The Sadducees also teach that there are no angels or spirits but the Pharisees believe in all these things.) <sup>09</sup> All these Jews began shouting louder and louder. Some of the teachers of the law, who were Pharisees, stood up and argued: "We find nothing wrong with this man! Perhaps an angel or a spirit did speak to him on the road to Damascus!" <sup>10</sup> The argument turned into a fight. The commander was afraid that the Jews would tear Paul to pieces. So the commander ordered the soldiers to go down and take Paul away from them and put him in the fortress. <sup>11</sup> The next night the Lord Jesus came and stood by Paul. He said, "Be strong! You have told the people in Jerusalem the truth about me. You must also go to Rome to do the same thing there."

<sup>12</sup> The next morning some of the Jews made a plan. They wanted to kill Paul. These Jews vowed to themselves that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul! <sup>13</sup> There were more than 40 Jews who plotted this. <sup>14</sup> They went and talked to the most important priests and the older Jewish leaders. These Jews said, "We have vowed to ourselves that we won't eat or drink until we have killed Paul!"

<sup>15</sup> So this is what we want you to do: send a message to the commander from you and the Jewish Council. Tell the commander that you want him

to bring Paul out to you as if you want to ask Paul more questions. While he is on the way here, we will be waiting to kill him."

<sup>16</sup> But Paul's nephew heard about this plan. He went to the fortress and told Paul. <sup>17</sup> Then Paul called one of the officers and said to him, "Take this young man to the commander. He has a message for him." <sup>18</sup> So the officer brought Paul's nephew to the commander. The officer said, "The prisoner Paul asked me to bring this young man to you. He wants to tell you something." <sup>19</sup> The commander led the young man to a place where they could be alone. The commander asked, "What do you want to tell me?" <sup>20</sup> The young man said, "The Jewish leaders have decided to ask you to bring Paul down to their council tomorrow. They want you to think that they plan to ask Paul more questions. <sup>21</sup> But don't believe them. There are more than 40 Jews who are hiding and waiting to kill Paul. They have all vowed not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are now waiting for you to say yes." <sup>22</sup> The commander ordered him, "Do not tell anyone that you have told me this." Then the commander sent the young man away.

<sup>23</sup> After this, the commander called two officers. He said to them, "I need some men to go to Caesarea. Get 200 soldiers ready. Also get 70 horsemen and 200 men to carry spears. Be ready to leave at nine o'clock tonight. <sup>24</sup> Get some horses for Paul to ride. He must be safely taken to Governor Felix."

<sup>25</sup> The commander wrote a letter. This is what it said: <sup>26</sup> "From Claudius Lysias, To the Most Excellent Governor Felix: Greetings.

<sup>27</sup> "The Jews had taken this man, and they were about to kill him, but I learned that he is a Roman citizen. I went with my soldiers and saved him. <sup>28</sup> I wanted to know why they were accusing him so I brought him before their council. <sup>29</sup> This is what I learned: the Jews said that Paul did some things, which were wrong, but these charges were about their own Jewish laws. None of these things were worthy of jail or death. <sup>30</sup> I was told that some of the Jews were plotting to kill Paul; therefore I sent him to you. I also ordered those Jews to tell you the things they have against him."

<sup>31</sup> The soldiers did the things they were told. They got Paul and took him to the town of Antipatris that night. <sup>32</sup> The next day the horsemen went with Paul to Caesarea, but the soldiers and the spearmen went back to the fortress in Jerusalem. <sup>33</sup> The horsemen entered Caesarea and gave the letter to the governor. Then they gave Paul to him.

<sup>34</sup> The governor read the letter. He asked Paul, "What country are you from?" He learned that Paul was from Cilicia. <sup>35</sup> The governor said, "I will hear your case when the Jews, who are accusing you, come here too." Then the governor gave orders for Paul to be kept in the palace. (This building had been built by Herod the Great.)

---

## Chapter 24

<sup>01</sup> Five days later, Ananias went down to the city of Caesarea. Ananias was the high priest. He also brought some of the older Jewish leaders and a lawyer named Tertullus. They went to Caesarea to make charges against Paul before the governor. <sup>02</sup> Paul was called into the meeting, and Tertullus began to make his charges. Tertullus said, "Our people have enjoyed much peace because you are a wise reformer, <sup>03</sup> Most Excellent Felix. We are very thankful to accept these things from you, always and in every place. <sup>04</sup> But I don't want to use any more of your time. So I will say only a few words. Please be patient. <sup>05</sup> This man Paul is a troublemaker. He stirs up trouble among the Jews everywhere in the world. He is a leader of the Nazarene sect. <sup>06</sup> He was also trying to make the temple unclean when we stopped him. We planned to judge him according to our own law, <sup>07</sup> but the commander Lysias came and, with great violence, took him from us. <sup>08</sup> Then Lysias gave orders that his accusers should come before you. You can decide whether all of our charges are true or not. Ask him some questions yourself."

<sup>09</sup> The other Jews agreed. They said, "These things are really true!" <sup>10</sup> The governor signaled for Paul to speak. So Paul answered, "Governor Felix, I know that you have been a judge over this nation for many years. So I am happy to defend myself before you. <sup>11</sup> I went up to worship in Jerusalem only twelve days ago. You can learn for yourself that this is true. <sup>12</sup> These Jews who are accusing me did not find me arguing with anyone in the temple. I was not stirring up a crowd. And I was not causing trouble or arguing in the houses of worship or any place else in the city. <sup>13</sup> They cannot prove the things they are claiming against me now.

<sup>14</sup> "However, I will admit this to you: I worship the God of our ancestors as a student of the way. The Jewish leaders claim that the Way is a 'sect'. I believe everything, which is taught in the law of Moses, and everything, which is written in the books of the prophets. <sup>15</sup> I have the same belief in God that these Jews have — the hope that all people, good and bad, will be raised from death. <sup>16</sup> This is why I always try to do what I believe is right before God and men. <sup>17</sup> I was away from Jerusalem for many years. I went back there to bring money to my people and to give some offerings. <sup>18</sup> I was doing this when some Jews found me in the temple courtyard. I had just finished the cleansing ceremony. No crowd was gathered around me. I had not caused any trouble.

<sup>19</sup> "However, some Jews from Asia were there. They should be here, standing before you. If I have really done anything wrong, those Jews from Asia are the ones who should accuse me. <sup>20</sup> Ask these Jews here if they found any wrong in me when I stood before the Jewish Council in Jerusalem. <sup>21</sup> I did say one thing when I stood before them: I said, loud enough for all to hear, 'You are judging me today because I believe that people will rise from death!'"

<sup>22</sup> Felix already understood much about the Way. He stopped the hearing and said, "When commander Lysias comes here, I will decide on these things later." <sup>23</sup> Felix ordered the officer to keep Paul guarded, but he told the officer to give him some freedom and to let Paul's friends bring the things that he needed.

<sup>24</sup> After a few days, Felix came with his wife, Drusilla. She was a Jewish woman. Felix asked for Paul to be brought to him. He listened to Paul talk about believing in Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup> However, Felix became afraid when Paul spoke about such things as being made right, self-control, and the Judgment Day, which will come in the future. Felix said, "Go away now! When I have time, I will call for you." <sup>26</sup> Felix hoped that Paul would pay him a bribe. So Felix sent for Paul often and talked with him. <sup>27</sup> After two years, Portius Festus became governor so Felix was no longer governor. But Felix left Paul in prison because he wanted to do something to please the Jewish leaders.

---

## Chapter 25

<sup>01</sup> So Festus became governor, and three days later he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. <sup>02</sup> The most important priests and the important Jewish leaders made charges against Paul before Festus. <sup>03</sup> They asked Festus to do something for them; they wanted Festus to send Paul back to Jerusalem. They had a plan to kill Paul along the way. <sup>04</sup> But Festus answered, "No! Paul will be kept in Caesarea. I myself will go to Caesarea soon. <sup>05</sup> Some of your leaders should go down with me. They can accuse the man there in Caesarea if he really has done something wrong."

<sup>06</sup> Festus stayed in Jerusalem another eight or ten days and then went back down to Caesarea. The next day Festus ordered the soldiers to bring Paul before him. Festus was seated on the judgment seat. <sup>07</sup> Paul came into the room. The Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him. They said that Paul had done many serious crimes but they could not prove any of them. <sup>08</sup> This is what Paul said to defend himself: "I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law, against the temple, or against Caesar!"

<sup>09</sup> However, Festus wanted to please the Jewish leaders. So he asked Paul, "Do you want to go up to Jerusalem? Do you want me to judge you there on these charges?" <sup>10</sup> Paul said, "I am standing at Caesar's judgment seat now. This is where I must be judged! I have done nothing wrong to the Jews; you know this is true. <sup>11</sup> If I have done anything wrong and the law says I must die, then I agree that I should die. I don't ask to be spared from death. But if these charges are not true, then no one can give me to these Jews. No! I want Caesar to hear my case!" <sup>12</sup> Festus talked about this with his advisors. Then he said, "You have asked to see Caesar, so to Caesar you will go!"

<sup>13</sup> A few days later, King Herod Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to visit Festus. <sup>14</sup> They stayed there many days. Festus told the king about Paul's case. Festus said, "There is a man whom Felix left in prison. <sup>15</sup> When I went to Jerusalem, the most important priests and the Jewish elders made charges against him. These Jews wanted me to order his death. <sup>16</sup> But I answered, 'When a man is accused of doing something wrong, Romans do not give the man to other people to judge. First, the man must face the people who are accusing him. Then he must be allowed to defend himself against their charges.'

<sup>17</sup> "Some Jews came here to Caesarea for the trial. I did not waste any time. The next day I sat on the judgment seat and ordered that the man be brought in. <sup>18</sup> The Jewish leaders stood up and accused him. They did not accuse him of any of the crimes I thought they would. <sup>19</sup> They wanted to argue about their own religion and about a man named Jesus. Jesus died but Paul said that Jesus is still alive. <sup>20</sup> I didn't know much about these things so I did not ask questions. Instead I asked Paul, 'Do you want to go to Jerusalem and be judged there?'

<sup>21</sup> But Paul asked to be kept in Caesarea. He wants a decision from the Emperor. So I commanded that Paul be held until I could send him to Caesar in Rome."

<sup>22</sup> Agrippa said to Festus, "I would also like to hear this man." Festus said, "You can hear him tomorrow!" <sup>23</sup> The next day Agrippa and Bernice appeared. They dressed and acted like very important people. Agrippa and Bernice, the army leaders, and the important men of Caesarea went into the courtroom. Festus ordered the soldiers to bring in Paul.

<sup>24</sup> Festus said, "King Agrippa and all of you men gathered here with us, you see this man. All the Jewish people here and in Jerusalem have complained to me about him. They cry out that he should not be allowed to live anymore. <sup>25</sup> When I judged him, I could find nothing wrong. I found no reason to order his death, but he asked to be judged by the Emperor. So I have decided to send him to Rome. <sup>26</sup> But I really do not know what to tell Caesar that this man has done. Therefore I have brought him before all of you – especially you, King Agrippa. I hope that you will question him and give me something to write to Caesar. <sup>27</sup> I think it is foolish to send a prisoner to Caesar without making some charges against him."

---

## Chapter 26

<sup>01</sup> Agrippa said to Paul, "You are now permitted to defend yourself." Then Paul raised his hand and began to speak. <sup>02</sup> He said, "King Agrippa, I will answer all of the charges that the Jews make against me.

I think it is a privilege that I can stand here before you today and do this. <sup>03</sup> I am very happy to talk to you because you know much about all of the Jewish customs and issues. Please listen to me patiently.

<sup>04</sup> "All the Jewish people know about my whole life. They know the way I lived, from the beginning among my own people and later in Jerusalem. <sup>05</sup> These Jews have known me for a long time. If they want to, they can tell you that I was a Pharisee. And the Pharisees obey the laws of the Jewish faith more carefully than any other group of Jewish people.

<sup>06-07</sup> "Now I am on trial because I believe in God's promise which all the twelve tribes of our people hope to receive. For this hope, the Jews earnestly serve God day and night. O King, the Jews have accused me because I hope for this same promise! <sup>08</sup> Why should any of you think it is impossible for God to raise people from death?

<sup>09</sup> "I too thought that I must do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>10</sup> And in Jerusalem I did persecute the saints. The most important priests gave me authority to put many of these people in jail. When they were being killed, I voted for it. <sup>11</sup> In every house of worship I punished them. I tried to force them to say evil things against Jesus. I was so crazed against these people that I hunted them down among other towns.

<sup>12</sup> "Once the most important priests gave me permission and authority to go to the city of Damascus. <sup>13</sup> It was noon, O King. I was on my way to Damascus. I saw a light from the sky. It was brighter than the sun. The light shined all around me and around the men who were traveling with me. <sup>14</sup> We all fell to the ground. Then I heard a voice talking to me in the Hebrew language. The voice said, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? By fighting me you are only hurting yourself.' <sup>15</sup> I said, 'Who are you, Sir?' The Lord said, 'I am Jesus. I am the one you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup> Get up! Stand on your feet! I have chosen you to be my servant. You will be my witness telling people the things that you have seen and the things I will show you. This is why I have appeared to you today. <sup>17</sup> I will rescue you from your own people and from non-Jewish people to whom I am sending you. <sup>18</sup> You will show the non-Jewish people the truth.

They will turn away from darkness to light, turning from the power of Satan back to God. Then they can receive forgiveness of their sins. They will have a share with those people who have become saints by their faith in me."

<sup>19</sup> Paul continued speaking: "King Agrippa, after I had this vision from heaven, I obeyed it. <sup>20</sup> First, in Damascus I began to tell Jews that they should change their hearts. I told them to turn back to God. I also went to Jerusalem and to the area around Judea and to the Non-Jews also. I said, 'Change your lives and do good things. This will show that you have truly changed your hearts.' <sup>21</sup> This is why some Jews took hold of me and tried to kill me in the temple courtyard. <sup>22</sup> But God helped me, and He is still helping me today. With God's help I am standing here today and telling all people, whether important or unimportant, the things I have seen. I am saying nothing new; I am only saying the same things which Moses and the prophets said would take place: <sup>23</sup> they said that the Messiah would die and be the first to rise from death; and that the Messiah would bring light to Jewish people and non-Jewish people."

<sup>24</sup> While Paul was saying these things to defend himself, Festus shouted, "Paul, are you crazy? Too much education has made you insane!" <sup>25</sup> Paul said, "Most Excellent Festus, I'm not insane. The things I say are true. My words are not the words of a foolish man; I am serious. <sup>26</sup> King Agrippa knows about these matters. I can speak freely to him. I know that he has heard about all of these things because these things happened where everyone could see. <sup>27</sup> King Agrippa, do you believe what the prophets wrote? I know you believe!" <sup>28</sup> King Agrippa asked Paul, "Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christ-like person so easily?" <sup>29</sup> Paul said, "It doesn't matter whether it is easy or hard; I pray to God that not only you but everyone, who is listening to me today, could be like me — except for these chains!"

<sup>30</sup> King Agrippa, Governor Festus, Bernice, and all of the people sitting with them got up <sup>31</sup> and left the room. They began to talk to each other. They said, "This man should not be killed or put in prison; he has done nothing that bad!" <sup>32</sup> And Agrippa said to Festus, "We could have let this man go free but he has already asked to be judged by Caesar."

---

## Chapter 27

<sup>01</sup> It was decided that we would sail for Italy. A Roman officer named Julius guarded Paul and some other prisoners. Julius served in the Emperor's regiment. <sup>02</sup> We went aboard a ship, which was from the city of Adramyttium. It was ready to sail for ports along the coast of Asia. Then we set sail. Aristarchus went with us. He was a man from the city of Thessalonica in Macedonia.

<sup>03</sup> The next day we came to the city of Sidon. Julius was very kind to Paul. He gave Paul freedom to go visit Paul's friends who took care of his needs. <sup>04</sup> We left the city of Sidon. We sailed south of the island of Cyprus, because the wind was blowing against us. <sup>05</sup> We went across the sea next to Cilicia and Pamphylia. Then we came to the town of Myra in Lycia. <sup>06</sup> In Myra the Roman officer found a ship from the city of Alexandria. This ship was going to Italy so he put us on it.

<sup>07</sup> We sailed slowly for many days. It was hard for us to reach the town of Cnidus because the wind was blowing against us. We could not go any further that way. So we sailed past the south side of the island of Crete near the town of Salmone. <sup>08</sup> We sailed along the coast, but sailing was hard. Then we came to a place called Safe Harbors. The town of Lasea was near there. <sup>09</sup> However, we had lost much time. It was now dangerous to sail because it was after mid-September. So Paul warned them, <sup>10</sup> "Men, I can see that there will be much destruction on this trip. The ship and the things on this ship will be lost. Even our lives may be lost!" <sup>11</sup> But the captain of the ship and its owner did not agree with Paul. The Roman officer believed what they said, rather than what Paul said.

<sup>12</sup> That harbor was not a good place for the ship to stay for the winter. Therefore most of the men decided that the ship should leave there. The men hoped that we could go to Phoenix; the ship could stay there for the winter. (Phoenix was a city on the island of Crete. It had a harbor, which faced southwest and northwest.)

<sup>13</sup> Then a good wind began to blow from the south. The men on the ship thought, "This is the wind we wanted and now we have it!" So they pulled up anchor. We sailed very close to the island of Crete, <sup>14</sup> but then a very strong wind called "the Northeaster" came down from the island. <sup>15</sup> This wind took the ship and carried it away. The ship could not hold against the wind. So we stopped trying to resist and let the wind blow us. <sup>16</sup> We went below a small island named Cauda. Then we were able to bring in the lifeboat. (It was very hard to do this.) <sup>17</sup> After the men took the lifeboat in, they tied ropes around the ship to hold the ship together.

The men were afraid that the ship would hit the sandbanks of Syrtis. So they lowered the sail and let the wind carry the ship along.

<sup>18</sup> The next day the storm was blowing us so hard that the men threw some things out of the ship to make the ship lighter. <sup>19</sup> A day later they threw out the ship's equipment. <sup>20</sup> For many days we couldn't see the sun or the stars to guide us. The storm was very bad. We lost all hope of staying alive; we thought we would die.

<sup>21</sup> For a long time the men did not eat. Then one day Paul stood up before them and said, "Men, I told you not to leave Crete. You should have listened to me. Then you would not have had all of this trouble and loss. <sup>22</sup> But now I am telling you to cheer up. None of you will die! However, the ship will be lost. <sup>23</sup> Last night an angel came to me from the true God. This is the God I worship. I am His. <sup>24</sup> God's angel said, 'Paul, don't be afraid! You must stand before Caesar. And God has promised to give you something good: He will save the lives of all those sailing with you.' <sup>25</sup> So men, cheer up! I trust in God. Everything will happen just as His angel told me. <sup>26</sup> But we will run aground on an island."

<sup>27</sup> On the 14th night we were floating around in the Adriatic Sea. The sailors sensed that we were close to land. <sup>28</sup> They threw a rope into the water with a weight on the end of it. They found that the water was about 37 meters deep. They went a little further and threw the rope in again. It was about 27 meters deep. <sup>29</sup> The sailors were afraid that we would hit the rocks; therefore they threw four anchors into the water. Then they prayed for daylight to come.

<sup>30</sup> Some of the sailors wanted to leave the ship. They lowered the lifeboat to the water, trying to make the other men think that they were throwing out more anchors from the front of the ship. <sup>31</sup> But Paul told the officer and the other soldiers, "If these men do not stay in the ship, then your lives cannot be saved!" <sup>32</sup> So the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat fall into the water.

<sup>33</sup> Just before dawn, Paul started persuading everyone to eat something. He said, "For the past two weeks you have been waiting and watching. You have not eaten for 14 days. <sup>34</sup> Now, I beg you, eat something! You need it to stay alive. Not one of you will lose one hair of your head." <sup>35</sup> After he said this, Paul took some bread and, in front of them all, thanked God for it. He broke off a piece and began to eat. <sup>36</sup> All of the men felt better. They all started to eat too. <sup>37</sup> (There were 276 people on

the ship.)<sup>38</sup> We ate all we wanted. Then we began to make the ship lighter by throwing the wheat into the sea.

<sup>39</sup> When daylight came, the sailors saw land but they did not know where we were. We saw a bay with a beach. The sailors wanted to sail the ship to the beach if they could.<sup>40</sup> So the men cut the ropes to the anchors and left the anchors in the sea. At the same time, the men untied the ropes, which were holding the rudders. Then the men raised the front sail into the wind and sailed toward the beach.<sup>41</sup> But the ship hit a sandbank and the front of the ship stuck there; the ship could not move. Then the big waves began to break up the back of the ship.

<sup>42</sup> The soldiers decided to kill the prisoners so that none of the prisoners could swim away and escape,<sup>43</sup> but the officer wanted to let Paul live. Therefore he did not allow the soldiers to kill the prisoners. Julius ordered the people who could swim to jump into the water and swim toward land.<sup>44</sup> Others used wooden boards or pieces from the ship. This is how all of the people got to land. No one died.

---

## Chapter 28

<sup>01</sup> When we were safe on land, we realized that the island was called Malta. <sup>02</sup> It was very cold and raining. The people who lived there were very kind to us. They made a fire for us and welcomed us all.

<sup>03</sup> Paul picked up a pile of sticks for the fire. He was putting the sticks on the fire. Then, because of the heat, a poisonous snake came out and bit him on the hand. <sup>04</sup> The people living on the island saw the snake hanging from Paul's hand. They said to each other, "Surely this man is a murderer! He didn't die in the sea, but fairness will not permit him to live." <sup>05</sup> However, Paul shook off the snake into the fire. He was not hurt. <sup>06</sup> The people expected him to swell up or to suddenly fall down dead. For a long time the people waited and watched him, but nothing bad happened to him. So the people changed their minds and they began to say, "He is a god!"

<sup>07</sup> There were some fields around that same area. A very important man on the island owned these fields. His name was Publius. He welcomed us into his home. Publius was very kind to us. We stayed in his house for three days. <sup>08</sup> Publius' father was very sick. He had a fever and dysentery but Paul went to him and prayed for him. Paul put his hands on the man and healed him. <sup>09</sup> After this occurred, all the other sick people on the island began to come to Paul; they too were healed.

<sup>10-11</sup> The people on the island gave us many honors. We stayed there three months. When we were ready to leave, the people gave us the things we needed. We got on a ship from the city of Alexandria. The ship had stayed on the island of Malta during the winter. On the front of the ship was the sign for the twin gods.

<sup>12</sup> We stopped at the town of Syracuse and stayed there for three days. <sup>13</sup> Then we came to the town of Rhegium. The next day a wind began to blow from the southwest so we were able to leave. A day later we came to the town of Puteoli. <sup>14</sup> We found some brothers there. They asked us to stay with them seven days. Finally, we came near to Rome.

<sup>15</sup> The believers in Rome heard that we were there. They came out to meet us at the Market of Appius and at the Three Inns. When Paul saw these people, he felt better. He thanked God.

<sup>16</sup> Then we went to Rome. In Rome, though Paul was allowed to live alone, a soldier stayed with Paul to guard him.

<sup>17</sup> Three days later Paul sent for some of the most important Jewish leaders. When they came together, Paul said to them, "My Jewish brothers, I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, yet I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. <sup>18</sup> The Romans asked me many questions, but they could not find any reason why I should be put to death. They wanted to let me go free. <sup>19</sup> However, the Jewish leaders there did not want me to go free. So I was forced to ask to have my trial before Caesar in Rome. I am not accusing my people of anything wrong. <sup>20</sup> This is the reason I wanted to see you and talk with you. I am bound with this chain because I believe in the hope of Israel."

<sup>21</sup> These Jews answered Paul, "We have received no letters from Judea about you. None of our Jewish brothers who have traveled from Judea brought any news about you or told us anything bad about you. <sup>22</sup> We do want to hear your ideas. We know that people everywhere are speaking against this sect." <sup>23</sup> Paul and the Jewish leaders set a day for a meeting. On that day many more of these Jews met with Paul at his house. Paul spoke to them all day long. He explained to them the truth about the kingdom of God. Using the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets, Paul tried to persuade them about Jesus.

<sup>24</sup> Some of the Jews believed the things that Paul said, but others did not believe. <sup>25</sup> They disagreed among themselves. The Jewish leaders were ready to leave, but Paul said one more thing to them: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah. He said: <sup>26</sup> 'Go to this people and tell them: you will certainly hear, but you will not understand! You will certainly see, but you won't understand! <sup>27</sup> The heart of this people has become hard. They have ears, but they do not listen. They have shut their eyes. Otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their minds, and then turn. I would heal them.' <sup>28</sup> I want you Jewish leaders to know that God has sent His safety from danger to non-Jewish people. They will listen!" <sup>29</sup> And when he had said these things, the Jews left, having a great argument among themselves.

<sup>30</sup> Paul stayed two full years in his own rented house. He welcomed everyone who came to visit him. <sup>31</sup> Paul was preaching about the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. He was very bold. No one tried to stop him from speaking.

---

This content is not copyrighted and may be freely distributed.  
Please credit the Galilee Translation Project.