

Read the Bible in A Year: Chronological

Readings for September Nov 8-14, 2020

Selections from Acts 3-15; Galatians 1-6

While the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) tell the story of Jesus' birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension; the Book of Acts continues to tell of what the disciples (apostles) and other followers of Jesus did and experienced as they began their missionary work, spreading the good news of Jesus as he had told them to do. As communities of those who came to saving faith in Jesus grew, the church began to take form.

The Lame Man Healed at the Temple Gate

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. A man lame from birth was being carried, whom people placed daily at the gate of the temple called Beautiful to ask alms from those who entered the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. Peter, gazing at him with John, said, "Look at us." So he paid attention to them, expecting to receive something from them.

Then Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." He took him by the right hand and raised him up. Immediately his feet and ankles were strengthened. Jumping up, he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God. They knew that it was he who sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what happened to him.

Peter's Speech at Solomon's Porch

As the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the entrance that is called Solomon's Porch, greatly amazed. When Peter saw it, he answered the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this man? Or why do you stare at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Son Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Creator of Life, whom God has raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And His name, by faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. And faith which comes through Him has given him perfect health in your presence.

"Now brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold through all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled. Therefore repent and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the One who previously was preached to you, Jesus Christ, whom the heavens must receive until the time of restoring what God spoke through all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses indeed said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall hear whatever He may say to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that prophet shall be

utterly eliminated from the people.’ Indeed, all the prophets since Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold these days. You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to you first, to bless you in turning every one of you from your iniquities.”

Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin

As they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly troubled because they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they seized them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who heard the word believed, and the number of the men grew to about five thousand. On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes were assembled at Jerusalem with Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John and Alexander, and all who were of the family of the high priest. When they had stood them in the midst, they asked, “By what power or by what name have you done this?”

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we today are being examined concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, how this man has been healed, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands before you whole. He is ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ There is no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

When they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were illiterate and uneducated men, they marveled. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. But seeing the man who was healed standing with them, they had nothing to say against it. So when they had commanded them to go outside of the Sanhedrin, they conferred among themselves, saying, “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that an acknowledged miracle has been done through them is revealed to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But lest it spread further among the people, let us threaten them that they no longer speak to anyone in this name.”

Then they called them and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot help but declare what we have seen and heard.” When they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people. For all glorified God for what was done, for the man on whom this miracle of healing was performed was over forty years old.

The Believers Pray for Boldness

On being released, they went to their own people and reported what the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they lifted their voices in unity to God and prayed, “Lord, You are God, who has made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, and who by the mouth of Your servant David said: ‘Why did the nations rage, and the people devise vain things? The kings of the earth came, and the rulers were assembled together against the Lord and against His Christ.’ Indeed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were assembled together against Your holy Son Jesus whom You have anointed, to do what Your hand and Your counsel had foreordained to be done. Now, Lord,

look on their threats and grant that Your servants may speak Your word with great boldness, by stretching out Your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be performed in the name of Your holy Son Jesus.” When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.

All Things in Common

All the believers were of one heart and one soul, and no one said that what he possessed was his own. But to them all things were in common. With great power the apostles testified to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on them all. There was no one among them who lacked, for all those who were owners of land or houses sold them, and brought the income from what was sold, and placed it at the apostles’ feet. And it was distributed to each according to his need. Joseph, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means, Son of Encouragement), a Levite from the land of Cyprus, sold a field he owned, and brought the money and placed it at the apostles’ feet.

Ananias and Sapphira

Now a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property. He kept back part of the proceeds with his wife’s knowledge, and brought a part of it and placed it at the apostles’ feet. Then Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to deceive the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, was it not your own? And when it was sold, was it not under your authority? Why have you conceived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to men, but to God.” On hearing these words, Ananias fell down and died. And great fear came on all those who heard these things. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter said to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for this amount?” She said, “Yes, for that much.” Peter said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.” At once she fell down at his feet and died. Upon entering, the young men found her dead and carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear came on the entire church and on all those who heard these things.

Signs and Wonders

Many signs and wonders were performed among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon’s Porch. No one else dared join them, but the people respected them. Believers were increasingly added to the Lord, crowds of both men and women, so that they even brought the sick out into the streets and placed them on beds and mats, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might touch some of them. Crowds also came out of the cities surrounding Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those who were afflicted by evil spirits, and they were all healed.

Persecution of the Apostles

Then the high priest and all those who were with him (that is, the sect of the Sadducees) rose up and were filled with jealousy. They seized the apostles and put them in the common prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and led them out, and said, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." Having heard this, they entered the temple at dawn and taught.

But the high priest and those who were with him came and called together the Sanhedrin and the senate of all the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought out. But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, "We found the prison securely shut and the guards standing outside before the doors. But when we opened it, we found no one inside." Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they were in doubt of what might become of this. Then one came and told them, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." Then the captain with his escorts went and brought them, without force lest they should be stoned, for they feared the people.

When they had brought them, they stood them before the Sanhedrin. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? Yet now you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring on us this Man's blood." Peter and the other apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging on a tree. God exalted this Man to His right hand to be a Ruler and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. We are His witnesses to these words, as is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

When they heard this, they were cut to the heart and took counsel to kill them. But a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law honored by all the people, stood and ordered the apostles to be put outside for a little while. Then he said to them, "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do concerning these men. For in previous days Theudas rose up, boasting to be somebody, to whom a number of about four hundred men joined themselves. He was killed, and all who obeyed him were dispersed and came to nothing. After Theudas, Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away many people after him. This man also perished, and all who obeyed him were scattered. Now I tell you, keep away from these men and leave them alone, because if this intention or this activity is of men, it will come to nothing. But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them, lest perhaps you be found even fighting against God."

They agreed with him. When they had called in the apostles, they beat them, and commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and released them. Then they departed from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. Daily, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

The Seven Helpers

Now in those days, as the disciples were multiplied, there was murmuring among the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were overlooked in the daily distribution. So the twelve called the multitude of disciples together and said, "It is not reasonable for us to leave the word of God and serve tables. Brothers, look among yourselves for seven men who are known to be full of the Holy Spirit and of

wisdom, whom we will appoint over this duty. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

And what was said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, who was a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Procorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they presented before the apostles. And when they had prayed, they placed their hands on them.

So the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples grew rapidly in Jerusalem, and a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith.

The Arrest of Stephen

Now Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then some men rose up from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and of Asia), disputing with Stephen. But they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” So they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and came upon him and seized him and led him to the Sanhedrin, and set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses handed down to us.”

All who sat in the Sanhedrin, gazing at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

Stephen’s Speech

Then the high priest said, “Are these things so?”

He said, “Brothers and fathers, listen! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran, and said to him, ‘Leave your country and your relatives, and come to the land which I will show you.’ Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Harran. When his father died, He removed him from there to this land in which you now live. He gave him no inheritance in it, nor a foothold, and promised to give it to him as a possession and to his descendants after him while he had no child. God spoke in this way, ‘Your descendants shall be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who will enslave them and mistreat them four hundred years. And I will judge the nation to whom they will be enslaved,’ said God. ‘After that they shall come out and worship Me in this place.’ Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day. And Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs. The patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him governor over Egypt and all his house. Then a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan with great affliction, and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers the first time. During the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph’s family became known to Pharaoh. Then Joseph sent and called for his father Jacob and all his kindred, seventy-five souls. Then Jacob went down into Egypt. And he and our fathers died, and were carried to Shechem and put in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a price of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. When the time of

the promise drew near, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt until another king rose up who did not know Joseph. He dealt deceitfully with our people and mistreated our fathers, forcing them to put out their young children, that they might not live. At that time Moses was born, and was fair in the sight of God. And he was reared for three months in his father's house. When he was put out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up and reared him as her own son. Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in words and in deeds. When he was forty years old, it came to his heart to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel. But seeing one being wronged, he defended him, and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck the Egyptian. He supposed that his brothers would understand that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. On the next day he appeared to them as they fought and tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?' But the one wronging his neighbor pushed him away, saying, 'Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us? Will you kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' Moses fled at this word and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

"When forty years had passed, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight. As he drew near to look at it, the voice of the Lord came to him, saying, 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' Moses trembled and dared not look. Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off the shoes from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have indeed seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt. I have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. Now come, I will send you to Egypt.' This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'Who appointed you a ruler and a judge?' God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. He led them out after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and for forty years in the wilderness. This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. Him you shall hear.' This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received living oracles to give to us, whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust away. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, saying to Aaron, 'Make for us gods to go before us. For we do not know what has become of this Moses, who led us out of the land of Egypt.' So they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands. But God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: 'O House of Israel, have you offered to Me slain animals and sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness? Yes, you even raised the shrine of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, idols which you made to worship; therefore I will exile you beyond Babylon.'

"Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, telling Moses to make it as He had commanded, according to the pattern that he had seen, which our fathers, having received it, brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out in front of our fathers until the days of David, who found favor in the presence of God and asked to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built Him a house. "However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands. As the prophet says: 'Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, or what is the place of My rest? Has not My hand made all these things?' You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets have your fathers not persecuted? They have even killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of whom you have now become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the disposition of angels, but have not kept it."

The Stoning of Stephen

When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed their teeth at him. But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." Then they cried out with a loud voice, closed their ears, and rushed at him in unison. And they threw him out of the city and stoned him. The witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. They stoned Stephen as he was calling on God, praying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." Having said this, he fell asleep.

And Saul was consenting to his death.

Saul Persecutes the Church

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem. And they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² Devout men carried Stephen to his burial and made great lamentation over him. ³ But Saul ravaged the church, entering house by house and dragging out both men and women and committing them to prison.

The Gospel Preached in Samaria

Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miracles which he did, they listened in unity to what he said. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed. And many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.

Simon the Sorcerer Believes

Now a man named Simon was previously in the city practicing sorcery and astonishing the nation of Samaria, saying he was someone great, to whom they all listened, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." They listened to him, because for a long time he had astonished them by his sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Even Simon himself believed. And when he was baptized, he continued with Philip and was amazed as he watched the miracles and signs which were done.

Samaritans Receive the Holy Spirit

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they came down, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for still He had come on none of them. They were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me also this power, that whomever I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit." Peter said to him, "May your money perish with

you, because you thought you could purchase the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor share in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Therefore repent of your wickedness, and ask God if perhaps the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me that nothing you have spoken may come upon me." When they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise up and go toward the south on the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. So he rose up and went. And there was a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in command of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship. He was returning, sitting in his chariot and reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit said to Philip, "Go to this chariot and stay with it." Then Philip ran to him, and heard him read the book of Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

The passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation justice was denied Him; who will speak of His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." The eunuch said to Philip, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet speak, of himself or of someone else?" Then Philip spoke, beginning with the same Scripture, and preached Jesus to him.

As they went on their way, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." He answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And he commanded the chariot to halt. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away. And the eunuch saw him no more, and he went his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached the gospel in all the cities until he came to Caesarea.

The Conversion of Saul

Saul, still breathing out threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and requested letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any there of the Way, either men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he went he drew near Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" He said, "Who are You, Lord?" The Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." Trembling and astonished, he said, "Lord, what will You have me do?" The Lord said to him, "Rise up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

The men traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one. Saul rose up from the ground. And when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

A disciple named Ananias was in Damascus. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He said, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Rise and go to Straight Street, and inquire at Judas' house for someone named

Saul of Tarsus, for he is praying, and has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he may see again." Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go your way. For this man is a chosen vessel of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and their kings, and before the sons of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

Then Ananias went his way and entered the house. Putting his hands on him, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the way as you came, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he could see again. And he rose up and was baptized. When he had eaten, he was strengthened.

Saul Preaches in Damascus

For several days Saul was with the disciples in Damascus. Immediately he preached in the synagogues that the Christ is the Son of God. All who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this he who killed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and came here with that intent, to bring them bound to the chief priests?" Yet Saul increased all the more with power and confounded the Jews living in Damascus, proving that this One is the Christ.

Saul Escapes from the Jews

After many days had passed, the Jews arranged to kill him. But their scheme was known by Saul. They watched the gates day and night to kill him. But the disciples took him by night, and lowered him in a basket through the wall.

Saul in Jerusalem

When Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples. But they all feared him, not believing he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and led him to the apostles, and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had boldly preached in Damascus in the name of Jesus. So he stayed with them while coming in and going out of Jerusalem. And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists. But they tried to kill him. When the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him off to Tarsus.

Then the churches throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and were built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

The Healing of Aeneas

As Peter passed through every region, he came down also to the saints who lived in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years and was paralyzed. Peter said to him, "Aeneas,

Jesus the Christ heals you. Rise up and make your bed.” And immediately he rose up. All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

Dorcas Restored to Life

In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and almsgiving. In those days she became ill and died. And when they had washed her, they placed her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, pleading, “Do not delay to come to us.” Peter rose up and went with them. When he arrived, they led him into the upper room. All the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. He gave her his hand and lifted her up. And when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. It became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. He remained in Joppa for many days with Simon, a tanner.

Peter and Cornelius

In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, the centurion of a band of soldiers called the Italian Detachment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave many alms to the people and continually prayed to God. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius.” When he looked at him he was afraid, and said, “What is it, Lord?” He said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have come up as a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa, and bring back Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.”

When the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who continually waited on him. When he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. The next day as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray about the sixth hour. He became very hungry and desired to eat. But while they prepared a meal, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened, and a vessel like a great sheet, tied at the four corners, descending to him, and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth and wild beasts and reptiles and birds of the air. Then a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” Peter said, “Not at all, Lord. For I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” The voice spoke to him a second time: “What God has cleansed, do not call common.” This happened three times. And again the vessel was taken up into heaven.

Now while Peter wondered what this vision which he had seen might mean, the men who were sent by Cornelius had inquired for Simon’s house and stood at the gate, and called and asked whether Simon, who was surnamed Peter, was lodging there. While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Three men are looking for you. So rise and go down, and go with them, doubting nothing. For I have sent them.” Then Peter went down to the men who were sent to him by Cornelius and said, “Here I am, the one you are seeking. Why have you come?” They said, “Cornelius, a centurion, a man who is righteous and fears God and is of good report throughout the nation of the Jews, was directed by a holy angel to summon you to his house to hear your words.” Then he invited them in and gave them lodging.

The next day Peter went with them, and some brothers from Joppa accompanied him. And the next day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up. I myself am a man." As he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. He said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jew to visit or approach a foreigner. But God has shown me not to call any man common or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without question. Therefore, I ask why you have sent for me." Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour. At the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and suddenly a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered before God. Therefore, send to Joppa for Simon, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.' So immediately I sent for you, and you have done well to come. Now therefore we are all here, present before God, to hear everything the Lord has commanded you."

Peter Speaks in Cornelius' House

Then Peter began to speak, saying, "Truthfully, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation he who fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. The word which He sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, the word, which you know, that was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. We are witnesses of all that He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. But God raised Him on the third day and presented Him publicly, not to all the people, but to witnesses previously chosen by God, to us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets bear witness that whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins through His name."

Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the word. All the believers of the circumcision who had come with Peter were astonished, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in other tongues and magnifying God. Then Peter continued, "Can anyone forbid water for baptizing these, who have received the Holy Spirit as we have?" So he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Peter's Report to the Church in Jerusalem

The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised disputed with him, saying, "You went in and ate with uncircumcised men!" Peter began explaining it to them in order, saying, "I was in the city of Joppa praying. And in a trance I saw a vision: A vessel like a great sheet was descending, let down from heaven by four corners, and it came to me. I considered what I had observed and saw four-footed creatures and wild beasts and reptiles and birds of the air. Then I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill

and eat.' "I said, 'Not at all, Lord. For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.' The voice answered from heaven a second time, 'What God has cleansed, do not call common.' This happened three times. And again everything was taken up into heaven. And immediately three men sent from Caesarea to me came to the house where I was. The Spirit told me to go with them without hesitation. Moreover these six brothers came with me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen an angel in his house, who stood and said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter. He will speak words to you by which you and all your household will be saved.' As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as He fell on us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to be able to hinder OGod?"

When they heard these things, they were silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then God has granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life."

The Church in Antioch

Now those who were scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to no one except Jews. Some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. News of these things came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and exhorted them all to remain with the Lord with a loyal heart. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And many people were added to the Lord.

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. When he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a considerable crowd. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

In these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and prophesied by the Spirit that there would be a great famine throughout all the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then every disciple, according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers who lived in Judea. Indeed they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

James Killed and Peter Imprisoned

About that time King Herod extended his hands to harm certain ones from the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword. Seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to arrest Peter also. This happened during the Days of Unleavened Bread. When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him before the people after the Passover. So Peter was kept in prison. But the church prayed to God without ceasing for him.

Peter Delivered from Prison

The very night when Herod would have brought him out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains. And the guards before the door were securing the prison. And suddenly an angel of the Lord approached him, and a light shone in the prison. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up, saying, "Rise up, quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. Then the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put your sandals on." And he did so. Then he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." He went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first and the second guards, they came to the iron gate leading to the city, which opened to them by itself. And they went out and went forward one street. And immediately the angel left him. When Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I certainly know that the Lord has sent His angel and delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

Realizing this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. As Peter knocked at the door of the porch, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter's voice, from joy she did not open the door, but ran in and announced that Peter was standing at the door. They said to her, "You are insane." But she insisted that it was really so. So they said, "It is his angel." But Peter continued knocking. And when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. Motioning to them with his hand to be quiet, he described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. And he said, "Go, tell these things to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place.

Now when day came, there was a great disturbance among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. When Herod had searched for him and did not find him, he examined the guards and commanded that they should be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed there.

The Death of Herod

Now Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. But they came to him in unity, and having made Blastus, the king's personal servant, their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was fed by the king's country. On an appointed day, Herod, dressed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave a public speech to them. The mob shouted, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man!" Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give God the glory. And he was eaten by worms and died.

But the word of God spread and increased.

When Barnabas and Saul had fulfilled their ministry, they returned from Jerusalem and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Barnabas and Saul Commissioned

In the church that was in Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they worshipped the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

The Apostles Preach in Cyprus

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John as an assistant.

When they had gone through the whole island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a Jewish false prophet, whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (which is his name by interpretation) opposed them, trying to divert the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, stared at him and said, "You son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness, full of deceit and of all fraud, will you not cease perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now, look! The hand of the Lord is against you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time."

Immediately mist and darkness fell on him, and he went about seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed and was astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas in Antioch of Pisidia

Now when Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. But they departed from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it."

Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they lived as foreigners in the land of Egypt, and with great power He led them out of it. For about forty years He endured their conduct in the desert. When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave them their land as an inheritance by lot. After about four hundred and fifty years, God gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then they requested a king. And God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. When He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, of whom He testified, saying, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will fulfill My entire will.' From this man's descendants God has raised a Savior for Israel, Jesus, according to His promise. Before His coming John had preached a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. As John was fulfilling his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not He. But look! He is coming after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.' Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those of you who fear God, the word of this salvation has been sent to us. Because those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, did not know Him, in condemning Him they have fulfilled the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath. Though they found in Him no cause worthy of death, yet they asked Pilate to have Him killed. When they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree and placed Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead, and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now His witnesses to the people. We preach to you good news: The promise which was made to the fathers, God has fulfilled to us, their children, raising Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son; today I have become Your Father.' That He raised Him from the dead, no

more to return to corruption, He has spoken in this way: 'I will give You the holy and sure blessings of David.' So He says in another Psalm: 'You will not let Your Holy One see decay.' For after David had served by the counsel of God in his own generation, he fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw decay. But He whom God raised up saw no decay. Therefore, brothers, let it be known to you that through this Man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by Him everyone who believes is justified from everything from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Therefore beware, lest what is spoken of in the prophets come upon you: 'Look, you scoffers, marvel and perish! For I will perform a work in your days which you will never believe, even if someone declares it to you.'"

When Paul and Barnabas went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles asked that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city assembled to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, blaspheming and contradicting what Paul was saying. Then Paul and Barnabas boldly said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first. But seeing you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we are turning to the Gentiles. For thus has the Lord commanded us: 'I have established you to be a light of the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And all who were ordained to eternal life believed. The word of the Lord was spread throughout the entire region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women and the chief men of the city, and raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them from their region. So they shook off the dust of their feet against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Paul and Barnabas in Iconium

At Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together and so spoke that a great crowd of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and embittered their minds against the brothers. So they continued there a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to His gracious word, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the people of the city were divided. Some sided with the Jews, and others with the apostles. When an assault was planned by both Gentiles and Jews, with their leaders, to attack them and to stone them, they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. And there they preached the gospel.

Paul and Barnabas in Lystra

In Lystra there sat a man, crippled in his feet, who had never walked and was lame from birth. He heard Paul speaking, who looked intently at him and perceived that he had faith to be healed and said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he jumped up and walked. When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes, because he was the main speaker. The priest of Zeus, who was in front of the city, brought bulls and garlands to the gates to offer sacrifices with the crowds. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, "Men, why are you doing this? We also are men, of like nature with you, preaching to you

to turn from these vain things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything that is in them, who in times past allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Yet He did not leave Himself without witness, for He did good and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying our hearts with food and gladness.” With these words they scarcely restrained the crowds from sacrificing to them. Then some Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there and persuaded the crowds. They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing he was dead. But as the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. The next day he departed with Barnabas for Derbe.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the minds of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith, to go through many afflictions and thus enter the kingdom of God. When they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they believed. Then they passed throughout Pisidia and came to Pamphylia, and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. When they arrived and had assembled the church, they reported what God had done through them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And there they stayed a long time with the disciples.

The area through which Paul and Barnabas travelled on this first missionary journey was known as the region of Galatia. Upon returning to Antioch and continuing their work there, Paul wrote to the churches they had established in the areas of Galatia, encouraging them in their new faith and life as the church.

Paul’s Letter to the Galatians

Salutation Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), and all the brothers who are with me, to the churches of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

There Is No Other Gospel I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not a gospel. But there are some who trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. Although if we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than the one we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so I say now again: If anyone preaches any other gospel to you than the one you have received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the approval of men or of God? Or am I trying to please men? For if I were still trying to please men, I would not be the servant of Christ.

How Paul Became an Apostle But I reveal to you, brothers, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, neither was I taught it, except by a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it, and progressed in Judaism above many of my equals in my own heritage, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who set me apart since I was in my mother's womb and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the nations, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. But I went into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and stayed with him for fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie! Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia and was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. They had heard only, "He who persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which he once destroyed." And they glorified God because of me.

Paul Accepted by the Other Apostles Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas and also took Titus with me. I went up in response to a revelation and communicated to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles. But privately I communicated to those who were of reputation, in case I might be running, or had run, in vain. But even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised. This happened because false brothers were secretly brought in, who sneaked in to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. We did not yield to subjection to them, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of these who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality to anyone—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me. On the contrary, they saw that I was entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, as the gospel to the circumcised was to Peter. For He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles. When James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, understood the grace that was given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Only they requested that we should remember the poor, which I also was eager to do.

Paul Rebukes Peter in Antioch But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him face to face, because he stood condemned. Before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles. But when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the other Jews, likewise, joined together in hypocrisy with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, why do you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Jews, Like Gentiles, Are Saved by Faith We are Jews by nature, and not Gentile sinners, yet we know that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. Even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, rather than by the works of the law. For by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. If, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found to be sinners, is Christ therefore the minister of sin? God forbid! For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For through the law I am dead to the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God. For if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ died in vain.

Law or Faith O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth? Before your eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified. I want to learn only this from you: Did you receive the Spirit through the works of the law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Have you endured so many things for nothing, if indeed it was for nothing? Does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by hearing with faith? Even Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Therefore know that those who are of faith are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel in advance to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For all who rely on the works of the law are under the curse. For it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.” Now it is evident that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, for “The just shall live by faith.” But the law is not of faith, for “The man who does them shall live by them.” Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us—as it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” so that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The Law and the Promise Brothers, I am speaking in human terms: Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is ratified, no one annuls or adds to it. Now the promises were made to Abraham and his Seed. He does not say, “and to seeds,” meaning many, but “and to your Seed,” meaning one, who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not annul the covenant that was ratified by God in Christ, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance comes from the law, it no longer comes from the promise. But God gave it to Abraham through a promise. What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, until the Seed should come to whom the promise was made. And it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator for only one party, but God is one.

Slaves and Sons Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? God forbid! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, righteousness would indeed come through the law. But the Scripture has confined all things under sin, that the promise through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were imprisoned under the law, kept for the faith which was later to be revealed. So the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. You are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, and there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Now I say that as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ from a servant though he is lord of all. But he is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father. So when we were children, we were in bondage to the elements of the world. But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born from a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, crying, “Abba, Father!” Therefore you are no longer a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Paul’s Concern for the Galatians Previously, when you did not know God, you served those who by nature are not gods. But now, after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how do you turn again to the weak and beggarly elemental forces to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have worked for you in vain. Brothers, I ask you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong. You

know that it was because of an infirmity of the flesh that I first preached the gospel to you. Though my infirmity was a trial to you, you neither despised nor rejected me, but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. So where is your blessing? For I bear witness of you that, if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? They would zealously influence you, but not favorably. Yes, they would exclusively control you, so that you might consult them. But it is good to be zealous in a good manner always and not only when I am present with you. My little children, of whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, I desire to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am displeased with you.

The Allegory of Hagar and Sarah Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a slave woman, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but he of the free woman through the promise. These things are an allegory, for these are the two covenants. The one is from Mount Sinai, which gives birth to bondage; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and represents the present Jerusalem, and is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother. For it is written: "Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who have no labor pains! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband." Now we, brothers, like Isaac, are the children of promise. But as it was then, he who was born after the flesh persecuted him who was born after the Spirit, so it is now also. Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." So then, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. For freedom Christ freed us. Stand fast therefore and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Christian Freedom Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. I testify again to every man who is circumcised that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You have been cut off from Christ, whoever of you are justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we, through the Spirit, by faith, eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith which works through love. You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. A little yeast leavens the whole batch. I have confidence in you through the Lord that you will not think otherwise. But he who is troubling you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is. Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. I wish that those who are troubling you would castrate themselves! You, brothers, have been called to liberty. Only do not use liberty to give an opportunity to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For the entire law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed by one another.

Spiritual Fruit and Fleshly Works I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. These are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are revealed, which are these: adultery, sexual immorality, impurity, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, rage, selfishness, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I previously warned you, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control; against such there is no law. Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be conceited, provoking one another and envying one another.

Bear One Another's Burdens Brothers, if a man is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, watching yourselves, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if someone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. ⁵ For each one shall bear his own burden. Let him who is taught in the word share all good things with him who teaches. Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Final Warning and Benediction You see what large letters I have written to you with my own hand. It is those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For they themselves who are circumcised do not keep the law. But they desire to have you circumcised, so that they may boast in your flesh. God forbid that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be on all who walk according to this rule and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brothers, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.