

## **Read the Bible in A Year: Chronological**

**Readings for September Nov 29-Dec 5, 2020**

### **Selections from Acts 20-28; 2 Corinthians**

**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.**

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**During this time in his ministry, Paul wrote a second letter to the churches in Corinth...**

## **Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians**

### **Salutation**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Paul's Thanksgiving After Affliction**

Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. If we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective in enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. Our hope for you is steadfast, knowing that as you partake in the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation. For we would not, brothers, have you ignorant of our troubles which came to us in Asia. We were pressured beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. We had the sentence of death in ourselves, so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead. He delivered us from so great a death and does deliver us. In Him we trust that He will still deliver us, as you help together by praying for us, so that thanks may be given by many on our behalf for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many persons.

### **Paul's Travel Plans Change**

For our rejoicing is this: The testimony of our conscience is that we conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God. For we write nothing else to you than what you read or understand. And I trust you will understand even to the end, as you have understood us in part,

that we are yours, boasting even as you are ours on the day of the Lord Jesus. In this confidence I planned to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit: to visit you while going to Macedonia, and to come again to you from Macedonia, and then be sent by you on my way to Judea. Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do this lightly? Or the things that I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, so that I would tell you “Yes, yes” and “No, no”? But as God is true, we did not tell you “Yes” and “No.” For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by Silas, Timothy, and me, was not “Yes” and “No.” In Him it was “Yes.” For all the promises of God in Him are “Yes,” and in Him “Amen,” to the glory of God through us. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and established the guarantee with the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I call God as a witness upon my soul, that it is to spare you that I have not yet gone to Corinth. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy, for by faith you stand. But I determined this for myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. For if I make you sorrowful, who then will there be to make me rejoice, but the one whom I have made sorrowful? I wrote concerning this matter to you, so that when I came, I would not be grieved by those in whom I ought to rejoice, having confidence in you all, that my joy is your joy. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have more abundantly for you.

### **Forgiveness for the Offender**

But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but to some extent all of you, not to put it too severely. This punishment which was inflicted by many on such a man is sufficient. So on the contrary, you ought to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps he might be swallowed up with excessive sorrow. Therefore I ask you to confirm your love toward him. For to this end I also wrote, so that I might know that you are proving yourselves by whether you are being obedient in all things. Whomever you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if I forgave someone anything, for your sakes I forgave it in Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us. For we are not ignorant of his devices.

### **Paul’s Anxiety in Troas**

Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother. So taking my leave of them, I went from there into Macedonia. Now thanks be to God who always causes us to triumph in Christ and through us reveals the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God a sweet fragrance of Christ among those who are saved and among those who perish. To the one we are the fragrance of death, which brings death, and to the other the fragrance of life, which brings life. Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many are who peddle the word of God. Instead, being sent by God, we sincerely speak in Christ in the sight of God.

### **Ministers of the New Covenant**

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, letters of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? You are our letter written in our hearts, known and read by all men. For you are prominently declared to be the letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone

but on human tablets of the heart. We have such trust through Christ toward God, not that we are sufficient in ourselves to take credit for anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us able ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. If the ministry that brought death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, the glory which was to fade away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation is glorious, the ministry of righteousness much more exceeds it in glory. Even that which was made glorious had no glory in comparison to the glory that excels. For if that which fades was glorious, that which remains is much more glorious.

Seeing then that we have such hope, we speak with great boldness, not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, so that the children of Israel could not look intently at the end of what was fading away. Instead, their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the old covenant, the veil which was done away with in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is in their hearts. Nevertheless when anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, seeing the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, as in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.

### **Treasure in Earthen Vessels**

Therefore, since we have this ministry through the mercy we have received, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the secret things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by expressing the truth and commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost. The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, the excellency of the power being from God and not from ourselves. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; and always carrying around in the body the death of the Lord Jesus, that also the life of Jesus might be expressed in our bodies. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that also the life of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then, death works in us, but life in you.

We have the same spirit of faith. As it is written, "I believed, and therefore I have spoken." So we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us through Jesus and will present us with you. All these things are for your sakes, so that the abundant grace through the thanksgiving of many might overflow to the glory of God.

### **Living by Faith**

For this reason we do not lose heart: Even though our outward man is perishing, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day. Our light affliction, which lasts but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are

seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

We know that if our earthly house, this tent, were to be destroyed, we have an eternal building of God in the heavens, a house not made with hands. In this one we groan, earnestly desiring to be sheltered with our house which is from heaven. Thus being sheltered, we shall not be found unsheltered. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we wish to be unclothed, but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal might be swallowed up by life. Now He who has created us for this very thing is God, who also has given to us the guarantee of the Spirit.

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. Instead, I say that we are confident and willing to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. So whether present or absent, we labor that we may be accepted by Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive his recompense in the body, according to what he has done, whether it was good or bad.

### **The Ministry of Reconciliation**

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. But we are revealed to God, and I trust we are also revealed in your consciences. For we are not commending ourselves again to you. Instead, we give you occasion to boast on our behalf, that you may have something to answer those who boast in appearance and not in heart. If we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ constrains us, because we thus judge: that if one died for all, then all have died. And He died for all, that those who live should not from now on live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

So from now on we do not regard anyone according to the flesh. Yes, though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet we do not regard Him as such from now on. Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new. All this is from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their sins against them, and has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us. We implore you in Christ's stead: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

As workers together with God, we ask you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have listened to you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Look, now is the accepted time; look, now is the day of salvation.

We give no offense in anything, that our service may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as servants of God: in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distress, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, and in hunger; by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by genuine love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and look, we live; as punished, but not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; and as having nothing, and yet

possessing all things. O Corinthians, we have spoken frankly to you; our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. In return (I speak as to my children) you also be open.

### **The Temple of the Living God**

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion has light with darkness? What agreement has Christ with Belial? Or what part has he who believes with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live in them and walk in them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore, "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you...I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

### **Paul's Joy at the Church's Repentance**

Accept us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, and we have defrauded no one. I do not say this to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts, so that we would die or live with you. Great is my boldness of speech toward you; great is my boasting of you. I am filled with comfort, and I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. For when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, and we were troubled on every side. On the outside were conflicts; on the inside were fears. Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us through the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, when he told us about your sincere desire, your mourning, and your zeal toward me, so that I rejoiced even more.

Though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it. For I perceive that this same letter has caused you sorrow, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorrowful in a godly way, that you might not suffer loss in any way through us. Godly sorrow produces repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, which you sorrowed in a godly way: What carefulness it produced in you, what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what intense desire, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In all things you have proven yourselves to be innocent in this matter. So though I wrote to you, I did it not because of him who had done the wrong, nor because of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might be evident to you. Therefore we were comforted in your comfort. Yes, and we were exceedingly the more joyful for the sake of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all. So I am not ashamed if I have boasted of anything to him regarding you. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even our boasting in the presence of Titus is found to be true. Now his affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.

### **Liberal Giving**

Moreover, brothers, we want you to experience the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty

overflowed toward the riches of their generous giving. For I bear record that according to their means, and beyond their means, they freely gave, begging us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of ministering to the saints. This they did, not as we expected. First, they gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this gracious deed for you. But as you abound in everything—in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love to us—see that you abound in this grace also. I say this not as a command, but to prove through the authenticity of others, the sincerity also of your love. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that through His poverty you might be rich.

And in this matter I give my advice. It is appropriate for you, who began last year not only to give, but also to willingly give. Now therefore complete the task, so that, as there was a willingness to do so, there may be a performance of it according to your means. For if there is a willing mind first, the gift is accepted according to what a man possesses and not according to what he does not possess. I do not mean that other men have relief, and you be burdened, but for equality, that your abundance now at this time may supply their need, and their abundance may supply your need—that there may be equality. As it is written, “He who gathered much had no excess. And he who gathered little had no lack.”

But thanks be to God, who placed the same sincere care in the heart of Titus for you. For indeed he accepted the exhortation. But being more zealous, he went to you of his own accord. And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches. And not only that, but he was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which we administer to the glory of the same Lord, and to declare your willing mind, to prevent any man from blaming us in administering this abundant gift, providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men. Furthermore, we have sent with them our brother whom we have frequently proved diligent in many things, but now is much more diligent, due to the great confidence which he has in you. If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you. Or if our brothers are inquired about, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. Therefore show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.

### **The Offering for the Saints**

It is redundant for me to write to you concerning the ministry to the saints. I know your willingness, for which I boast of you to those in Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. Yet I have sent the brothers, lest our boasting of you might be in vain in this case, that, as I said, you may be ready; and lest if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you) should be ashamed of this confident boasting. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brothers to go ahead to you and arrange beforehand your bountiful gift you previously promised, that it might be prepared as a gift, not as a matter of greed.

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Let every man give according to the purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. God is able to make all grace abound toward you, so that you, always having enough of everything, may abound to every good work. As it is written: “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness remains

forever.” Now He who supplies seed to the sower and supplies bread for your food will also multiply your seed sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness. So you will be enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which makes us give thanks to God. For the administration of this service not only supplies the need of the saints, but is abundant also through many thanksgivings to God. Meanwhile, through the performance of this ministry, they glorify God for the profession of your faith in the gospel of Christ and for your liberal sharing with them and with all others. And in their prayer for you, they long for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.

### **Paul Defends His Ministry**

Now I, Paul, who am lowly in presence among you but bold toward you while absent, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. I beg you that when I am present, I might not have to be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is complete.

Do you look at things from the outward appearance? If any man trusts that he is Christ’s, let him consider again that, as he is Christ’s, even so are we Christ’s. For even if I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord has given us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed, lest I appear to frighten you by my letters. “For his letters,” they say, “are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.” Let such a person consider this: that as we are in word by letters when we are absent, we will also be in deed when we are present.

For we dare not count or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. They who measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another are not wise. But we will not boast beyond measure, but within the boundaries which God has appointed us, which reach even you. For we are not overextending ourselves as though we did not reach you, since we have come to you, preaching the gospel of Christ. We are not boasting of things beyond our measure in other men’s labors. But we have hope that when your faith is increased, our region shall be greatly enlarged by you, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you and not to boast in another man’s accomplishments. But, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.” For it is not he who commends himself who is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.

### **Paul and the False Apostles**

I would to God you could bear with me a little in my folly. Indeed, bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear that somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve through his trickery, so your minds might be led astray from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if you receive another spirit, which you have not received, or another gospel, which you have not accepted, you might submit to it readily enough. For I think I am not in any way inferior to the most eminent of the apostles. Even though I am unpolished in speech, yet I am not in knowledge. All things about us

have been thoroughly revealed to you. Did I commit a sin in abasing myself that you might be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of God free of charge? I robbed other churches by accepting wages from them to serve you. Furthermore, when I was present with you and was lacking, I was a burden to no one. For the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I lacked. In all things I have kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows.

And I will continue doing what I am doing, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be found equal to us in what they boast about. For such are false apostles and deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

### **Paul's Sufferings as an Apostle**

I say again, let no one think that I am a fool. Otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, so that I also may boast a little. What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. For you tolerate fools gladly, seeing you yourselves are wise. For you permit it if a man brings you into bondage, if a man devours you, if a man takes from you, if a man exalts himself, or if a man strikes you on the face. I say to my reproach that we were too weak for that.

But whenever anyone is bold (I speak foolishly), I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. Five times I received from the Jews forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brothers; in weariness and painfulness, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, and in cold and nakedness. Beside the external things, the care of all the churches pressures me daily. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is led into sin, and I am not distressed? If I must boast, I will boast of the things which concern my weakness. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forevermore, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the governor under King Aretas secured the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me. But I was let down by the wall through a window in a basket and escaped his hands.

### **Visions and Revelations**

Doubtless it is not profitable for me to boast. So I will move on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ over fourteen years ago—whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I knew that such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knows— was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words not permitted for a man to say. Of such a person, I will boast. Yet of myself I will not boast, except in my weaknesses. For if I desire to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But now I resist, lest anyone should think of me above



that which he sees me to be or hears from me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me, lest I be exalted above measure. I asked the Lord three times that this thing might depart from me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, in reproaches, in hardships, in persecutions, and in distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

### **Paul's Concern for the Corinthian Church**

I have become a fool in boasting. You have compelled me, for I ought to have been commended by you, for I am in no way inferior to the leading apostles, though I am nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were performed among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds. For in what respect were you inferior to other churches, unless it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!

I am ready to come to you this third time. And I will not be burdensome to you, for I do not seek what is yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? But be that as it may. I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with deceit. Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus to go, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?

Again, do you think that we are defending ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. We do all things, beloved, for your edifying. For I fear that when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish. I fear there are debates, envying, wrath, strife, backbiting, whispering, arrogance, and disorder. And I fear that when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall mourn for many who have sinned already, who have not repented of uncleanness, sexual immorality, and lasciviousness which they have committed.

### **Final Warnings and Greetings**

This is the third time I am coming to you. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." I told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time. And being absent now, I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the others, that if I come again, I will not spare *anyone*, since you seek proof of Christ speaking through me, who toward you is not weak, but is mighty in you. For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. So also we are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God serving you.

Examine yourselves, seeing whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not know that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified. Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do that which is honorable, whether or not we may seem disqualified. For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth. For we are glad when we are weak, and you are strong. We wish even your perfection. Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should be sharp, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

Finally, brothers, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, and live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

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**We continue into the **BOOK OF ACTS** as Paul and other missionaries continue their work of spreading the good news of Christ and building and encouraging the churches throughout the Mediterranean.**

### **Paul's Farewell Visit to Troas**

On the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to leave the next day, preached to them and continued his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were assembled. A young man named Eutychus sat in the window, falling into a deep sleep as Paul spoke for a longer time. Being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third floor and was taken up dead. Paul went down and leaned over him, and embracing him said, "Do not be troubled, for he is alive." When he had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed for a long while until dawn and departed. They took the lad in alive and were greatly comforted.

### **The Voyage From Troas to Miletus**

We went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, intending to take Paul on board there. For he had arranged this, intending to go on foot. When he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. The day after sailing from there we arrived off Chios. And the next day we crossed over to Samos and stayed at Trogyllium, and the following day we came to Miletus. Paul had decided to sail by Ephesus, to avoid spending time in Asia. For he was hurrying so he could be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

### **Paul Speaks to the Ephesian Elders**

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they came to him, he said to them, "You know how I always lived among you from the first day that I came to Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with many tears and trials which befell me through the plots of the Jews. I did not keep from declaring what was beneficial to you, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what shall befall me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But none of these things deter me. Nor do I count my life of value to myself, so that I may joyfully finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. Now I know that all you, among whom I went proclaiming the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not keep from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to the entire flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know that after my departure, dreadful wolves will enter among you, not sparing the flock. Even from among you men will arise speaking perverse things, to draw the

disciples away after them. Therefore watch, remembering that for three years night and day I did not cease to warn everyone with tears. Now, brothers, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities and for those who were with me. In all things I have shown you how, working like this, you must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Having said these things, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept much and embraced Paul's neck and kissed him, grieving most over the words he spoke, that they were to see his face no more. Then they escorted him to the ship.

### **Paul's Journey to Jerusalem**

When we had withdrawn from them and set sail, we went on a straight course to Cos, the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went aboard, and set sail. Having come in sight of Cyprus, we passed to the south of it and sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre, for there the ship's cargo was to be unloaded. When we found the disciples, we remained there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. But when our days were over, we parted and traveled on. Everyone, with wives and children, escorted us until we were outside the city. And we knelt on the shore and prayed. After bidding farewell to one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home.

We finished the voyage from Tyre when we landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. The next day we who were Paul's companions departed, and arrived at Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. He had four virgin daughters who prophesied. While we stayed there many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had arrived, he took Paul's belt and bound his own hands and feet, saying, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this manner the Jews at Jerusalem shall bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

When we heard these things, both we and the residents implored him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart"? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." When he would not be persuaded, we kept silent and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done." After those days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

### **Paul Visits James**

When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. On the next day Paul went with us to James, and all the elders were present. He greeted them and recounted one by one what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they glorified the Lord. Then they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who believe, and they are all zealous for the law. They have been informed concerning you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to observe the customs. What then shall be done? The assembly will certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you. We have four men who have taken a vow. Take these men and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may have their heads shaved. Then all will know that what they were told concerning you is nothing, but that you yourself live in observance of the

law. As for the Gentiles who believe, we have written and concluded that they should observe no such thing, except that they abstain from food offered to idols, from sexual immorality, from strangled animals, and from blood.” Then on the next day, Paul took the men and purified himself with them. And he went into the temple, announcing when the days of purification would be complete and an offering would be given for each one of them.

### **Paul Arrested in the Temple**

When the seven days were nearly concluded, the Jews from Asia saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man teaching all men everywhere against the people and the law and this place. He even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, whom they supposed Paul had brought into the temple.

Then the whole city was provoked, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple. And immediately the doors were shut. While they were trying to kill him, news came up to the commander of the battalion of soldiers that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He at once took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. When they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the commander came and arrested him, and ordered that he be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. Some in the crowd shouted one thing, some another. As he could not learn the truth because of the uproar, he commanded that he be brought into the barracks. When he came onto the stairs, he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the people. For the mob of people followed, crying out, “Away with him!”

### **Paul Defends Himself**

As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the commander, “May I speak to you?” He replied, “Do you know how to speak Greek? Are you not the Egyptian who in past days caused an uproar and led the four thousand men of the Sicarii out into the wilderness?” Paul said, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of no common city. I beg of you, permit me to speak to the people.” When he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. When there was great silence, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying,

“Brothers and fathers, hear my defense which I now make to you.” When they heard that he addressed them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. Then he said, “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. At the feet of Gamaliel I was trained in the strict tradition of the law of the fathers, being zealous toward God as you all are today. I persecuted this Way to the death, arresting and imprisoning both men and women, as even the high priest and the council of elders bear witness of me. From them I received letters to the brothers in Damascus, where I went to take even those who were there and lead them in chains to Jerusalem to be punished. As I journeyed and came near Damascus, about noon suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’ I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ He said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ Those who were with me saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who was speaking to me. I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ The Lord said to me, ‘Rise and go into Damascus. There you will be told what you have been appointed to do.’ Since I was blinded by the glory of that light, those who were with me led me by the hand into Damascus. Ananias, a devout man according to the law, who was well spoken of by all the Jews living there, came and stood by me, and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that moment I looked up at him. Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will

and to see the Just One and to hear His voice, for you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. <sup>1</sup>And now why do you wait? Rise, be baptized and wash away your sins, and call on the name of the Lord.' When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw Him saying to me, 'Hurry! Get out of Jerusalem immediately, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.' I said, 'Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat those who believed in You in every synagogue. And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I was standing by consenting to his death, guarding the clothes of those who killed him.' Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

### **Paul and the Roman Commander**

They listened to him up to this word, and then they lifted up their voices and said, "Away with such a man from the earth, for he is not fit to live!" As they shouted and threw off their garments and threw dust into the air, the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks and examined with scourging, so that he might learn what crime they were alleging against him. As they stretched him forward with straps, Paul said to the centurion standing by, "Is it legal for you to flog an uncondemned Roman citizen?" On hearing this, the centurion reported to the commander, saying, "What are you doing? This man is a Roman citizen." The commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" He said, "Yes." The commander answered, "I bought my citizenship for a large sum." So Paul said, "But I was born a citizen." Therefore those who were about to examine Paul immediately backed away from him. And the commander feared, knowing that he was a Roman citizen and because he had bound him.

### **Paul Before the Sanhedrin**

On the next day, desiring to know exactly why he was accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble, and he brought Paul down to stand before them. Paul looked at the Sanhedrin and said, "Brothers, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." The high priest Ananias ordered those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! Do you sit judging me according to the law, yet order me to be struck contrary to the law?" Those who stood by said, "Do you criticize God's high priest?" Paul said, "Brothers, I did not know that he was the high priest. For it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people.'" Then Paul, knowing that one sect were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, cried out among the Sanhedrin, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of a Pharisee. I am being judged for my hope in the resurrection of the dead." When he had said this, dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit. But the Pharisees acknowledge them all. There was a great outcry. The scribes that were from the sect of Pharisees stood up and argued, "We find no evil in this man. But if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God." When much dissension arose, fearing that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, the commander ordered the soldiers to go down and take him from them by force and bring him into the barracks. The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, Paul. For as you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify at Rome."

### **The Plot Against Paul's Life**

At daybreak some of the Jews conspired under oath, saying they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who had conspired. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have bound ourselves under oath not to eat until we have killed Paul. So now, with

the Sanhedrin, tell the commander to bring him down to you tomorrow, pretending to inquire further concerning him. We are ready to kill him before he arrives.” But when the son of Paul’s sister heard of the treachery, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions over and said, “Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him.” So he took him to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner sent for me and asked me to bring you this young man who has something to tell you.” Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside privately, and asked him, “What is it you have to tell me?” The boy said, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down tomorrow to the Sanhedrin, pretending to inquire further concerning him. Do not trust them. More than forty men, who have bound themselves with an oath to neither eat nor drink until they have killed him, are waiting for him. And now they are ready, waiting for your promise.” The commander dismissed the young man and ordered him, “Tell no one that you have reported these things to me.”

### **Paul Sent to Felix the Governor**

Then he summoned two centurions and said, “Prepare two hundred infantrymen, seventy mounted soldiers, and two hundred light infantrymen with spears to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night. And provide mounts so Paul may ride and take him safely to Felix the governor.” He wrote a letter that went like this:

Claudius Lysias, to His Excellency Governor Felix: Greetings. This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. When I learned that he was a Roman citizen, I came with soldiers and rescued him. Being minded to learn what crime they alleged, I took him to their Sanhedrin. I found him being accused of controversial matters about their law, but charged with nothing worthy of death or imprisonment. When it was revealed to me that there was a plot against the man, at once I sent him to you and ordered the accusers to state before you their charges against him. Farewell.

So the soldiers, according to their orders, took Paul by night to Antipatris. The next day they let the cavalry depart with him and they returned to the barracks. When they arrived in Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also to him. Upon reading the letter, the governor asked what province he was from. When he learned that he was from Cilicia, he said, “I will hear you when your accusers also arrive.” And he ordered that he be guarded in Herod’s Praetorium.

### **The Case Against Paul**

After five days Ananias the high priest arrived with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus. They brought before the governor their charges against Paul. When he was summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, “Since through you we enjoy much peace, and your foresight is bringing reforms to this nation, with all thankfulness, most excellent Felix, we always welcome it everywhere. But not to detain you further, I beg you to briefly hear us in your patience. We have found this man a troublemaker, instigating riots among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple. So we seized him and wanted to judge him according to our law. But the commander, Lysias, came to us and forcefully took him out of our hands, ordering his accusers to come before you. By examining him yourself you will be able to learn about all these things concerning which we accuse him.” The Jews assented, alleging these things to be true.

### **Paul's Defense Before Felix**

After the governor motioned to him to speak, Paul answered, "Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully defend myself. You may verify that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. They did not find me in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd. They cannot prove the things concerning which they now accuse me. However, I affirm that in accordance with the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of my fathers and believe everything written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, which they also expect. In this do I always strive to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men. Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, when some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a crowd nor an uproar. They ought to be here before you to accuse me if they have any charges. Or let these men say what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin, unless it is concerning this one statement which I cried out while standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead, I am being judged by you this day.'" When Felix, who had more exact knowledge concerning the Way, had heard this, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When Lysias the commander arrives, I will decide your case." Then he ordered the centurion to guard Paul, and to let him have liberty, and to forbid none of his own people from attending to him.

### **Paul Held in Custody**

After several days, when Felix arrived with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess, he sent for Paul and heard him speak concerning faith in Christ. As he lectured about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix was afraid and answered, "For now, leave! When time permits, I will send for you." At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. So he sent for him more often and conversed with him. But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix. And Felix, desiring to do the Jews a favor, left Paul imprisoned.

### **Paul Appeals to Caesar**

Now three days after Festus had come into the province, he went from Caesarea up to Jerusalem. The high priest and the elders of the Jews spoke to him against Paul. And they begged him, asking as a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem, plotting to kill him along the way. Festus said that Paul should be kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly. He also said, "Let the men in authority go down with me. If there is anything wrong in the man, let them accuse him."

Having stayed among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he sat on the judgment seat and ordered that Paul be brought in. When he arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him and brought many serious charges against him which they could not prove, while he defended himself, saying, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I sinned at all." Desiring to do the Jews a favor, Festus answered, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem to be judged concerning these charges before me?" Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you know very well. If I am doing wrong or have done anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die. But if these are empty charges of which these men accuse me, no one may deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar." When Festus had conferred with the council, he then answered, "To Caesar you have appealed. To Caesar you shall go."

### **Paul Before Agrippa and Bernice**

After several days King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to welcome Festus. When they had been there many days, Festus stated Paul's case to the king, saying, "There is a man left as a prisoner by Felix. When I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me about him, asking for a sentence against him. I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to die before he who is accused meets the accusers face to face and has the opportunity to make his defense concerning the charge brought against him.' So when they assembled here, without delay I sat on the judgment seat the next day and ordered that the man be brought in. When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such crimes as I had supposed. But they had disagreements with him about their own religion and about a Man named Jesus, who had died, but whom Paul asserted was alive. Being perplexed about such questions, I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried there concerning these charges. But when Paul had appealed to be under guard for the decision of Caesar, I ordered that he be secured until I could send him to Caesar." Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear the man myself." He said, "Tomorrow you shall hear him."

The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the hall with the commanders and the leading men of the city. When Festus gave the order, Paul was brought in. Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all the men who are present with us, you see this man, concerning whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death. But when he himself appealed to Caesar, I decided to send him. But I have nothing to write to His Majesty concerning him. Therefore I have brought him before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that upon examination, I might have something to write. For it seems unreasonable to me to send a prisoner without signifying the charges against him."

### **Paul's Defense Before Agrippa**

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that today I shall make my defense before you against all the accusations of the Jews, especially because you are an expert in all customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to patiently listen to me. My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning in my own nation and at Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. They knew me from the beginning and could testify, if they wished, how according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived as a Pharisee. And now I stand on trial for hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God day and night. Concerning this hope, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. Why is it judged incredible by you that God raises the dead? I, too, thought that I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which I indeed did in Jerusalem and locked up many of the saints in prison by authority from the chief priests. And when they were killed, I cast my vote against them. I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme. And being extremely enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities. So I went to Damascus with authority and a commission from the chief priests. At midday, O King, I saw along the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' He said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet. For I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and a witness both of what you have seen and of what I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from your people and from the Gentiles to whom I now send you, to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from



the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do works proving their repentance. For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. Therefore having obtained help from God, I continue to this day, testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would happen: that the Christ must suffer, that He would be the first who would rise from the dead, and would announce light to His own people and to the Gentiles."

### **Paul Appeals to Agrippa to Believe**

So as he made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are mad. Much learning is turning you to madness." Paul said, "I am not mad, most excellent Festus. I speak the words of truth and reason. The king, before whom I also speak freely, knows about these things. For I am persuaded that none of this is hidden from him, for this was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to be a Christian." Paul said, "I pray to God that not only you, but all who hear me this day, might become not only almost, but thoroughly and altogether, what I am, except for these chains." When he had said this, the king rose, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them. When they had gone aside, they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing deserving death or imprisonment." And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

### **Paul Sails for Rome**

When it was decided that we should sail into Italy, they handed Paul and some other prisoners over to a centurion of the Augustan Regiment, named Julius. Boarding a ship from Adramyttium, we put out to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. The next day we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be given care. From there we put out to sea and sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. Sailing across the sea off of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing to Italy, and he put us on board. We sailed slowly for many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and as the wind did not allow us to proceed, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. Sailing past it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea. As much time had been lost and as the voyage was now dangerous, because the Day of Atonement was already over, Paul advised them, saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also of our lives." But the centurion was persuaded more by the captain and the owner of the ship than by what Paul said. Since the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority decided to sail on from there, if somehow, we might reach Phoenix, a harbor in Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and winter there.

### **The Storm at Sea**

When a south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained the necessary conditions, they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. But soon afterward a tempestuous wind swept through, called the Euroclydon. When the ship was overpowered and could not head into the wind, we let her drift. Drifting under the lee of an island called Cauda, we could scarcely secure the rowboat. When they had hoisted it aboard, they used ropes to undergird the ship. And fearing that they might run aground on the sand of Syrtis, they let down the mast, and so were driven. We were violently tossed by the storm. The next day they threw cargo overboard. On the third day we threw the tackle of

the ship overboard with our own hands. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was upon us, all hope that we should be saved was lost.

After they had long abstained from food, Paul stood in their midst and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete, incurring this injury and loss. But now I advise you to take courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand before Caesar. And, look! God has given you all those who sail with you.' Therefore, men, take courage, for I believe God that it will be exactly as it was told to me. Nevertheless, we must be shipwrecked on a certain island."

When the fourteenth night came, while we were drifting in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors supposed that they were approaching land. They took soundings and found the water to be one hundred and twenty feet deep. When they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found it to be ninety feet deep. Fearing that we might run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. When the sailors strove to abandon ship and lowered the rowboat into the sea, under the pretext of lowering anchors out of the bow, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these sailors remain in the ship, you cannot be saved." Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the rowboat and let her fall off.

As day was about to dawn, Paul asked them all to eat, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have waited and continued without food, having eaten nothing. So I urge you to eat. This is for your preservation, for not a hair shall fall from your head." When he had said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all. And when he had broken it he began to eat. Then they were all encouraged, and they also ate food themselves. In all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship. When they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw the wheat into the sea.

### **The Shipwreck**

When it was day, they did not recognize the land. But they noticed a bay with a shore, into which they were determined to run the ship if possible. Casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea while loosening the ropes that secured the rudders. Then they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. But striking a sandbar where two seas met, they ran the ship aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, but the stern was broken up by the violent surf. The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, prevented them from their intent and ordered those who could swim to abandon ship first and get to land, and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And in this way they all escaped safely to land.

### **Paul in Malta**

When they had escaped, they learned that the island was called Malta. The natives showed extraordinary kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because of the rain and the cold. When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper driven out by the heat fastened on his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "Surely this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, justice does not allow him to live." But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. They expected him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But while they waited and saw no harm befall him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god. In that area was an estate of the chief man of the island, named Publius, who had welcomed us and courteously housed us for three days. It happened that the father of

Publius lay sick with a fever and dysentery. Paul visited him and, placing his hands on him, prayed and healed him. When this happened, the rest on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. They honored us in many ways. And when we sailed, they provided us with necessary supplies.

### **Paul Arrives in Rome**

After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. Landing at Syracuse, we waited there for three days. From there we circled around and sailed to Rhegium. After one day the south wind blew, and the next day we arrived at Puteoli. There we found brothers, and were invited to remain with them for seven days. And so we went to Rome. From there, when the brothers heard of us, they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage. When we arrived at Rome, the centurion handed the prisoners over to the captain of the guard. But Paul was allowed to remain by himself with the soldier who guarded him.

### **Paul Preaches in Rome**

After three days Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. When they had assembled, he said to them, "Brothers, having done nothing contrary to our people or the customs of our fathers, I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. When they had examined me, they were determined to release me, because there was no charge against me deserving death. But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any charge to bring against my nation. For this reason I have asked to see you and speak with you, because I am bound with this chain for the hope of Israel." They said to him, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers that have come have reported or spoken any evil of you. But we think it is proper to hear from you what you think. For concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere."

When they had arranged a day to be with him, many came to him at his residence. From morning until evening he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God to them, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Some believed what was said, but some did not believe. Being in disagreement with one another, they were dismissed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit accurately spoke to our fathers through Isaiah the prophet, 'Go to this people and say: You shall certainly hear, but never understand; and you shall certainly see, but never perceive; for the heart of this people has grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and they have closed their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.' Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles. They will hear it!" When he had said these words, the Jews departed and disputed greatly among themselves. Paul remained two whole years in his own rented house. He welcomed all who came to him, boldly and freely preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.