

Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles

The Acts of the Apostles is the second part of a two-volume work by the evangelist Luke; the first is his Gospel. It continues his story from Jesus' Ascension for the next thirty years until the Apostle Paul reaches Rome, the greatest city of the ancient world.

Acts is, however, no more a history in the modern sense than the Gospel is what we now would consider a biography, and Luke is occasionally taken to task by modern critics for failing to write like a twenty-first century academic. By the standards of his own day, however, Luke does quite well. There are occasional errors of fact in Acts, true, but the difficulties of gathering information in antiquity make that inevitable.

One problem in evaluating Luke's accuracy in Acts is that there is very little against which to check it. He is our only reliable source of information for Christian history for the three decades he covers; his Gospel, at least, can be compared with the other three. On the other hand, because Acts deals with lengthy ministries in Asia Minor and Greece, his background information is more easily checked against the secular historians of the same period, and as always we can consult Josephus for information on the history of Palestine. There is also a considerable amount of information by Paul himself on his own life in his epistles.

On the whole, Luke rates very high in terms of the overall background of first century Roman history. He is generally in agreement with Paul on Paul's life story—there are a few knotty points here and there, but nothing that cannot be accommodated without resorting to too many *ad hoc* explanations. His implied chronology of Palestinian history differs somewhat more from Josephus'.

The biggest single divergence between Acts and external information has to do with Paul's theology. Paul as presented in Acts gives speeches that sound like everybody else's speeches, and the overall theology that Paul presents is closer to Luke's than to Paul's. The latter is sometimes made into more of a problem than it deserves to be. Luke was Paul's occasional companion and spent a fair amount of time with him, but that is rather different from making a thorough, nuanced study of Paul's theology; and as for the literary style of Paul's speeches in Acts, that has to do overall with how Luke as a historian uses speeches in his text.

The Speeches in Acts

One important feature that Luke shares with other Hellenistic historians is his use of speeches. This is a technique pioneered by the greatest of the Greek historians, Thucydides. As he expresses it (1.22, Rex Warner's translation), "In this history I have made use of set speeches some of which were delivered just before and others during the war. I have found it difficult to remember the precise words used in the speeches which I listened to myself and my various informants have expressed the same difficulty; so my method has been, while keeping as closely as possible to the general sense of the words that were actually used, to make the speakers say what, in my opinion, was called for by each situation."

While some of the Greek historians who followed Thucydides objected to the technique, they used it themselves, and Luke is no exception. There are a number of set speeches in Acts, by Peter, Stephen, James, Paul, and others. Luke may have been present for some of them or obtained information on others from his sources, but Luke himself is responsible for the precise

wording. As such, he shows considerable skill in varying his style and content to suit the occasion.

This should not bother modern LDS, as we have a prime example of the same sort of thing in the King Follett Discourse. What we now read as the King Follett Discourse is an amalgamation made in 1855 by Jonathan Grimshaw, a clerk in the Church Historian's Office. Grimshaw used notes made by Willard Richards and Wilford Woodruff. We also have the official notes prepared by William Clayton and Thomas Bullock. Even though there are four versions made by people who actually heard Joseph speak, there are innumerable differences between them. The amalgamation is useful for study and for doctrinal insight, but should not by any means be taken as representing Joseph's exact words.

In other words, imagine a time traveler with a video camera taping both King Follett's funeral and Paul's speech on the Areopagus. The tapes would not match what we have written as the King Follett Discourse or in Acts. We should not expect that they would.

The Apostleship in Acts and the Early Church

The traditional name for Acts, which dates back to the second century, is strictly speaking a misnomer. The first half of the book is dominated by Peter and occasionally John, with lengthy asides for the ministries of Stephen and Philip; the second half is entirely Paul's. Of these, only Peter and John are definitely members of the Twelve, and only Paul is also called an apostle. The martyrdom of James the son of Zebedee is mentioned, but not the death of any other Apostle. Only one addition to the Twelve is narrated. There is a list of Apostles at the beginning of the book, but most of the names listed there are nowhere else mentioned in the book.

It cannot be determined from Luke whether there were apostles in the primitive Church who were not part of the Twelve, as has occasionally happened in the modern Church, most recently with Alvin R. Dyer. It is clear that the institution of an Apostleship was not maintained in the primitive Church beyond the end of the first century, and we cannot prove from historical data that the primitive Church understood as the modern one does the importance of keeping the Twelve as a quorum up to strength. Luke recounts an addition to the Twelve to replace Judas, but the ancient Church may have shared the assumption of modern Christianity in general, that Judas' betrayal and death were extraordinary and required an extraordinary response.

All this is complicated by the fact that the word "apostle" is a perfectly good Greek word meaning *emissary*, and is occasionally used with that meaning (2 Cor. 8:23, Phil. 2:25). When someone is referred to as an "apostle," therefore, it may mean one of three things:

- a) He was a member of the Twelve;
- b) He held the priesthood office of "apostle" without being in the Twelve; or
- c) He was an emissary for Jesus or the Church.

(As a modern analogy, if I say that someone is a teacher in the LDS Church, one cannot tell if that means he holds the priesthood office of a teacher or just teaches a class.)

Luke tends to use some theological words in a generalized sense, most notably "prophet," which he uses for people who have the gift of prophecy but who are not either the head of the Church or members of the Twelve. He may therefore use "apostle" in a similarly generic sense.

LDS commentators are divided on the issue of whether Paul was ever a member of the Twelve. On the whole, most favor the belief that he was, but there is no consensus. All agree

that he was a powerful teacher, an indefatigable missionary, and a stalwart example of devotion to God, whose writings are deservedly among our greatest treasures.

Date

Acts is assumed to have been written at the same time as the Gospel of Luke. The main controversy is whether this was at some point in the mid-60's AD or some twenty years later.

The main evidence in favor of a late date is that the attitude towards the Temple and temple worship seems to fit better with a period after the Temple's destruction by the Romans in AD 70. Allowing some time for the new situation to sink in and for Luke to gather sources, one arrives at a date around AD 80 or 85. This later date also gives more time for Luke's many sources to be composed and for Luke to research them and utilize them in a single, smooth narrative.

Such an approach is not universally accepted, however. It would not have taken much prescience on the part of the first generation Christians to anticipate the Temple's destruction by the Romans. Even if Christ had not predicted such a catastrophe (as all three synoptics and, more to the point, JS—M, state), any reasonably intelligent Jew who did not assume that God's protection of the Temple was automatic and eternal could see the writing, as it were, on the wall even during Jesus' lifetime, let alone thirty years later. As a result, an awareness of the destruction of the Temple and the potential consequences thereof on Judaism do not necessarily imply a date after the Jewish War.

The main evidence in favor of an early date is that Luke ends Acts with Paul's house arrest in Rome, which took place around AD 62 as nearly as can be determined. Luke does not narrate the deaths of Peter and Paul, which took place shortly thereafter, nor the impact of the Jewish War on the early Christian community and its relationship with Judaism. These are surely important events, which, it is argued, Luke would have narrated had he known of them.

The counter-argument to this has to do with Luke's geographic orientation. His history ends, not with Paul's house-arrest, but with his successful evangelization of the Empire's capital city, something all of Acts has been tending towards. Anything taking place afterwards would have been an anticlimax within that scheme, particularly the condemnation and execution of Paul and the first Roman persecution of Christians.

On the whole, the majority of scholars tend towards accepting the later date with a significant minority leaning towards the earlier date.

Themes

There are a number of themes that Luke touches on repeatedly over the course of the book. Some are carry-overs from his Gospel, such as prayer and an organization centered on geography. Some of the other important themes are:

The shift from a Jewish Church to a Gentile one. This is at the core of Acts. It is centered on the transition from being an almost exclusively Jewish Church to the introduction of preaching to the Gentiles with the conversions of Paul and Cornelius and the Council of Jerusalem. We also see Jews and particularly their leaders consistently rejecting the message of Christ and Gentiles accepting it.

Christianity as a legal religion. As the first century drew towards its close, the primitive Church had to begin to face organized opposition from the Roman government. The Romans

were conservative in matters of religion and generally frowned on religious innovation. As religious conflict was often violent and disruptive, they would also suppress religions of which they disapproved. Even worse, much of the cement that held their realm together was centered on the imperial cult that treated the Emperor and the immediate members of his family as gods. (This should be taken more as an indication of the relatively low esteem with which the pagans held their gods than their relatively high esteem for their Emperors.)

Now, Judaism was a recognized religion and as such had certain rights. Jews, for example, were permitted not to participate in the imperial cult. If Christianity were merely a variety of Judaism, it should have similar rights.

Luke relates to us several early conflicts between the Church and the Roman government. Consistently, we see the Romans as treating Christianity as a variety of Judaism and therefore not subject to official proscription.

Christians as Jesus' successors. The miracles that we see in the Gospel continue in Acts. For modern LDS, this should be no surprise as the same priesthood is operative in both cases. Luke uses these miracle accounts as he had in the Gospel, to show that God's hand is still operative among his people, and that the apostles and others are the ones through whom he works.

The triumphant progress of the early Church. This theme is developed partly through Luke's geographic focus, and partly by his periodic pauses to summarize Church growth. The Church moves onwards and upwards, overcoming all obstacles.

The unity of the early Church. Luke cannot and will not hide notable instances where Christian unity was less than perfect, such as Ananias and Sapphira lying to Peter, in-fighting between Greek- and Aramaic-speaking Christians over distributions to widows, or even disagreement over Gentile fellowship. He does tend to minimize conflicts as much as possible and emphasizes group unity and fellowship.

Text

The textual problems of Acts are knottier than for any other book in the NT; the *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* devotes as much space to Acts as to all four Gospels put together. The main difficulty is that the Western text is some 10% longer than the Alexandrian text. The additional material is spread throughout the book and is generally in the nature of adding details to the existing narrative. Although some scholars argue that the Western text is original, most would not agree. Nonetheless, the additions found in the Western text are ancient and some may conceivably date back to Luke himself.

We will not here detail the differences found between the Western text and the Alexandrian text. In the main, this is because the KJV is, as elsewhere, based on the Byzantine text family, which is relatively close to, but not identical with, the Alexandrian text. Fitzmyer's volume on Acts for the Anchor Bible series lists all such textual variations and is probably the best source of information for the English speaker who reads no Greek.

As one might expect, alterations to the text of Acts in the JST are relatively sparse: only forty-five verses in the entire book have any sort of change at all, and about one-third of those are trivial in nature.

Manuscript History

The earliest manuscripts date to the third century. The earliest five manuscripts are:

P29, or P. Oxy. 1597, now housed in Oxford, contains Acts 26:7-8, 20. This manuscript has been dated paleographically to the third century AD.

P45, or P. Chester Beatty I, now housed in Dublin, contains portions of many New Testament books. The portions of Acts that it contains are Acts 4:27-36; 5:10-21; 5:30-39; 6:7-7:2; 7:10-21; 7:32-41; 7:52-8:1; 8:14-25; 8:34-9:6; 9:16-27; 9:35-10:2; 10:10-23; 10:31-41; 11:2-14; 11:24-12:5; 12:13-22; 13:6-16; 13:25-36; 13:46-14:3; 14:15-23; 15:2-7; 15:19-27; 15:38-16:4; 16:15-21; 16:32-40; 17:9-17. This manuscript has been paleographically dated to the third century AD.

P48, or PSI 1165, now housed in Florence, contains Acts 23:11-17; 23:23-29. This manuscript has been dated paleographically to the third century AD.

P53, or P. University of Michigan Inventory 6652, now housed in Ann Arbor, Michigan, contains portions of Matthew and Acts. The portions of Acts it contains are Acts 9:33-10:1. This manuscript is dated paleographically to the third century AD.

P38, or P. Mich. 138, now housed in Ann Arbor, contains Acts 18:27-19:6; 19:12-16. This manuscript has been dated paleographically to the late third or early fourth century AD.

Many other manuscripts have survived, but all date later than these five. Acts chapters 1-3, 20-22, 24-25, 27-28, and most of chapter 18 are not preserved before the fourth century.

Outline

Although the narrative structure of Acts makes a summary of its contents relatively easy, discerning the *structure* of the book is relatively difficult and as many theories exist as scholars proposing them. We follow here the suggestion that Acts 1:8 provides the most basic structure for the book: the Church in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and then spreading “to the uttermost parts of the earth.” This fits in well with the overall geographic structure Luke gave his Gospel, which was focused on Jerusalem. Here, although the action continually returns to Jerusalem as the spiritual heart of the Church, we see Christianity spread in ever widening circles until at the end it touches Rome itself.

The following may be taken as a simple outline.

1. Luke’s prologue (1:1–2)
2. The Church in Judea
 - a. The beginning of the Apostolic ministry (1:3–26)
 - i. Christ’s final charge and Ascension (1:3–11)
 - ii. The unity of the first disciples (1:12–14)
 - iii. Matthias chosen to replace Judas (1:15–26)
 - b. The first Pentecost (2:1–47)
 - i. Outpouring of the Spirit (2:1–13)
 - ii. Peter addresses the crowds (2:14–36)
 - iii. The aftermath of Peter’s speech (2:37–47)
 - c. A miracle and its aftermath (3:1–4:35)
 - i. Peter and John heal a man in the Temple (3:1–11)
 - ii. Peter’s discourse on the miracle (3:12–26)

- iii. Peter and John arrested, examined, and released (4:1–32)
 - d. Christian communitarianism (4:33–5:11)
 - i. The Church has all things in common (4:33–35)
 - ii. Barnabas' sincerity (4:36–37)
 - iii. Ananias' perfidy (5:1–11)
 - e. Peter's Ministry Continues
 - i. Peter performs miracles in the Temple (5:12–16)
 - ii. Peter rearrested and retried with the other Apostles (5:17–42)
 - f. The Seven Chosen (6:1–8)
 - g. Stephen's Martyrdom
 - i. Stephen accused and brought to trial (6:9–7:1)
 - ii. Stephen's defense (7:2–53)
 - iii. The Martyrdom of Stephen (7:54–8:1)
- 3. The Church in the Areas Surrounding Judea
 - a. The Church is scattered (8:2–4)
 - b. The Ministry of Philip the Evangelist
 - i. Philip preaches in Samaria and converts Simon Magus (8:5–25)
 - ii. Phillip converts the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40)
 - c. The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus
 - i. Saul's Vision on the road to Damascus (9:1–9)
 - ii. Saul is baptized and preaches in Damascus (9:10–25)
 - iii. Saul is introduced at Jerusalem and sent to Tarsus (9:26–30)
 - d. The Church Enjoys Peace and Prosperity (9:31)
 - e. Peter's Ministry
 - i. Peter heals Aeneas (9:32–35)
 - ii. Peter raises Dorcas from the dead (9:36–43)
- 4. The Church spreads to the Gentiles
 - a. The Conversion of Cornelius
 - i. Cornelius sends for Peter (10:1–8)
 - ii. Peter's vision (10:9–16)
 - iii. Peter visits and baptizes Cornelius (10:17–48)
 - iv. Peter reports to the brethren in Jerusalem (11:1–18)
 - b. The Gospel Spreads to Antioch
 - i. The Gospel is preached in Antioch (11:19–21)
 - ii. Barnabas is sent to Antioch by the church in Jerusalem and brings Saul there (11:22–26)
 - iii. Prophets in the church at Antioch (11:27–30)
 - c. Herod Agrippa I
 - i. Herod kills James and imprisons Peter, who escapes miraculously (12:1–19)
 - ii. Herod's horrible death (12:20–25)
 - d. Paul's First Missionary Journey
 - i. Barnabas and Saul called on a mission (13:1–3)
 - ii. Barnabas and Saul/Paul on Cyprus (13:4–12)
 - iii. Paul and Barnabas in Antioch in Pisidia (13:13–51)
 - iv. Paul and Barnabas in Iconium (14:1–7)

- v. A healing in Lystra; Paul and Barnabas worshipped as gods (14:8–18)
 - vi. Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch (14:19–28)
- e. The Council of Jerusalem
 - i. The controversy over circumcision (15:1–5)
 - ii. The Council meets (15:6–35)
- 5. The ministry of Paul
 - a. Paul's Second Missionary Journey
 - i. Paul departs with Silas for Cilicia (15:36–41)
 - ii. Timothy joins Paul (16:1–5)
 - iii. Paul in Philippi (16:6–40)
 - 1. Paul sees a vision to go to Macedonia (16:6–10)
 - 2. Paul arrives in Philippi and converts Lydia (16:11–15)
 - 3. Paul and Silas exorcise a demon and are imprisoned (16:16–24)
 - 4. Their miraculous escape (16:25–40)
 - iv. Paul travels to Thessalonica (17:1–9)
 - v. Paul in Beroea (17:10–15)
 - vi. Paul arrived in Athens (17:16–22)
 - vii. Paul's speech on the Areopagus (17:23–34)
 - viii. Paul arrives in Corinth (18:1–11)
 - ix. Paul before Gallio (18:12–17)
 - b. Paul's Third Missionary Journey
 - i. Paul returns to Antioch and departs again (18:18–23)
 - ii. Conversion of Apollos (18:24–28)
 - iii. Paul's ministry in Ephesus (19:1–41)
 - 1. Paul converts disciples of John the Baptist (19:1–7)
 - 2. Paul turns from the Jews to the Greeks (19:8–12)
 - 3. The sons of Sceva (19:13–20)
 - 4. The silversmiths' riot (19:21–41)
 - iv. Paul returns to Macedonia and raises Eutychus (20:1–12)
 - v. Paul travels to Miletus (20:13–16)
 - vi. Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders (20:17–38)
 - vii. Paul returns to Palestine (21:1–16)
 - c. Paul a prisoner transported to Rome
 - i. Paul becomes a Roman prisoner
 - 1. Paul enters the temple and provokes a riot (21:17–39)
 - 2. Paul defends himself to the crowd in Jerusalem (21:40–22:21)
 - 3. Paul taken into custody by the Romans (22:22–30)
 - 4. Paul defends himself before the Sanhedrin (23:1–11)
 - 5. A plot against Paul's life (23:12–22)
 - 6. Paul is transferred to Caesarea (23:23–35)
 - ii. Paul defends himself to the Roman governors
 - 1. Paul defends himself before Felix (24:1–27)
 - 2. Paul defends himself before Festus (25:1–12)
 - iii. Paul defends himself to Herod Agrippa II
 - 1. Agrippa II and Bernice arrive in Caesaria (25:13–27)

2. Paul's speech (26:1–23)
3. The reaction of Agrippa and Festus (26:24–32)
- iv. Paul's journey to Rome
 1. Paul departs for Italy (27:1–8)
 2. Storm and shipwreck (27:9–44)
 3. Paul on Malta (28:1–10)
 4. Paul reaches Rome (28:11–16)
- Paul preaches to the Roman Jews (29:17–29)
6. Conclusion (29:30–31)

Further Readings

Non-LDS Sources

As one might imagine, there is less scholarly material on Acts than on the Gospels or, for that matter, Paul's epistles. Acts is, however, unusually well covered by the Anchor Bible series. A volume on Acts was published in 1967 by Johannes Munck, and a second volume in 1998 by Joseph A. Fitzmyer, who also translated Luke and Romans for the series. Acts is, in fact, one of the first books of the Bible to be translated for the Anchor Bible and one of the first to be retranslated. Munck's volume dates back to the time when the intention of the series was to provide a summary of scholarly consensus for the lay reader. Although competent, it is best remembered for its idiosyncratic assertion that Stephen was a Samaritan. Fitzmyer's commentary dates from a period when the series was retargeted to provide a summary of current scholarship for a lay or scholarly audience. In any event, Fitzmyer's work on Luke is highly regarded as an excellent balance between scholarship and faith, and his volume on Acts is a worthy successor. We will distinguish these in the notes as AB—M and AB—F, respectively.

The New International Commentary volume on Acts by F.F. Bruce is still available (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981). It is relatively old, and relatively uncritical in its acceptance of even older, conservative scholarship, but is still serviceable and worthwhile. At the other end of the spectrum is Hans Conzelmann's commentary (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), which is too willing to reject Luke's evidence but is still well written and insightful and which has justly been influential.

An excellent summary of the current state of scholarship on Acts aimed at both the lay reader and the scholar is Mark Allan Powell's *What Are They Saying About Acts?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991).

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The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 1

The Ascension

¹ THE former treatise¹ have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ² Until the day in which he was taken up, after that² he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles³ whom he had chosen: ³ To whom also he shewed⁴ himself alive after his passion⁵ by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days,⁶ and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: ⁴ And, being assembled together with *them*,⁷

¹ That is, the Gospel of Luke. There is little scholarly disagreement that Luke and Acts are by the same writer. Both begin with a formal prefatory statement addressing Theophilus; the one in Acts is less elaborate and structured, covering only two verses instead of four. The GR here is λόγον *logon*, lit. word, but generally used in an extended sense as here to any communication conveyed by written or spoken language.

² IE after.

³ This is the first mention of the word in Acts. The root meaning of the word in GR is *emissary* and it is used occasionally with that meaning in the NT (2 Cor. 8:23, Phil. 2:25). Luke uses the term more than the other evangelists (five times in his Gospel alone and another 28 in Acts, as opposed to once each for Matthew, Mark, and John), but he does not appear to restrict it to the office of Apostle in the Melchizedek Priesthood.

⁴ Pronounced *showed*.

⁵ JST *sufferings*, substituting a common English word for the technical Latin one. *Passion* is still used as the formal word referring to Christ's experiences in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the Cross. Scholars refer to the sections of the Gospel referring to these events as the *passion narratives*, and musical settings of these passages also carry the name, such as Bach's *Saint Matthew's Passion*. Many modern translations have adopted the reading found in the JST as more familiar to a modern audience.

⁶ This may be a precise number, although in general the number "forty" could be used as a Semitism meaning "a large number of."

⁷ Acts begins with a brief expansion of Christ's commission to the Twelve, which ends Luke. Compare Luke 24:49–53 with Acts 1:4–14. Luke may be copying a technique found elsewhere in the Bible. 2 Chronicles 36:22–23 is virtually identical with Ezra 1:1–3. Scholars are nearly universal in their agreement that Chronicles (originally one book in Hebrew) and Ezra/Nehemiah (also originally one book) are by the same hand, and that this repetition of verses helps create a link between them. Modern movie and television series use a similar technique to bridge the narrative gap between episodes. We do not know whether there was a standard order for the books in what is now the OT in Luke's day. However, in neither the Hebrew *Tanakh* nor the LXX does Ezra/Nehemiah follow Chronicles. (The *Tanakh* has Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, and the LXX places the Apocryphal 1 Esdras between 2 Chronicles and Ezra.) Luke may not have known, then, about this literary link; or, on the other hand, such a link may have been more necessary and therefore better-known in Luke's day. It is impossible to tell at this point.

commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem,⁸ but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*,⁹ ye have heard of me. ⁵ For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost¹⁰ not many days hence. ⁶ When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again¹¹ the kingdom to Israel?¹² ⁷ And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. ⁸ But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.¹³ ⁹ And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud¹⁴ received him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men¹⁵ stood by them in white apparel; ¹¹ Which also said,¹⁶ Ye men of Galilee,¹⁷ why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. ¹² Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.¹⁸ ¹³ And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room,¹⁹ where abode both Peter, and James, and John,²⁰ and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas,

⁸ Luke's geographical theme begins at the beginning of his narrative. As the Gospel begins and ends in Jerusalem, so the Acts begins there.

⁹ Something like the italicized phrase needs to be added to provide a smooth transition from indirect speech to direct.

¹⁰ Note that baptism by fire, mentioned in Luke 3:16 (which see), is not mentioned here.

¹¹ The *again* is redundant; the GR is the single verb ἀποκαθιστάνεις *apokathistaneis* restore, set back up.

¹² Note that the apostles have difficulty, even at this point, in abandoning their political interpretation of Christ's mission. In the modern Church, we understand that revelation comes "line upon line" as we are prepared to receive it, and it should be no surprise to us that it took some time for these first century Jews to change their understanding of what the Messiah was supposed to be.

¹³ Foreshadowing the spread of the Gospel to be recounted in Acts.

¹⁴ Clouds are frequently associated with theophanies in the OT, shielding men from God's glory. See, EG, Exo. 13:22 where a cloudy pillar accompanies the Israelites during the daylight hours on the Exodus.

¹⁵ Cf. Luke 24:4, where two "men" announce the Resurrection. They are, of course, angels; the presence of two angels at both the announcement of the Resurrection and at the Ascension helps strengthen the literary bridge between the last chapter of Luke and the first chapter of Acts.

¹⁶ The two angels act as interpreters of the sacred experience. Cf. Dan. 8:15–27, 1 Nephi 11–14.

¹⁷ There are occasional speculations that this should be taken as meaning "followers of the Galilean," namely Jesus, but the most likely meaning is simply, "men who come from Galilee."

¹⁸ IE 2000 cubits (about 3 km or 2 miles). Pious Jews in Christ's day would not travel more than this distance on the Sabbath, based on their understanding of Exodus 16:29 and Numbers 35:5.

¹⁹ Traditionally, the same upper room where the Last Supper was held.

Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother*²¹ of James.²² ¹⁴ These all continued²³ with one accord²⁴ in prayer and supplication, with the women,²⁵ and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.²⁶

Matthias chosen to replace Judas

¹⁵ And in those days Peter²⁷ stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said,²⁸ (the number of names²⁹ together were about an hundred and twenty,) ¹⁶ Men *and* brethren,³⁰ this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David³¹ spake before concerning Judas,³² which was guide to them that took Jesus.¹⁷ For he was numbered with us,

²⁰ Better GR MSS have the order “Peter, John, James.” This is considered the stronger reading both because Peter and John are frequently shown as working together in Acts, whereas James is scarcely mentioned, and because it is more likely that a scribe would change “Peter, John, James” to the more usual “Peter, James, John” than the other way around.

²¹ Note that *the brother* is in italics. “X of Y” was a typical way of expressing paternity in Greek and only occasionally some other relationship. Modern translations favor, therefore, “Judas the son of James” here. (Note that the KJV has “James *the son* of Alphæus” earlier in the verse.)

²² This list of the apostles is the same as in Luke 6:14–16, less Judas Iscariot and with a slightly different order; in Luke, the order is Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes, Judas the brother/son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

²³ προσκαρτεροῦντες *proskarterountes* were steadfast, persevering.

²⁴ The unity of the early Christian Church is a frequent theme of Acts.

²⁵ The attention paid to prayer and women in this verse is typical of Luke.

²⁶ Coming as it does immediately after “Mary the mother of Jesus,” this may well mean Jesus’ half-siblings, children of Mary and Joseph. It may, however, have a more extended sense of “relations,” or perhaps even “brothers in the Gospel.”

²⁷ Luke generally shows Peter as taking the lead in the actions of the early Church. Indeed, Peter is the main focus for Acts until Paul begins his ministry. This is consistent with the modern LDS view that Peter acted as the presiding high priest in the primitive Church and was the ancient equivalent of our Church President. LDS should not read too much into this, however. Luke shows no knowledge of a Quorum of the First Presidency separate and distinct from a Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and even Peter does not govern the Church by fiat, but by consensus.

²⁸ This is the first of the set speeches in Acts.

²⁹ The use of *names* to mean *people* is common in Hellenistic Greek.

³⁰ ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί *andres adelphoi* men, brothers. This is a common form of address in Greek rhetoric and is used frequently in the speeches recounted by Luke in Acts.

³¹ Probably considered as the author of Psalms generally, although both Psalms that Peter goes on to quote are, in fact, attributed to David directly in their superscriptions.

³² Luke’s account of the death of Judas in vv. 16–19 is inconsistent with Matthew’s (Matt. 27:3–10), which says that Judas hung himself and that the Jewish leaders were the ones to buy the field of Aceldama. There is a third tradition derived ultimately from Papias (fl. AD 130), to the effect that Judas was so afflicted by dropsy that he could not maneuver around a wagon, was struck by it, and died when his bowels burst. Various reconciliations of Luke and Matthew

and had obtained part of this ministry.¹⁸ Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity,³³ and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.¹⁹ And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue,³⁴ Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.²⁰ For it is written in the book of Psalms,

**Let his habitation be desolate,
and let no man dwell therein:³⁵
and his bishoprick³⁶ let another take.³⁷**

²¹ Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.^{38 23} And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.^{39 24} And they prayed,⁴⁰ and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew⁴¹ whether of these two

exist (such as that Judas hung himself, but that the rope broke and his bowels burst when he fell), but the simplest explanation is that more than one story circulated in the primitive Church regarding Judas' death. All three traditions belong to a well-attested genre of literature, the gruesome death of an enemy to God's people. Similar deaths are recounted of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Greek king whose desecration of the Temple triggered the Maccabean revolt (2 Maccabees 9:7–12), Herod the Great (Josephus, *Antiquities* 17, 6, 5, 168–169), and Herod Agrippa I later on in Acts (12:23). The appearance of books such as *The Fate of the Persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith* in the modern Church testifies to the continuing appeal of such stories.

³³ Probably a Semitism: *his iniquitous/ill-gotten reward*.

³⁴ τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ *tē idia dialektō* in their own language, IE Aramaic. “Aceldama” is a Greek form of an Aramaic phrase meaning “bloody field.” *Proper* here carries the older sense of *pertaining particularly to [them]*.

³⁵ Ps. 69:25.

³⁶ ἐπισκοπήν *episkopēn* (lit.) overseership. The word is the root (through a long path) of the English *bishop*.

³⁷ Ps. 109:8.

³⁸ Judas was the only one of the Twelve whose replacement is explicitly mentioned by Luke, and Judas' replacement was chosen from those who had *personally* witnessed Christ's ministry. These two points are the basis for non-LDS scholars' arguing that only Judas of the Twelve was formally replaced. The LDS view is that all Apostles are personal witnesses of Jesus, even if they did not share in his mortal ministry, and most LDS would hold that Luke only narrated one replacement in the Twelve because that would be sufficient to establish the precedent. One should note that Luke only recounts the death of two Apostles in all of his double work; one should not conclude, therefore, that the other ten never died. Luke's account as it stands is consistent with either approach.

³⁹ Nothing reliable is known of either candidate beyond his mention here. Joseph Justus bears both a Jewish and a Roman name, a common practice. Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.9) relates a story that he once drank poison but survived. He also says (*Ecclesiastical History* 1.12.3) that Matthias was one of the Seventy. Fragments of an apocryphal *Gospel According to Matthias* survive.

⁴⁰ Again Luke shows prayer as a fundamental part of Christian activity.

thou hast chosen,²⁵ That he may take part of this ministry⁴² and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.²⁶ And they gave forth their lots,⁴³ and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Chapter 2

The Day of Pentecost

¹ AND when the day of Pentecost⁴⁴ was fully come,⁴⁵ they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind,⁴⁶ and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues⁴⁷ like as of fire,⁴⁸ and it sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,⁴⁹ and began to speak with other tongues,⁵⁰ as the Spirit gave them utterance.⁵¹ ⁵ And there were

⁴¹ Pronounced like *show*.

⁴² διακονίας *diakonias* service. The word *minister* comes from a Latin word meaning the same thing.

⁴³ Cf. 1 Nephi 3:11, 1 Sam. 14:38–42, Lev. 16:1–10, Josh. 18:1–10, 1 Chr. 25:7–8. The ancient Jews did not share our modern sense of random chance. For them, every event was caused by something. God could therefore easily reveal his will through the fall of the lots (Prov. 16:33). See also D&C 102:12, 34.

⁴⁴ τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς *tēn hēmeran tēs pentēkostēs* lit. the day of the fiftieth. The English name *Pentecost* is derived from this phrase. It is also known as Whitsunday in English, after the white clothing traditionally worn on Pentecost. The festival is referred to as the “feast of weeks” in the OT, where it is specified as taking place fifty days after the beginning of the harvest (Exo. 23:16, 34:22, Dt. 16:9–10). Deuteronomy’s instructions for calculating the date of Pentecost are sufficiently ambiguous that various methods existed among first century Jews, just as various methods for calculating the date of Easter exist among modern Christians. The standard calculation is fifty days after the Sabbath day of Passover week. Christians celebrate Pentecost on the seventh Sunday after Easter. At some point, the Feast of Weeks also became a celebration of the making of the covenant between God and Israel; Luke may have been aware of this and shaped his account accordingly.

⁴⁵ συμπληροῦσθαι *sumplērousthai* was completely filled. That is, the count of fifty days was complete.

⁴⁶ In both Greek and Hebrew, the same word means “wind/breath” and “spirit.” The inrushing wind, then, is symbolic of the inrushing Spirit.

⁴⁷ διαμεριζόμεναι γλῶσσαι *diamerizomenai glōssai* divided tongues. Luke may not intend “forked tongues” here; the fiery tongues may have been divided up among the various people present (as in AB—M). The tongues are symbolic both of spiritual utterance in general (see 2 Nephi 32:2–3) and of the gift of tongues experienced in v. 4.

⁴⁸ The fire is a symbol of the Spirit (such as in the modern hymn, *The Spirit of God*) and may be a representation of a “baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost,” which the disciples were undergoing.

⁴⁹ πνεύματος ἁγίου *pneumatōs hagiou* a holy spirit. The definite article is missing.

⁵⁰ Theologians distinguish between two varieties of the gift of tongues: *glossolalia* (ecstatic utterance), where no known language is spoken, and *xenologia*, speaking in foreign

dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.⁵² ⁶ Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? ⁸ And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? ⁹ Parthians,⁵³ and Medes,⁵⁴ and Elamites,⁵⁵ and the dwellers in Mesopotamia,⁵⁶ and in Judæa,⁵⁷ and Cappadocia,⁵⁸ in Pontus,⁵⁹ and Asia,⁶⁰ ¹⁰ Phrygia,⁶¹ and

tongues. The former is frequently found in some varieties of Pentacostal Christianity, which derive their name from the experience Luke is recounting here. Glossolalia was occasionally experienced in the early days of the modern Church but tends to receive little emphasis now; the practical realities of the Church's mission tend to emphasize xenologia as a spiritual gift to be desired.

⁵¹ The spiritual manifestations on this Pentecost are a key event in the history of the primitive Church as recounted by Luke. Many theologians would refer to this as the "birthday" of the Church, and although LDS would generally argue that the formal organization of the Church antedated Pentecost, it was nonetheless a significant date when the early disciples received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost. It also serves as a manifestation of God's public acceptance of his Church, and as such is linked to the spiritual manifestations accompanying the dedication of the Tabernacle (Exo. 40:34) and Solomon's Temple (2 Chron. 7:1). An explicit link between the two is found in the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, where spiritual manifestations such as Luke records here were prayed for (D&C 109:36–37) and received (HC 2:428).

⁵² Pentecost was one of three annual festivals when pious Jews were expected to come to Jerusalem to worship if possible. The other two were Passover and Tabernacles (see Dt. 16:16). That Jews were present from "every nation under heaven" is, of course, hyperbole.

⁵³ Verses 9 through 11 list a number of areas from which people came to worship at Jerusalem during the festival. The list may be derived from some older or traditional list of peoples modified and supplemented by Luke. It runs, in general, from east to west and from north to south. It begins with Parthia, the large kingdom immediately to Rome's east and Rome's deadly enemy. The Parthian homeland was southeast of the Caspian Sea, but by Luke's day the Parthians ruled virtually all of what is now Iran and Iraq. There was a large Jewish population under Parthian rule left over from the Babylonian Captivity. Although Parthia could be considered a revival of sorts of the Persian Empire conquered by Alexander the Great, it would itself be conquered by the ethnic Persians in the third century AD.

⁵⁴ Media was southwest of the Caspian Sea. The Medes and Persians were closely related and treated as virtually identical in the OT.

⁵⁵ Elam was east of the Tigris river and north of the Persian Gulf, and home to one of the oldest of civilizations. The Elamite language was unrelated to its Semitic and Indo-European neighbors.

⁵⁶ Mesopotamia (GR for *between the rivers*) is strictly speaking the region between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, but informally would contain considerable territory on either side. Mesopotamia anciently had an elaborate network of canals that ensured its fertility; the resulting prosperity meant that it was periodically overrun by invaders, leaving behind an ethnically complex and polyglot population. At this point, Mesopotamia was firmly in Parthian control, but it would become Roman very briefly in the second century.

Pamphylia,⁶² in Egypt,⁶³ and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene,⁶⁴ and strangers of Rome,⁶⁵ Jews and proselytes,⁶⁶ ¹⁷ Cretes⁶⁷ and Arabians,⁶⁸ we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful

⁵⁷ Strictly speaking, “Judea” refers to the Roman province, consisting of the territory around Jerusalem, just west of the Dead Sea. Informally, it would refer to the entire area of Palestine where Jews were dominant. Luke may have either meaning in mind here. This is the first region Luke mentions under Roman control.

⁵⁸ A region in the eastern interior of what is now Asia Minor, just west of Armenia.

⁵⁹ North of Cappadocia, just on the southeastern coast of the Black Sea. (The name *Pontus* referred originally to the Black Sea itself and later became attached to the adjoining territory.)

⁶⁰ Not the continent, but the Roman province of this name. It occupied the former territory of the kingdom of Pergamum, roughly the western third of what is now Asia Minor. Pergamum had made a fortune by inventing and selling parchment (the word *parchment* is derived from *Pergamum*) and was bequeathed to the Romans by its last king in the late second century BC. The name “Asia” was gradually used to refer to more and more territory until it came to encompass the entire land mass of which the Roman province was but a tiny fraction. (“Africa” had a similar history, meaning originally the area on the Mediterranean coast around the modern city of Tunisia.)

⁶¹ A region in the interior of Asia Minor. In Luke’s day Phrygia was divided up between the Roman provinces of Asia and Galatia.

⁶² A region on the southern coast of Asia Minor, to the east of Lycia and the west of Cilicia (from whence Paul came).

⁶³ A Roman province and breadbasket of the city of Rome, which depended heavily on its steady grain harvests.

⁶⁴ Libya was the region of the African coast to the west of Egypt, with Cyrene as its largest city. Cyrene also had a large Jewish community. The area of Libya surrounding Cyrene was also known as Cyrenaica and was a Roman province in its own right.

⁶⁵ ἐπιδημοῦντες Ῥωμαῖοι *epidēmountes Rōmaioi* Roman residents. The AB, NIV, and NRSV all have “visitors from Rome.” As with all the large cities of the Empire, Rome had an important Jewish community. Some scholars have attempted to find significance in the fact that Luke lists twelve places prior to his mention of Rome.

⁶⁶ That is, ethnic Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism. Modern LDS tend to use the term “convert” instead of “proselyte,” but the words mean the same thing. (The GR προσήλυτοι *prosēlutoi* means literally *those who have arrived* [IE at God’s truth].) The phrase “Jew and proselytes” may refer to only the “strangers of Rome” or to all the previous regions. Note that a distinction is being made between ethnic Jews and Jewish converts; Christianity would inherit the division between Jew and Gentile, to bad effect.

⁶⁷ Crete is the large, nearly rectangular island south of Greece. We would now use the word “Cretan” for its inhabitants.

⁶⁸ The phrase “Cretes and Arabians” seems out-of-place and almost an afterthought. The other place names are arranged roughly in an east-to-west fashion and end, as seems most natural for Luke, with Rome. There is, however, no textual justification for excluding it. Arabia is the large peninsula southeast of Judea and adjoining desert regions. Since ancient times, it has been the home of nomadic tribes who trace their ancestry back to Abraham through his son Ishmael.

works of God.¹² And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?¹³ Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.⁶⁹

Peter's Speech

¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven,⁷⁰ lifted up his voice, and said unto them,⁷¹ Ye men of Judæa,⁷² and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:¹⁵ For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.⁷³ ¹⁶ But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

¹⁷ **And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God,**

I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

and your young men shall see visions,

and your old men shall dream dreams:

¹⁸ **And on my servants and on my handmaidens⁷⁴**

I will pour out in those days of my Spirit;

and they shall prophesy:

¹⁹ **And I will shew wonders in heaven above,**

and signs in the earth beneath;

blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

²⁰ **The sun shall be turned into darkness,**

and the moon into blood,

before that great and notable day of the Lord come:

²¹ **And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.⁷⁵**

⁶⁹ γλεúčους μεμεστωμένοι *gleukous memestōmenoi* full of sweet, new wine.

⁷⁰ That is, the other ten Apostles. We would probably capitalize the word.

⁷¹ The second set speech in Acts. Once again Peter is acting as spokesman for the entire Church. This is the first public sermon Luke records, and it is a bold proclamation of Jesus as Christ.

⁷² Ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι *Andres Ioudaioi* Men, Judeans. See Acts 1:16n.

⁷³ IE mid-morning.

⁷⁴ ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας μου *epi tous doulous mou kai epi tas doulas mou* upon my male slaves and upon my female slaves.

⁷⁵ Joel 2:28–32, largely following the LXX. Some English Bibles use an alternate chapter division which makes this Joel 3:1–5a. This passage was quoted by Moroni to Joseph Smith during his visits of 21–22 September 1823; Moroni said it “was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be” (JS—H 41). Note that the explicit reference to the last days has been added by Peter; it is not in either the Hebrew or LXX. It is certainly true that first century Christians believed they were living in the last days; Peter (or Luke) may have believed that the events of the first Pentecost were the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. Some modern LDS have reconciled Moroni with Peter by emphasizing the latter’s use of “that which was spoken,” and taking it to mean that the first Pentecost is prototypical of the sort of thing Joel was prophesying, but that the actual fulfillment would come at some other time. Alternatively (and more simply), the passage in Joel might easily have been fulfilled on more than one occasion.

²² Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved⁷⁶ of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: ²³ Him, being delivered by the determinate⁷⁷ counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands⁷⁸ have crucified and slain: ²⁴ Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.⁷⁹

²⁵ For David speaketh concerning him,

**I foresaw the Lord always before my face,
for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:**

²⁶ **Therefore did my heart rejoice,
and my tongue was glad;**

moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

²⁷ **Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,⁸⁰
neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.⁸¹**

²⁸ **Thou hast made known to me the ways of life;
thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.⁸²**

⁷⁶ ἀποδοδειγμένον *apodeideigmenon* commended, designated.

⁷⁷ ὁρισμένη *hōrismenē* decided-upon, that is, *deliberate*. Jesus was not killed because God was unable to prevent it.

⁷⁸ διὰ χειρὸς ἀνόμων *dia cheiros anomōn* by the hand of lawless [men], or, in this case, *Law-less men*, that is, men not bound by the Torah, the Romans. The NT consistently imputes the legal responsibility for Christ's death to the Romans, but the moral responsibility to the Jewish leaders or the Jews in general.

⁷⁹ IE held by it, that is, death.

⁸⁰ JST *prison*. This may be tied to the LDS rejection of the traditional Christian conception of Hell as a place of never-ending tortures. The GR here is ᾗδην *hadēn* Hades. This refers both to the god of the underworld (best known to us by his Roman equivalent's name, Pluto) and to the realm which he ruled. The HEB of Psalm 16:10 here has the word שְׁאֵל (*Sheol, the pit*). The Hebrew word is used in the OT to refer to the afterlife in a vague, shadowy way. Sheol as a theological concept does not really correspond to anything in modern LDS thought, but the Spirit World in general and the Spirit Prison specifically come closest.

⁸¹ διαφθοράν *diaphthoran*, which means in general *destruction, ruin, blight* but here means specifically *decay, dissolution*. This is an accurate translation of the LXX, but the HEB here in the OT is שָׂרַת *sharath* pit, cistern, well, grave, which is a poetic synonym for *Sheol* in the previous line; the KJV of Ps. 16:10 translates שָׂרַת *sharath* by “corruption” under the influence of its use here and elsewhere in the NT. The LXX and KJV break the Hebrew parallelism but provide potent theological ammunition to Christians. Jesus' body was only in the tomb for about thirty-six hours (from just before sunset on Friday to just before dawn on Sunday) and underwent no decay. Psalm 16 cannot possibly apply to David, whose body decayed; but since Jesus' body did not, it applies to him and he is therefore God's “holy one.” Note that LDS theology allows an alternate line of argument that is truer to the HEB of Psalm 16. D&C 138, Joseph F. Smith's vision of the redemption of the dead, details Jesus' activities between his death and resurrection and underscores the fact that Jesus did not personally visit the Spirit Prison during that time. Taking, then, Sheol and the Pit to refer to Spirit Prison specifically, this Psalm would apply very naturally to Jesus.

⁸² Psalm 16:8–11.

²⁹ Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak⁸³ unto you of the patriarch⁸⁴ David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.^{85 30} Therefore being a prophet,⁸⁶ and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;³¹ He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.³² This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.³³ Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth⁸⁷ this, which ye now see and hear.³⁴ For David is not ascended into the heavens:⁸⁸ but he saith himself,

The LORD⁸⁹ said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

³⁵ Until I make thy foes thy footstool.⁹⁰

³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

The Effect of Peter's Speech

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? ³⁸ Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,⁹¹ and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.³⁹ For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.⁴⁰ And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward⁹² generation.

⁸³ ἐξὸν εἰπεῖν μετὰ παρρησίας *exon eipein meta parrēσίας* it is permitted to speak with frankness.

⁸⁴ It is rare that David is called a “patriarch.” The term literally means a *father-ruler*, and is generally reserved for the great ancestors of all Israel: all the antediluvian patriarchs, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel.

⁸⁵ Even by this time, the exact location of David’s tomb was unclear. It was probably in Jerusalem, on Mount Zion. An alternate tradition places it in Bethlehem.

⁸⁶ Again, an unusual title to apply to David; but as the author of the Psalms, many of which were seen as looking forward to Christ, it is reasonable that Peter should call him that. Note that this is the generic sense of *one who speaks for [God]*, and not the specific Priesthood office.

⁸⁷ ἐξέχεεν *execheen* poured out. This is in the aorist tense, which can be taken as referring to a single incident, namely, the outpouring of the Spirit just manifested.

⁸⁸ IE Psalm 16:8–11 quoted above cannot apply to David, as his soul has been left (at least for a time) in prison, and his body has seen corruption.

⁸⁹ A rare instance of the use of small caps in the KJV NT. See Luke 20:42n.

⁹⁰ Psalm 110:1. This is among the most frequently quoted OT verses in the NT; its use as a reference to Christ and his relationship to the Father goes back to the Savior himself (EG Luke 20:39–44). In such use, it is seen as the Father (the LORD) speaking to the Son (my Lord). As the former is יהוה *YHWH* (Jehovah or YHWH) in the Hebrew, this is a circumstance where the name is used for the Father and not the Son.

⁹¹ The speeches in Acts tend to climax with an exhortation to repentance and baptism.

⁹² σκολιᾶς *skolias* crooked, perverse, dishonest.

Summary: The Unity of the Early Church

⁴¹ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. ⁴² And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread,⁹³ and in prayers. ⁴³ And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all that believed were together, and had all things common; ⁴⁵ And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.⁹⁴ ⁴⁶ And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,⁹⁵ did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, ⁴⁷ Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church⁹⁶ daily such as should be saved.⁹⁷

Chapter 3

Peter Heals a Lame Man in the Temple

¹ Now⁹⁸ Peter and John⁹⁹ went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer,¹⁰⁰ *being* the ninth *hour*.¹⁰¹ ² And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful,¹⁰² to ask alms of them that entered

⁹³ Probably a reference to the Eucharist, what LDS call now the Sacrament (of the Lord's Supper). It may, however, simply refer to shared meals. It is known from the NT epistles that the early Christians had community meals called "love-feasts" (GR ἀγάπαι *agapai* KJV "feasts of charity"; see Jude 12).

⁹⁴ Innumerable attempts at Christian communitarian economies have been attempted because of Luke's description in Acts. It would appear, however, that such efforts lasted no longer in the primitive Church than did the Law of Consecration in the modern one.

⁹⁵ Sharing of meals is in many cultures—even our own—fundamental to the building of communities.

⁹⁶ Missing in better GR MSS, which have ὁ δὲ κύριος προσετίθει τοὺς σωζομένους καθ' ἡμέραν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό *ho de kurios prosetitheí tous sōzomenous kath' hēmeran epi to auto* And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (NRSV). See 5:11.

⁹⁷ τοὺς σωζομένους *tous sōzomenous* the being-saved. The implication of the KJV translation that these are people destined for salvation is not present in the GR.

⁹⁸ This is the first miracle recounted by Luke in Acts. It is doubtless no coincidence that it parallels one narrated in his Gospel; see Luke 5:17–26.

⁹⁹ Note the absence of James.

¹⁰⁰ The JST changes "at the hour of prayer," to "for prayer, it". The GR is τὴν ὥραν τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν ἐνάτην *tēn hōran tēs proseuchēs tēn enatēn* the hour of prayer, the ninth [hour]. A smoother translation would probably be something like *the mid-afternoon hour of prayer*.

¹⁰¹ IE mid-afternoon.

¹⁰² It is not known which Temple gate this was. The most likely candidate is the Shushan Gate, in the east wall and led from the outside to the Court of the Gentiles. It might also be the Nicanor (or Corinthian) Gate between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Women.

into the temple; ³ Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.¹⁰³ ⁴ And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. ⁵ And he gave heed¹⁰⁴ unto them, expecting to receive something of them. ⁶ Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and¹⁰⁵ walk.¹⁰⁶ ⁷ And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸ And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God: ¹⁰ And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. ¹¹ And as the lame man which was healed held¹⁰⁷ Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch¹⁰⁸ that is called Solomon's,¹⁰⁹ greatly wondering.

Peter's Speech

¹² And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people,¹¹⁰ Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this?¹¹¹ or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? ¹³ **The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers,**¹¹² hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye¹¹³ delivered up,¹¹⁴ and denied¹¹⁵ him in the

¹⁰³ ἐλεημοσύνην *eleēmosunēn* lit. an act of pity/mercy, an act of charity. The English *alms* is both singular and plural and is derived from ἐλεημοσύνη *eleēmosunē*.

¹⁰⁴ ἐπέειχεν *epeichen* lit. to hold fast to, to be aimed at.

¹⁰⁵ The words *rise up and* are missing from some GR MSS; while it is easy to see why they might have been added, the textual evidence as to their originality is ambiguous.

¹⁰⁶ Surely one of the most dramatic sentences of the KJV; there is likely not a missionary in the Church but who has dreamed of delivering a blessing like this one.

¹⁰⁷ κρατοῦντος *kratountos* was holding, clutching.

¹⁰⁸ τῇ στοᾷ *tē stoa* porch, colonnade. The word is generally used for a sheltered area lined with columns.

¹⁰⁹ The location of this portico is unknown, as it is not mentioned in any of the detailed descriptions of the Temple from Jewish sources. It is, however, mentioned in John 10:23 and elsewhere in Acts. It may have been just inside the eastern wall.

¹¹⁰ The third set speech in as many chapters. Once again, Peter is taking the lead and preaching to convert those who witnessed the miracle he just performed to the Christ who worked the miracle through him.

¹¹¹ The GR could be taken as “at him,” that is, the healed man, or “at this [thing],” that is, the miracle itself.

¹¹² The phrase has long passed into common use, but it derives from Exo. 3:6, 15. Some GR MSS have “the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” It is difficult to choose between the two readings on the basis of the textual evidence.

¹¹³ The pronoun is explicitly present in the text, emphasizing it. This is also true for the first occurrence of “ye” in v. 14. Peter is making clear to his listeners that they have explicitly rejected Jesus and bear the moral responsibility for his death.

¹¹⁴ παρεδώκατε *paredōkate* handed over.

¹¹⁵ ἡρνήσασθε *ērnēsasthe* denied, disowned. Also in v. 14. The only use of the verb in the passion narratives, ironically, is for Peter himself when he thrice denied Jesus.

presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.¹⁴ But ye denied the Holy One and the Just,¹¹⁶ and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;¹⁵ And killed¹¹⁷ the Prince¹¹⁸ of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.¹⁶ And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong,¹¹⁹ whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him¹²⁰ hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.¹²¹ ¹⁷ And now, brethren, I wot¹²² that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers.¹²³ ¹⁸ But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

¹⁹ Repent ye therefore, and be converted,¹²⁴ that your sins may be blotted out,¹²⁵ when the times of refreshing¹²⁶ shall come from the presence of the Lord;²⁰ And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you¹²⁷: ²¹ Whom the heaven¹²⁸ must receive until the times of restitution¹²⁹ of all things, which¹³⁰ God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.²² For Moses truly said unto the fathers, **A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.**²³ And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which

¹¹⁶ τὸν ἅγιον καὶ δίκαιον *ton hagion kai dikaion*, better translated *the Holy and Just One*.

¹¹⁷ ἀπεκτείνετε *apekteinate* you killed.

¹¹⁸ ἀρχηγὸν *archegon* author, originator. The KJV is taking it in the sense of *leader*.

¹¹⁹ The JST changes the first part of this verse to “And this man through faith in his name hath been made strong,” a clarification of Luke’s unusually awkward phrase.

¹²⁰ δι’ αὐτοῦ *di’ autou* through him, that is, Jesus.

¹²¹ Another awkward phrase, although the GR here is more straightforward. The AB—F translates it “The faith that comes through Jesus has given him the perfect health that is present before all of you.”

¹²² The JST changes “wot” to “know,” removing an archaism.

¹²³ Having reproved his listeners “with sharpness,” Peter now softens his rhetoric and reveals the way for them to free themselves from their guilt.

¹²⁴ ἐπιστρέψατε *epistrepsate* turn back/around.

¹²⁵ ἐξαλειφθῆναι *exaleiphthēnai* washed away, obliterated.

¹²⁶ ἀναψύξεως *anapsuxeōs* cooling down, refreshing. The root meaning of the word is to cool by blowing. God is granting breathing room for God’s people to be cooled off by the Spirit, reflect on their actions and reject their past. Note that the fact that the same word can be used for *spirit* and *breath* makes the image a particularly apt one.

¹²⁷ The JST inserts, “whom ye have crucified.”

¹²⁸ The JST changes “heaven” to “heavens.” It seems awkward in English to refer to “the heaven,” and the KJV here is mistranslating the GR which is simply οὐρανὸν *ouranon* heaven, without an article. A literal translation would have made better English.

¹²⁹ ἀποκαταστάσεως *apokatastaseōs* reestablishment, restoration. Taken by LDS to refer to the current dispensation.

¹³⁰ The antecedent of the pronoun is “all things,” not “restoration.” IE the restoration will be of all things spoken of by the prophets; Peter is not implying that all the prophets have spoken of the Restoration. The idea that Christ in his own person recapitulated and personified all of the OT is fundamental to early Christianity; similarly, in the modern Church, we see ourselves as recapitulating all of the sacred history that precedes us.

will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.^{131 24} Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken,¹³² have likewise foretold of these days.^{133 25} Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers,¹³⁴ saying unto Abraham, **And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.**^{135 26} Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.¹³⁶

Chapter 4

Peter and John Arrested

¹ AND as they spake¹³⁷ unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees,¹³⁸ came upon them, ² Being grieved¹³⁹ that they taught the people, and preached

¹³¹ Dt. 18:15–16. These two verses were quoted by Moroni to Joseph Smith on the night of 21–22 September 1823. See JS—H 1:40. That the verses refer to Christ is universally accepted by Christians because of their citation here, and so it seems peculiar that Moroni should have included as part of his message the fact that “that prophet was Christ”; perhaps his intended focus was that “the day had not yet come when ‘they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people,’ but soon would come.”

¹³² This should probably be taken as typical Lucan hyperbole. While the fundamental responsibility of the prophet in the modern Church is to testify of Jesus, the role was slightly different in OT times, and we cannot guarantee that *every* individual called a “prophet” in the OT had Jesus as the central point of his preaching.

¹³³ IE Christ’s ministry.

¹³⁴ The climax of Peter’s speech: Moses and all the prophets looked forward to Christ. Peter’s contemporaries, the prophets’ children (both their literal, physical children and their followers) should therefore do as their fathers did, and accept Jesus as their Savior. Note that this sermon, reminding the Jews of their heritage, their history, and their fathers’ faith, is taking place in their own most sacred place, the Temple.

¹³⁵ Genesis 22:18, 26:4.

¹³⁶ τῶν πονηριῶν *tōn ponēriōn* evil [deeds].

¹³⁷ λαλούντων δὲ αὐτῶν *lalountōn de autōn* while they were speaking. The implication is that Peter was interrupted. Note that the subject is plural here, even though John has not actually said anything..

¹³⁸ The Sadducees are not portrayed in the Gospels as being in conflict with Jesus and the early Christians so often as the Pharisees. The latter represented a faction popular throughout Judea (including Jesus’ centers of activity in Galilee), whereas the Sadducees were an aristocratic faction centered in Jerusalem and the Temple. Peter and John having preached and performed a miracle within the temple precincts would naturally attract their attention. Note that the Sadducees are mentioned only once in Luke’s Gospel (20:27–33), and that in a passage derived from Mark (12:18–27). The Sadducees will be more prominent in Acts where they repeatedly are opposed to the actions of the Apostles.

¹³⁹ διαπονούμενοι *diaponoumenoi* to be annoyed, indignant.

through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.^{140 3} And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold¹⁴¹ unto the next day: for it was now eventide.^{142 4} Howbeit¹⁴³ many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men¹⁴⁴ was about five thousand.

Peter's Defense Before the Sanhedrin

⁵ And it came to pass on the morrow,¹⁴⁵ that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, ⁶ And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas,¹⁴⁶ and John,¹⁴⁷ and Alexander,¹⁴⁸ and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.^{149 7} And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?^{150 8} Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,¹⁵¹ ⁹ If we this day be examined¹⁵² of the good deed done to the impotent¹⁵³ man, by what means he is made whole; ¹⁰ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead,¹⁵⁴ *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole. ¹¹ This is **the stone which was set at nought of you**

¹⁴⁰ The Sadducees rejected the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, finding no explicit mention of it in the Law.

¹⁴¹ τήρησιν *tērēsîn* custody, under guard.

¹⁴² That is, too late to hold a trial.

¹⁴³ *IE nevertheless*. They stopped Peter from speaking, but they did not rob Peter's words of their force.

¹⁴⁴ ἀνδρῶν *andrōn* males [explicitly excludes females].

¹⁴⁵ αὔριον *aurion* next day.

¹⁴⁶ See the notes to Luke 3:1 for information on Annas and Caiaphas. Annas and Caiaphas had been involved in Jesus' arrest and execution, although this is not mentioned by Luke in his Gospel. Technically, Annas was not high priest and had not been for well over a decade, whereas Caiaphas was the current high priest; as in his Gospel, Luke nonetheless speaks of Annas as high priest.

¹⁴⁷ The Western text gives his name as Jonathan. If this is correct, it may be Annas' son, who succeeded Caiaphas as high priest in AD 36.

¹⁴⁸ Otherwise unknown. Despite his obvious Jewishness, Alexander bears a thoroughly Greek name. This is not surprising for a member of an aristocratic, highly hellenized family.

¹⁴⁹ This appears to be the Great Sanhedrin, the supreme council of the Jews. Under Roman law, the Sanhedrin had control over all internal matters regarding the Jews.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Luke 20:1–8.

¹⁵¹ *Of Israel* is omitted by better GR MSS. Note that Peter begins his address in respectful terms.

¹⁵² ἀνακρινόμεθα *anakrinometha* examined, questioned, tried. The verb form in the KJV is a subjunctive, comparatively rare in English.

¹⁵³ ἀσθενούς *asthenous* weak. The word *impotent* derives from Latin and has the root meaning of *incapable*, here *of walking unaided*.

¹⁵⁴ Peter here contrasts the human actions regarding Jesus and the divine. (The pronoun *ye* is explicitly present in the GR, emphasizing it.) The Sadducees have been fighting against God.

builders, which is become the head of the corner.^{155 12} Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned¹⁵⁶ and ignorant men,¹⁵⁷ they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them,¹⁵⁸ that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ And beholding the man which was healed¹⁵⁹ standing with them, they could say nothing against it. ¹⁵ But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, ¹⁶ Saying, What shall we do to these men?¹⁶⁰ for that indeed a notable miracle¹⁶¹ hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*. ¹⁷ But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly¹⁶² threaten¹⁶³ them, that they speak¹⁶⁴ henceforth to no man in this name. ¹⁸ And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.^{165 20} For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. ²¹ So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all *men*¹⁶⁶ glorified God for that which was done. ²² For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

¹⁵⁵ A paraphrase of Psalm 118:22. The “head of the corner” would usually be translated “cornerstone” now, referring to a key, weight-bearing stone at the corner of a wall. Christ and his resurrection are the absolute foundation upon which Christianity rests.

¹⁵⁶ ἀγράμματοι *agrammatōi* lit. unlettered. Here it refers to their lack of a formal, rabbinic education. The modern equivalent would be the lack of a Doctor of Divinity degree awarded by a theological seminary.

¹⁵⁷ ἰδιῶται *idiōtai* laymen. The root meaning of the word is *pertaining to one's own self*. It acquired the meaning of *someone who keeps to himself, someone who does not participate in public affairs*. (The fact that this gave rise to our modern word *idiot* shows what importance the Greeks placed on participation in the state.) Here it has the meaning *someone untrained*.

¹⁵⁸ ἐπεγίνωσκον *epeginōskon* came to know, perceived.

¹⁵⁹ τεθεραπευμένον *tetherapeumenon* healed, treated medically. The word is the root of the English *therapy* (the initial syllable is an indicator of the tense).

¹⁶⁰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τούτοις *tois anthrōpois toutois* these people. The Christian community in general may be intended.

¹⁶¹ γνωστὸν σημεῖον *gnōston sēmeion* incontrovertible sign.

¹⁶² ἢ *strictly*. This reflects the reading in the TR, ἀπειλὴ ἀπειλησώμεθα *apeilē apeilēsōmetha* let us threaten with a threat, a Semitism. This reading may be a harmonization with the grammar of 5:28, q.v.

¹⁶³ ἀπειλησώμεθα *apeilēsōmetha* let us threaten.

¹⁶⁴ φθέγγεσθαι *phthengesthai* speak, utter loudly and clearly.

¹⁶⁵ This open defiance of legally constituted authority seems scandalous to modern Saints, but we must bear in mind that we are currently commanded by God to obey secular authority, even when that proves a hindrance to our preaching his Gospel. That is, we do it because God commands us to, not despite his commands to the contrary. There are times and circumstances where God's representatives must act as Peter and John do here.

¹⁶⁶ The JST changes “all *men*” to “many,” removing a typical Lucan hyperbole, which patently was not literally true (after all, “all men” would technically include the Sadducees who arrested Peter and John).

Thanks Given for the Apostles' Release

²³ And being let go, they went to their own company,¹⁶⁷ and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. ²⁴ And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord,¹⁶⁸ and said, Lord,¹⁶⁹ thou *art* God, **which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:**¹⁷⁰ ²⁵ Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said,¹⁷¹

**Why did the heathen rage,
and the people imagine vain things?**

²⁶ **The kings of the earth stood up,
and the rulers were gathered together
against the Lord,
and against his Christ.**¹⁷²

²⁷ For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod,¹⁷³ and Pontius Pilate,¹⁷⁴ with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, ²⁸ For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.¹⁷⁵ ²⁹ And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, ³⁰ By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

³¹ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. ³²

¹⁶⁷ τοὺς ἰδίους *tous idious* their own [people].

¹⁶⁸ This combines two of Luke's favorite themes: prayer, and the unity of the early Church.

¹⁶⁹ Δέσποτα *Despota* master. The word is the root of the English *despot*, but it does not carry the word's pejorative sense. It is used of the owner of a slave, or of an absolute ruler; there is a sense of ownership implied.

¹⁷⁰ Psalm 146:6.

¹⁷¹ The standard GR text here is ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου στόματος Δαυὶδ παιδὸς σου εἰπὼν *ho tou patros hēmōn dia pneumatos hagiou stomatos David paidos sou eipōn*, a chiasmic phrase which is translated literally as, *who of our father through the Holy Spirit David's mouth, your servant's, saying* (IE *who says by the mouth of our father, your servant David, through the Holy Spirit*). While the Greek is nowhere nearly as awkward as the literal English would imply, it is still clumsy for Luke. It does, however, emphasize the Spirit as the means through which God speaks; this is one of the relatively uncommon instances where a theologically significant phrase has dropped *out* of the GR text underlying the KJV.

¹⁷² Psalm 2:1–2.

¹⁷³ IE one of the “kings of the earth” mentioned in the Psalm. As usual, this is Herod Antipas. It is interesting to speculate that Luke had this passage in mind when he wrote his passion narrative; this might explain why he alone of the evangelists mentions a trial before Herod Antipas; see Luke 23:1–12.

¹⁷⁴ IE one of the “rulers” mentioned in the Psalm.

¹⁷⁵ IE God's enemies cannot thwart his purposes. Their treachery is known and allowed for in advance.

And¹⁷⁶ the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.³³ And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.³⁴ Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,³⁵ And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.³⁶ And Joses,¹⁷⁷ who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas,¹⁷⁸ (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite,¹⁷⁹ *and* of the country of Cyprus,¹⁸⁰³⁷ Having land,¹⁸¹ sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

Chapter 5

Ananias and Sapphira Lie to Peter and Are Killed by God

¹ BUT¹⁸² a certain man named Ananias,¹⁸³ with Sapphira¹⁸⁴ his wife, sold a possession,² And kept back¹⁸⁵ *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and

¹⁷⁶ Modern translations would place the paragraph break here, between verses 31 and 32. Verse 31 wraps the pericope about Peter and John's return after their arrest, and 32 begins Luke's second major summary of the state of the Church to be found in Acts.

¹⁷⁷ A shortened form of the name *Joseph* (some GR MSS have, in fact Ἰωσὴφ *Iōsēph Joseph*).

¹⁷⁸ He is best known by his Aramaic surname. It would be Barnabas who would introduce Paul to the Apostles when he first came to Jerusalem after his conversion and who would serve as Paul's first missionary companion. The name does not, however, appear to be an Aramaic phrase meaning *son of consolation*; perhaps Luke knew no Aramaic himself and was mistaken. Paul implies in 1 Cor. 9:3–6 that Barnabas was an apostle and Luke calls him one in 14:4; some LDS commentators have assumed on this basis that he was at some time ordained as one of the Twelve. Other LDS authors disagree; we have no solid revelation one way or the other. Some GR MSS here have *Barsabbas* (see 1:23), a rather straightforward mistake.

¹⁷⁹ Of the tribe of Levi. Levites also had nominal responsibilities in temple worship and were charged to keep Israel instructed in the Law.

¹⁸⁰ The large island at the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean.

¹⁸¹ Num. 18:20 and Dt. 10:9 forbade Levites to own land in Israel. (God was to be their inheritance.) Either this prohibition was no longer in force, or the land he owned was elsewhere (e.g., in Cyprus itself).

¹⁸² The current chapter division is unfortunate, as the accounts of Barnabas' honesty and the lies of Ananias and Sapphira are clearly intended to be linked together and contrasted. Most modern translations would keep the chapter break (which cannot easily be changed at this point) but alter the paragraphing appropriately. The story of Ananias and Sapphira is similar to that of Achan in the OT (Jos. 7:16–26); in both cases, men lie to God's representatives out of greed.

¹⁸³ This episode has given rise to the English word *ananiās* for a habitual liar. There are, nonetheless, two other Ananiases in the book of Acts: a righteous disciple who cures Paul of his blindness (9:10–20 and 22:12–16), and the Jewish high priest (AD 47–58; see 22:30–23:10 and 24:1). *Ananias* is probably the GR form of the Hebrew name *Hananiah*, which means *YHWH has*

laid *it* at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? ⁴ Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?¹⁸⁶ why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. ⁵ And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost.¹⁸⁷ and great fear came on all them that heard these things. ⁶ And the young men arose, wound him up,¹⁸⁸ and carried *him* out, and buried *him*. ⁷ And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. ⁸ And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?¹⁸⁹ And she said, Yea, for so much. ⁹ Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt¹⁹⁰ the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out. ¹⁰ Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband. ¹¹ And great fear came upon all the church,¹⁹¹ and upon as many as heard these things.

Many Miracles Performed by Peter

¹² And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders¹⁹² wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. ¹³ And of the rest¹⁹³ durst no

graciously given; it might also be derived from the Hebrew Ananiah (see Neh. 3:23), meaning *YHWH has shown himself*.

¹⁸⁴ An Aramaic name meaning "Beautiful One."

¹⁸⁵ ἐνοσφίσατο *enosphisato* misappropriated, purloined. The same verb is used in the LXX of Joshua 7:1 with regard to Achan's transgression.

¹⁸⁶ It would appear that participation in the communitarian economy of the early Church was voluntary. Ananias could have kept the money; his sin was lying to Peter about it.

¹⁸⁷ Ananias' punishment seems severe for a relatively trivial sin, but this is perhaps part of Luke's point: there are no genuinely trivial sins. Any sin brings estrangement from God and (unless one repents) spiritual death.

¹⁸⁸ *IE* in a burial shroud. Without any significant refrigeration or embalming technologies available in first century Palestine, it was important to bury the dead as quickly as possible. Nonetheless, such haste that not even the wife is notified seems peculiar.

¹⁸⁹ *IE* for such-and-such an amount. We are to picture Peter as confronting Sapphira with the exact figure, even though Luke himself does not appear to know it.

¹⁹⁰ πειράσαι *peirasai* test. Here, the Spirit is being tested as to whether or not it can detect a liar.

¹⁹¹ ἐκκλησίαν *ekklēsian* lit. assembly. This is the first occurrence in Acts of the word which ultimately gave rise to the English word *church*. The root meaning is *group of people called out [of the main body] for a special purpose*, and hence in many Greek cities, the *legislative assembly*. It is also used in the LXX to translate a Hebrew term meaning *Israel as a congregation* (cf. Acts 7:38), and the Christian use most likely stems from that or the generalized meaning of *assembly*; it is unlikely that it was adopted by the early Christians to mean *a group of people called out [from among the wicked or the world]*. In the NT, it is used interchangeably to mean both the entire body of Christians and individual Christian congregations.

¹⁹² σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα *sēmeia kai terata*, which the KJV accurately translates. Σημεῖον *sēmeion* has the root meaning *sign or token* and often means *omen*. In the NT, it is used to refer to manifestations of divine power that should convince Israel of the *bona fides* of those

man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.¹⁴ And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)¹⁵ Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.^{194 16} There came also a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

Peter Rearrested and Tried with the Other Apostles

¹⁷ Then the high priest¹⁹⁵ rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect¹⁹⁶ of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,¹⁸ And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.¹⁹ But the angel¹⁹⁷ of the Lord by night opened the prison doors,¹⁹⁸ and brought them forth, and said,²⁰ Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.^{199 21} And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council²⁰⁰ together, and all the senate²⁰¹ of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.²² But

performing the sign. Τέρας *teras* refers to something astonishing or awe-inspiring. Because it acquired the meaning of *monster*, agents such as chemicals or viruses which induce birth defects are now called *teratogens*, *monster-makers*.

¹⁹³ JST “rulers.”

¹⁹⁴ As with Jesus (Luke 8:44), Paul (Acts 19:12) and even Joseph Smith (HC 4:3), something associated with a holy man is itself able to effect cures. Nowhere else, however, is anything so insubstantial as a shadow said to be effective. Passages such as this in the NT are among the factors giving rise to the veneration of relics in some branches of Christianity; although LDS may view such beliefs as apostate if not mere superstition, we must remember how desperate for cures people would have been in a world that had no effective medical science, and be grateful that God’s grace has brought healing to many through diverse means.

¹⁹⁵ Presumably, Luke means Annas and not Caiaphas here (cf. 5:6). The high priest here is explicitly identified as Annas in the Western text.

¹⁹⁶ αἵρεσις *hairesis* sect, faction. The root meaning is *a taking (as of a town in a military action)*. From this, it acquired the meaning of *a choice* and hence *a selected point of view* or *those who select a point of view*. Ultimately, it gave rise to the English *heresy* for a point of view chosen contrary to orthodoxy.

¹⁹⁷ Angels are mentioned frequently in Acts as instruments to aid in the Apostles’ ministry. Note the irony: the Sadducees denied the existence of angels, and so the Apostles’ escape is effected by a being in whom the Apostles’ opponents did not believe.

¹⁹⁸ Miraculous escapes from prison are also recounted in Acts 12:6–11 and 16:25–27.

¹⁹⁹ Not this temporal existence as opposed to the eternal one following it, but the Life which comes through faith in Jesus.

²⁰⁰ συνέδριον *sunedrion* lit. a sitting-together, a council, from which the name Sanhedrin comes.

²⁰¹ γερουσίαν *gerousian* an assembly of elders. (The root is the GR word for *old man*.) The word *senate* derives from Latin and has the same root meaning. It is not clear why Luke mentions both a council and a senate. Most likely, he is merely using two words to refer to the Sanhedrin, using *and* with an intensive meaning, something like *called the council, even the entire senate* (AB—F, REB, NJB, NASB, NIV).

when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,²³ Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety,²⁰² and the keepers standing without²⁰³ before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.²⁴ Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.^{204 25} Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.²⁶ Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.²⁷ And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: and the high priest asked them,²⁸ Saying, Did not we straitly command²⁰⁵ you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.²⁰⁶

²⁹ Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.^{207 30} The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.^{208 31} Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.³² And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost,²⁰⁹ whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Gamaliel Urges Caution to the Sanhedrin

³³ When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took counsel to slay them.³⁴ Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel,²¹⁰ a doctor of the law, had in

²⁰² ἐν πάσῃ ἀσφαλείᾳ *en pasē asphaleia* in all security, that is, *as secure as possible*. The apparent similarity to the word *asphalt* (which does derive from a Greek word) is coincidence.

²⁰³ Ἐξ ὧν (cf. *within* which means *inside*).

²⁰⁴ διηπόρουν περὶ αὐτῶν τί ἂν γένοιτο τοῦτο *diēporoun peri autōn ti an genoito touto* lit. they were perplexed about these [things], what they might become/lead to.

²⁰⁵ παραγγελία παρηγγείλαμεν *parangelia parēngeilamen* command with a command, a Semitism. *Straitly* means *strictly*.

²⁰⁶ Peter has struck a nerve by repeatedly asserting that the Jewish leaders bear the responsibility for Christ's death (see 2:23, 4:10).

²⁰⁷ While this is true, we must always be careful in such situations that it really is God we are obeying.

²⁰⁸ This is among the verses used by groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses to assert that Christ was not crucified on a cross. However, not only is the phrasing an allusion to Dt. 21:22–23, where it is stipulated that a condemned criminal hung on a tree might not be left there overnight, but “hanging on a tree” is used in the Dead Sea Scrolls to quite clearly refer to crucifixion; Peter's language here is not without precedent. Cf. 10:39.

²⁰⁹ This pairing is crucial to the modern Church: living Apostles who are called as witnesses of the living Christ, and the Holy Ghost to bear witness along with them.

²¹⁰ Rabban Gamaliel the Elder (flourished AD 25–50), otherwise best known among Christians as Paul's mentor (see 22:3). He was the grandson of the great rabbi Hillel and grandfather of Gamaliel II. His son may be the Joshua/Jesus who was high priest from AD 63–65. Gamaliel I was the first to be awarded the title *Rabban* (our Master) and is praised in the Mishnah. His name means *God is my reward* (see Num 1:10, 2:20). Luke shows Gamaliel here as not at all hostile towards the Apostles and more than a little pragmatic in attempting to

reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;^{211 35} And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.³⁶ For before these days rose up Theudas,²¹² boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.³⁷ After this man rose up Judas of Galilee²¹³ in the days of the taxing,²¹⁴ and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.³⁸ And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:³⁹ But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply²¹⁵ ye be found even to fight against God.^{216 40} And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*,²¹⁷ they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

determine God's will. This sort of attitude was, in fact, fairly typical of many of the Pharisees. Note that it is a Pharisee arguing in favor of leniency; the Pharisees and Sadducees were bitter political opponents. Acts 23:6–10 recounts how Paul is able to play the Pharisees against the Sadducees in similar circumstances. The modern Church similarly has had non-Mormons whose influence was able to help it tremendously in times of need.

²¹¹ ἐκέλευσεν ἔξω βραχὺ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ποιῆσαι *ekeleusen exō brachu tous anthrōpous poiēsai* he commanded the men to be put just outside. Some GR MSS have τοὺς ἀπόστολους *tous apostolous* (the apostles) instead of τοὺς ἀνθρώπους *tous anthrōpous* (the men). He did not want Peter and John to hear what he had to say.

²¹² Luke would appear to be mistaken here in mentioning Theudas. According to Josephus (*Ant.* 20.5.1, §§97–98), Theudas claimed to be a prophet and gained a small following. He attempted to lead his disciples east across the Jordan, which he claimed would part at his command (cf. Josh. 3:14–16, 2 Kings 2:8, 14). He was stopped by troops sent by the Roman governor C. Cuspius Fadus (AD 44–46), placing him some years after Gamaliel's speech. Alternatively, there may have been another Theudas who “boasted to be somebody” of the first years of the common era, but that is a sheer guess.

²¹³ Josephus (*Ant.* 20.5.2 §§102) says that Judas the Galilean rebelled against Rome during the census conducted by Quirinius, hence around AD 6, some forty years *before* Theudas (a second mistake related to the first). His sons were executed by the governor Tiberius Julius Alexander (AD 46–48), who succeeded the Fadus who thwarted Theudas. It has been speculated that Luke may have been misled by the fact that Josephus first relates Theudas' fiasco and then (in a flashback) Judas' rebellion. Most scholars disagree with this scenario. Not only would it imply that Luke read Josephus but used him carelessly, his vocabulary and Josephus' differing at some crucial points.

²¹⁴ IE the census of AD 6. It is this census that many scholars believe led to Luke's (possibly mistaken) account of a census throughout the Roman dominions at the time of Jesus' birth (see Luke 2:1).

²¹⁵ IE *perhaps*. The GR is μήποτε *mēpote* lest by any means.

²¹⁶ The JST removes the archaic “haply” and the apparently dangling conclusion by changing the entire phrase to “be careful, therefore, lest ye be found even to fight against God.”

²¹⁷ δείραντες *deirantes* lit. flayed. Here it probably means scourging. Note the implied second direct object; a more straightforward translation would have been, “when they had called and beaten the apostles.”

⁴¹ And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. ⁴² And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach²¹⁸ Jesus Christ.

Chapter 6

The Seven Called

¹ AND in those days, when the number of the disciples²¹⁹ was multiplied, there arose a murmuring²²⁰ of the Grecians²²¹ against the Hebrews,²²² because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.²²³ ² Then the twelve called²²⁴ the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason²²⁵ that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.²²⁶ ³ Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven²²⁷ men of honest report,²²⁸ full of the Holy Ghost and

²¹⁸ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι *euangelizomenoi* lit. gospel-izing, spreading the good news. This is Luke's first use of the verb in Acts; it is appropriate that Jesus should be the object.

²¹⁹ τῶν μαθητῶν *tōn mathētōn* of the learners, disciples. (*Disciple* is a Latin-derived word meaning the same as the GR.) This is the first use of the word in Acts to designate Christians in general as opposed to those who personally followed Jesus during his mortal ministry.

²²⁰ The sin of Ananias and Sapphira in ch. 5 was the first hint that all was not well in the primitive Church. This conflict is the second.

²²¹ Ἑλληνιστῶν *Hellēnistōn* Hellenists, Greeks. In this case, it is usually assumed that the word refers to Jews of the Diaspora, not to ethnic Greeks, as the Church had experienced no real growth among Gentiles at this point. Their native language would have been Greek, hence the name. This, however, is only a guess. All that is known of the two parties is the labels Luke uses to mark them.

²²² Ἰε most likely Jewish members from Palestine itself, whose native language was Aramaic.

²²³ The Western text adds that it was the Hebrews who were responsible for this distribution.

²²⁴ προσκαλεσάμενοι *proskalesamenoi* called in. This explains the implied indirect object found in italics in the KJV.

²²⁵ ἀρεστόν *areston* acceptable, suitable, appropriate, reasonable.

²²⁶ διακονεῖν *diakonein* to minister, serve. It is from this word that the English *deacon* is derived for one who handles many of the temporal needs of a church. The seven men chosen in this pericope are not called deacons by Luke, but they are traditionally called deacons based on his repeated use of διακονεῖν *diakonein* and related words in this passage. Deacons as priesthood officers are referred to, however, elsewhere in the NT (EG 1 Tim. 3:8–13).

²²⁷ This may have been a symbolic number. The Twelve are usually taken as symbolizing the Twelve Tribes of Israel; in this case, the Seven may represent the seven nations of Canaan, as traditionally counted.

²²⁸ μαρτυρουμένους *marturoumenous* lit. witnessed, here meaning *well-spoken of*.

wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. ⁴ But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry²²⁹ of the word.

⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose²³⁰ Stephen,²³¹ a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip,²³² and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas,²³³ and Nicolas²³⁴ a proselyte²³⁵ of Antioch.²³⁶ ⁶ Whom they set before the apostles:

²²⁹ τῇ διακονίᾳ *tē diakonia* ministry, service. The translation chosen by the KJV fails to capture the contrast in the GR: the Seven will serve tables (temporally), and the Twelve will serve the Word (spiritually). (Ironically, Luke never shows the Seven serving temporally; he does, however, show them serving spiritually.)

²³⁰ This procedure is very different from what would be followed in the modern Church. Inspiration and revelation are not excluded from the process, of course (note that the Twelve pray before setting them apart), but the willingness of the Twelve to accept those nominated by the membership shows a remarkable tact.

²³¹ Stephen is the hero of Acts 6 and 7. Like the others of the Seven, he bears a Greek name. It is difficult to assess whether or not this is significant. Many Jews of the time bore a Greek or Roman name (often in addition to their Hebrew or Aramaic one), so it may merely be that Luke is recording the Greek names here and leaving the Aramaic ones unstated. On the other hand, it may mean that the temporal administration was left entirely to members of the Hellenistic faction, or that the ministry of the Seven was limited to the Hellenists. *Stephen* means *crown* or *wreath* and refers to the wreath worn by the victor in an athletic or other competition. It is certainly a fitting name to be borne by the first known Christian martyr. His feast day in the Roman Catholic Church is December 26. There are some unexpected points of Stephen's theology as recorded by Luke, and some scholars have attempted to explain these points by positing that Stephen was a Samaritan, not a Jew. While this is not impossible, the case in favor of it is unconvincing.

²³² *Philip* means *lover-of-horses* and was the name of Alexander the Great's father. It was therefore quite popular and remains so to this day. This is a different Philip, obviously, from the Apostle (1:13). Philip's ministry will be recounted in Acts 8, and his daughters and their gift of prophecy will be mentioned in 21:8. Philip's success as a missionary is such that he is frequently referred to as "Philip the Evangelist" (*evangelist* here meaning *missionary*, and not being the equivalent of *patriarch* as is the case in the modern Church; see Acts 21:8). Philip's feast day in Roman Catholicism is June 6.

²³³ Beyond their mention here, nothing is known of Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, or Parmenas.

²³⁴ The similarity of names has led to the traditional identification of Nicolas with the author of the Nicolaitan heresy mentioned in Revelation 2:6, 15. There is no real reason, however, to accept that identification.

²³⁵ IE a Gentile convert. *Proselyte* is from the GR προσήλυτον *proseluton* used here and means *one who has come over, a convert*.

²³⁶ The third largest city of the Roman Empire (after Rome itself and Alexandria), Antioch was the capital of Syria. It is generally believed that Luke himself was an Antiochene; if so, this may account for the special prominence it plays in Acts.

and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them²³⁷. ⁷ And the word of God increased,²³⁸ and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests²³⁹ were obedient to the faith. ⁸ And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles²⁴⁰ among the people.

Stephen Accused

⁹ Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue*²⁴¹ of the Libertines,²⁴² and Cyrenians,²⁴³ and Alexandrians,²⁴⁴ and of them of Cilicia²⁴⁵ and of Asia,²⁴⁶ disputing with Stephen. ¹⁰ And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. ¹¹ Then they suborned²⁴⁷ men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God. ¹² And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the

²³⁷ Luke does not appear to be aware of our modern distinction between “ordaining” and “setting apart.” This particular ceremony appears more likely to have been an example of the latter than the former.

²³⁸ Another summary of the state of the Church.

²³⁹ IE Aaronic priests, not necessarily “priests” in the sense of holding our modern office of the Aaronic priesthood (although, as Aaronic priests, they would naturally have had the Aaronic priesthood as their birthright).

²⁴⁰ σημεῖα *sēmeia* signs.

²⁴¹ JST “who are called,” a more natural translation of the GR.

²⁴² λιβερτίνων *libertinōn* freemen (a Latin borrowing). That is, this is a synagogue of freed slaves, possibly descendants of Jews carried off to Rome a century before when Pompey the Great took Jerusalem. On the other hand, they may be freemen from Cyrenaica, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia. Luke’s GR is ambiguous here, and he may be referring either to one synagogue or to five (one for the Freemen, and one for each of the four areas he enumerates).

²⁴³ See 2:11.

²⁴⁴ Alexandria was the capital of Egypt and the second largest city of the Roman Empire after only Rome itself. It was founded by and named for Alexander the Great; its population at this time was divided roughly into thirds: Greeks and Macedonians, Jews, and native Egyptians. There were almost continual conflicts among the three populations, particularly between the Jews and the Greeks. As the home to the temple to the Muses (the Museum) and its associated library, Alexandria was also the home to the largest collection of literature in the ancient world and a center of learning. The Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint (LXX) was made either for the sake of Alexandrian Jews who had lost command of Hebrew or at the command of the Macedonian Kings of Egypt who wanted copies of the Jewish holy writings available in the Museum.

²⁴⁵ A region on the southern coast of Asia minor, just east of Pamphylia and extending to the northeast corner of the Mediterranean. Cilicia had been a province in the first century BC and would become one again in AD 72. The city of Tarsus, from which Paul the Apostle hailed, was in Cilicia. Paul is mentioned as being present at Stephen’s martyrdom (8:1); it may be that he was among those who were in conflict with him and who accused him before the Sanhedrin.

²⁴⁶ See 2:9.

²⁴⁷ ὑπέβαλον *hupebalon* lit. underthrew, put up.

scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council,^{248 13} And set up false witnesses,²⁴⁹ which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place,²⁵⁰ and the law.^{251 14} For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs²⁵² which Moses delivered us.¹⁵ And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.²⁵³

Chapter 7

Stephen's Speech

¹ THEN²⁵⁴ said the high priest, Are these things so? ² And he said,²⁵⁵ Men, brethren,²⁵⁶ and fathers,²⁵⁷ hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in

²⁴⁸ As with Jesus, Peter and the other Apostles, and later Paul, Stephen is tried before the Sanhedrin. The short account of his trial bears many similarities with Jesus'; Luke may have meant this deliberately. On the other hand, there are a number of key divergences (particularly with Jesus' trial as recorded by Luke), so the similarities may be coincidence.

²⁴⁹ Luke does not mention false witnesses testifying against Jesus at his trial. They are mentioned, however, in Matthew and Mark (Matt. 26:30, Mark 14:56–57).

²⁵⁰ That Stephen spoke blasphemy against the Temple would naturally get the attention of the Sadducees among the Sanhedrin. The Sadducees, more than other Jews, centered their worship on the Temple and, indeed, derived much of their income from it.

²⁵¹ This is the first suggestion in the NT that the Law itself might be altered by Christians. Accusations that Christianity threatened the Temple date back to Jesus himself. That the Law would be fulfilled (and that its provisions would no longer be binding) by the death and sacrifice of Jesus Christ is well-understood in the modern Church and was known among the Nephites, as well (Alma 25:15, 3 Ne. 1:24–25, 4 Ne. 13). From Luke's account in Acts, however, this was *not* clear to the Church in Palestine, and it was some time before even Gentile converts would be freed from the obligations of the Law (see Acts 15:23–29).

²⁵² ἔθνη *ethē* customs (from whence the English *ethics*). In the end, it may be that the accusation boils down not to a denunciation of the Law *per se* but of the “unwritten law” which had grown up around it by tradition. The Pharisees in particular would have found any repudiation of this unwritten law most offensive.

²⁵³ Cf. Exo. 34:29–35, where Moses' face was said to glow when he came down from Sinai after speaking with God.

²⁵⁴ Another awkward chapter divison. It might be better to break the chapter between 7:1 and 7:2, as the high priest's question is part of the set up for Stephen's speech.

²⁵⁵ Stephen has been accused of blaspheming against the Law and the Temple. His lengthy response consists largely of a standard but slightly unorthodox recitation of Israelite history, with particular attention to the stories surrounding the granting of the Law and the building of Solomon's Temple. His defense is also riddled with quotations from Scripture (primarily the Law); but at the same time, it is hardly a legal defense so much as a defense of Christianity itself and an attack on his accusers. The history he rehearses is one of rebellion on the part of God's people against God's will—even the Temple is shown to be a futile gesture, at best tolerated by God. This rebellion, in Stephen's eyes, climaxes with the death of Jesus at the hands of Jews who were no better than their stubborn, stiff-necked, rebellious ancestors. The

Mesopotamia,²⁵⁸ before he dwelt in Charran,²⁵⁹ ³ And said unto him, **Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.**²⁶⁰ ⁴ Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans,²⁶¹ and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead,²⁶² he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. ⁵ And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not *so much as* to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would **give it**

anger and frustration Stephen's audience experiences is a fairly common reaction in a "Bible bash." Stephen is using quotations they cannot deny, but they cannot by any means accept his conclusions. Stephen's defense, with its long recitation of Israel's history, can seem long and tedious to a modern audience, but to Stephen's original audience it would have been far more interesting.

²⁵⁶ IE fellow Jews.

²⁵⁷ A term of respect for the members of the Sanhedrin. Stephen is starting off by flattering his hearers; he will be attacking them soon enough.

²⁵⁸ See 2:9. This point forms the first example of Stephen's defense to the charge of having blasphemed against "this place": "place" is in divine history more important to man than to God. God's revelation to Abraham, which was accepted as the start of Jewish history, took place far from Jerusalem.

²⁵⁹ Spelled *Haran* in the OT (EG Gen. 11:31). The initial consonant in Hebrew is a *heth* (ח *ch*), which has a guttural sound and hence the name was transliterated into GR with a *chi* (χ *ch*), which had in antiquity the *ch* sound of *Bach* or *loch*. (Abraham also had a brother whose name is spelled *Haran* in the KJV OT and the Book of Abraham; the two names have similar but different spellings in Hebrew.) Haran is at the northern end of Mesopotamia and was important not only as a trade center but also as a place of worship for the moon god Sin.

²⁶⁰ Gen. 12:1. See also Abraham 2:3. Note that Stephen is agreeing with the Book of Abraham against Genesis in localizing this commandment to Ur and not Haran (Abraham 2:9).

²⁶¹ The southern end of Mesopotamia. Abraham's home city is traditionally referred to as "Ur of the Chaldeans" (see Gen. 15:7). Referring to it as Chaldea or the land of the Chaldeans during Abraham's day is generally considered an anachronism, as the Chaldeans did not move into the region until the ninth century BC. This is usually accepted as reflecting the situation as of the time when the Torah was reaching its current form; it would be analogous to a modern book referring to the area conquered by Julius Cæsar in the 50's BC as "France"—technically this is wrong, but it helps later audiences get their geographical bearings. The Book of Abraham also refers to the land as belonging to the Chaldeans (Abr. 1:1). This may mean either that proper use of the name "Chaldeans" dates back over a millennium earlier than secular evidence would allow, or that Joseph Smith's translation of the papyrus was influenced by traditional English phrasing.

²⁶² The chronology of Abraham's sojourns in Genesis is confused, and it does not help that even the JST of Genesis is inconsistent with the Book of Abraham. Gen. 11:26 says that Terah was 70 years old at Abraham's birth and Gen. 12:4 says that Abraham was 75 when he left Haran. (Compare Abraham 2:14, which says that Abraham was 62 when he left Haran.) Since Gen. 11:32 says that Terah died at the age of 205, he must have lived over sixty years after Abraham left Haran. Despite this, some first century Jews could not accept that Abraham would have abandoned his aging father, and so there was a tradition (EG in Philo's *De migratione Abrahami* 32 § 177) that Terah died before Abraham left Haran. It is this tradition that Luke is following here.

to him for a possession,²⁶³ and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.⁶ And God spake on this wise, **That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years.**⁷ And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge,²⁶⁴ said God: and **after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.**^{265 8} And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac *begat* Jacob; and Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs.^{266 9} And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,^{267 10} And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor²⁶⁸ over Egypt and all his house.¹¹ Now there came a dearth²⁶⁹ over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan,²⁷⁰ and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.¹² But when Jacob heard that there was corn²⁷¹ in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.^{272 13} And at the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.¹⁴ Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to *him*, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.^{273 15} So Jacob went

²⁶³ An allusion to Genesis 17:8, 48:4.

²⁶⁴ Genesis 15:13–14.

²⁶⁵ Exo. 3:12. The verse in Exodus refers to Mt. Sinai; Stephen takes it to mean Jerusalem. In this, he is not entirely incorrect, as the Law requires Israel to worship in the place which God would appoint, and that was, ultimately, Jerusalem. Stephen is merely glossing over the religious history that transferred the focus of worship from the one to the other.

²⁶⁶ πατριάρχας *patriarchas* patriarchs, clan-heads. In the modern Church, the word is generally used of a particular priesthood office and as the father as the head of the family. It is common to refer to all of Israel's illustrious ancestors as *patriarchs*. See 2:29n.

²⁶⁷ Stephen develops a theme often found in OT prophets and in Jesus' ministry: from the beginning, Israel as a people has consistently failed to follow the path God set out for them. This begins with Joseph's brothers' attack on him, attempting to thwart God's intention to have Joseph lead them. A similar theme is found in the Book of Mormon, where Laman and Lemuel reject Nephi's leadership. In the case of the Book of Mormon, however, there is a stronger focus on the deuteronomic cycle of fidelity leading to prosperity, to pride, to sin, to punishment, to repentance, and then back to fidelity. This cyclic view of Israelite history is also to be found in the OT, most notably in Judges, but is not germane to Stephen's argument. For Stephen and early Christians generally, the pattern is a consistent one of rejection, which climaxes with the crucifixion of Jesus. Modern LDS would see the pattern continue into modern times with the rejection of Joseph Smith by the Christian world generally. We ourselves need to guard against the tendency to continue the pattern.

²⁶⁸ ἡγούμενον *hēgoumenon*. This is actually a participle (*governing-one*). A related GR word gives rise to the English *hegemony*.

²⁶⁹ λιμός *limos* famine. (*Dearth* is accurate, but rather archaic.)

²⁷⁰ IE Canaan.

²⁷¹ σιτία *sitia* wheat, grain (in general). In 1611, *corn* meant *grain* and only later acquired its current specialized meaning of *maize*.

²⁷² Stephen glosses over the fact—unimportant in his narrative—that Benjamin did not accompany his brothers on the first trip into Egypt.

²⁷³ The OT gives various figures for the size of the initial Israelite migration to Egypt, most likely a combination of the passage of time between the events in question and when they

down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,¹⁶ And were carried over into Sychem,²⁷⁴ and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor *the father* of Sychem.²⁷⁵ ¹⁷ But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,¹⁸ Till **another king arose, which knew not Joseph.**²⁷⁶ ¹⁹ The same dealt subtilly²⁷⁷ with our kindred, and evil entreated²⁷⁸ our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.²⁷⁹ ²⁰ In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:²¹ And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.²² And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.²³ And when he was full forty years old,²⁸⁰ it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.²⁴ And seeing one *of them* suffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:²⁵ For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by

were recorded, and the inevitable ambiguities in counting a group such as this one (EG does one count Joseph and his family or not?). Gen. 46:26 says sixty-six (not counting Joseph, his two sons, and Jacob/Israel himself), and Gen. 46:27 seventy in the MT (sixty-six plus Joseph's family and Jacob) and seventy-five in the LXX (which allots Joseph nine sons). Stephen (or Luke) is following the LXX here as elsewhere.

²⁷⁴ Spelled Shechem in the OT of the KJV.

²⁷⁵ Jacob bought land from the sons of Hamor in Shechem after his return to Canaan (Gen. 33:19). Stephen is confusing this plot of land with the burial plot purchased by Abraham from Ephron at Machpelah near Hebron (Gen. 23:3–20), where Jacob was buried (Genesis 49:29–32, 50:13). Joseph, on the other hand, was buried after the Conquest in the field of land at Shechem (Josh. 24:32), but this is specifically because he requested reburial in Canaan (Gen. 50:24–25) and because Shechem was part of the territory of the Josephites after Canaan was divided among the Israelites. The OT does not specify the burial place of any of the other eleven of Jacob's sons, but it was believed in the first century that they had all been buried at Hebron (*Ant.* 2.8.2 §199, *Jub.* 46:9, *T. Reuben* 7:2). Note that Shechem is in Samaritan territory—one of the points used to suggest that Stephen was a Samaritan. At the very least, Stephen's mention of Israel's patriarchs' being buried on enemy land cannot have endeared him to his listeners.

²⁷⁶ Exo. 1:8. This Pharaoh of the Oppression is generally assumed to have been either Seti I (1308–1290) or Rameses II (1290–1224).

²⁷⁷ κατασοφισάμενος *katasophisamenos* exploited, dealt craftily with. “Subtilly” is a spelling variation of “subtly.”

²⁷⁸ ἐκάκωσεν *ekakōsen* mistreated, abused, hence the KJV translation (using *entreated* as a synonym for *treated*). With a following articular infinitive, it can have the sense of *compelled*, hence ἐκάκωσεν τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν τοῦ ποιεῖν τὰ βρέφη ἔκθητα αὐτῶν *ekakōsen tous pateras hēmōn tou poiein ta brephē ektheta autōn* compelled [our] fathers to expose their children, lit. to make their children exposed.

²⁷⁹ τὸ μὴ ζογονεῖσθαι *to mē zōogoneisthai* breed. The antecedent is the Israelites generally, not the exposed children. Note that this is slightly different from the account in Exodus, which simply says that Pharaoh commanded the Egyptians to drown all male Israelite babies in the Nile (Exo. 1:22)

²⁸⁰ Moses' life divides into three blocks of forty years each (forty years representing a generation): one generation as a prince in Egypt, one as a shepherd in Midian, and one as a prophet of God.

his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.²⁶ And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?²⁷ But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, **Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?**²⁸ **Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest²⁸¹ the Egyptian yesterday?**^{282 29} Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger²⁸³ in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.³⁰ And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina²⁸⁴ **an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.**^{285 31} When Moses saw *it*, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him,³² **Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.**²⁸⁶ Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.³³ Then said the Lord to him, **Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.**^{287 34} **I have seen, I have seen²⁸⁸ the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them.**²⁸⁹ **And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.**^{290 35} This Moses whom they refused,²⁹¹ saying, **Who made thee a ruler and a judge?**²⁹² the same did God send *to be* a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.^{293 36} He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs²⁹⁴ in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea,²⁹⁵ and in the wilderness forty years.

²⁸¹ This form is used only here in the KJV; the more familiar form, “didst,” is used 106 times.

²⁸² Exo. 2:14.

²⁸³ παράκοιτος *paroikos* lit. dweller-about, a resident alien.

²⁸⁴ IE Sinai. Note that once again a revelation that was to be crucial to Israelite history took place outside of the territory of Israel.

²⁸⁵ Exo. 3:2.

²⁸⁶ Exo. 3:6.

²⁸⁷ Exo. 3:5. Again Stephen brings up the concept of “sacred space.” Here, God did not reveal himself to Moses at a place already sanctified; rather, the place is made sacred by God’s presence.

²⁸⁸ Repetition of the phrase is a Semitism for emphasizing it: AB—F has *I have seen indeed*.

²⁸⁹ Exo. 3:7–8.

²⁹⁰ Exo. 3:10.

²⁹¹ As happened with Joseph and would happen with Jesus, God’s chosen leader has been rejected by God’s people.

²⁹² Exo. 2:14.

²⁹³ In the OT, it is God Himself who appears to Moses in the bush, and not an angel. (The LDS understanding is that God in this case is the pre-existent Jesus.) At the same time, it is possible through divine investiture of authority for an angel to speak as if he were God, but that is almost certainly not the case here. Jews after the Exile became increasingly reluctant to refer directly to God and preferred to use circumlocutions if at all possible.

²⁹⁴ Cf. 2:22, where Peter attributes “wonders and signs” to Jesus. Luke’s account shows Stephen making implicit parallels between Moses and Jesus on more than one occasion.

²⁹⁵ The account of the Israelites’ safe passage through miraculous means in Exo. 14:21–31 does not actually name the location as being the “Red Sea.” This identification is made in

³⁷ This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, **A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.**^{296 38} This is he, that was in the church²⁹⁷ in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles²⁹⁸ to give unto us: ³⁹ To²⁹⁹ whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, ⁴⁰ Saying unto Aaron, **Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot³⁰⁰ not what is become of him.**^{301 41} And they made a calf³⁰² in those days,³⁰³ and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. ⁴² Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven,³⁰⁴ as it is written in the book of the prophets,³⁰⁵

**O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices
by the space of forty years in the wilderness?**

later Jewish tradition and is to be found in the LXX of Exodus and elsewhere. The crossing most likely did not take place in what is now referred to as the Red Sea, but somewhat to the north in the wet and marshy land that used to stretch between the north end of the Red Sea and the Mediterranean (where the Suez Canal is now found).

²⁹⁶ Dt. 18:15. This important early Christian proof-text is key to Stephen's argument here. Yes, Stephen honors Moses as the other Jews claim to, but it is Moses himself who prophesied of Jesus. Cf. Peter's use of the same passage in 3:22. Both Peter's and Stephen's quotations are based on the LXX, but the latter is somewhat freer.

²⁹⁷ ἐκκλησία *ekklēsia* congregation, assembly. See 5:11. The use of the word for "Church" here cannot be accidental; strengthening the parallel between Moses, who founded an ἐκκλησία *ekklēsia* in the wilderness, and Christ, who founded another in the First Century.

²⁹⁸ λόγια ζῶντα *logia zōnta* lit. living words. This is a technical term for oracular replies from Greek divination, hence the KJV translation.

²⁹⁹ JST omits "to," making for smoother English and a less literal translation.

³⁰⁰ JST "know," removing an archaism.

³⁰¹ Exo. 32:1, 23. Stephen is showing how the Israelite people reacted to Moses, and he will soon accuse his opponents of continuing the tradition: God's people have consistently rebelled against God's representatives.

³⁰² A bull calf would be a symbol of strength and fertility. Animal deities were common in Egyptian mythology, and the Israelites would find it most natural to adopt a deity based on their former oppressors. Note, however, that the attempt was *not* to replace Jehovah with another God, but to reinterpret Jehovah in the terms already familiar to the Israelites. The worship of Jehovah through a calf idol would resurface later in Israelite history (see 1 Kings 12:26–30).

³⁰³ Stephen reminds his listeners that Israel's history of idolatry began, ironically, even while Moses was receiving the Tablets with God's law on it. (From the Book of Mormon and JST, we understand that the actual Law found in the current OT was replacement legislation, geared to Israel's demonstrated level of spiritual development.)

³⁰⁴ IE the stars and planets.

³⁰⁵ The twelve OT books from Hosea through Malachi are so short that they could fit conveniently together on a single scroll. Hence the quotation here from Amos, one of the minor prophets, is attributed to the book of the prophets, taking all twelve as a single book.

⁴³ **Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch,³⁰⁶
and the star of your god Remphan,³⁰⁷
figures which ye made to worship them:
and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.³⁰⁸**

⁴⁴ Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed,³⁰⁹ speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion³¹⁰ that he had seen. ⁴⁵ Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus³¹¹ into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; ⁴⁶ Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.³¹² ⁴⁷ But

³⁰⁶ *Moloch* or *Molech* is a deliberate distortion of the Hebrew *melekh* meaning *king*. When used to refer to a pagan god, the Masoretes assigned the word the vowels of *bosheth* (meaning *shame*). *Melekh* and its derived forms are frequently found in Hebrew names, most notably *Melchizedek*—"king of righteousness"—including deity names such as Adrammelech and Anammelech (2 Kings 17:31). *Molech* is not properly the name of a god but a generic title applied to a Canaanite god or gods to whom the human sacrifice of children or even infants was offered (see Lev. 18:21, 20:2–5, 2 Kings 23:10, Jer. 32:35). The reference to Moloch here (following the LXX) is an error; the Hebrew original refers to *Sakkuth*, *your king*, which was incorrectly vocalized to *the sukkah* (Heb. for "tent") *of your king*, hence *the tent/tabernacle of Molech* (τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ Μολοχ *tēn skēnēn tou Moloch* in the LXX and Acts). The KJV of Amos 5:26 has "the tabernacle of your Moloch" under the influence of the LXX and Acts; the NRSV, like modern translations in general, changes this to, "Sakkuth your king," and editions of the KJV other than the LDS one may very well include a footnote containing the alternate translation.

³⁰⁷ *Remphan* or *Rephan* is probably from the Egyptian name for the planet Saturn. The Hebrew of Amos 5:26 suggests *Kaiwan your star-god*. This was translated in the LXX, τὸ ἄστρον τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν Ραιφαν *to astron tou theou humōn Raiphan* the star of your god Raiphan. *Kaiwan* is probably the Hebrew form of the Akkadian name for Saturn, hence the LXX substituted the Egyptian equivalent. Our own habit of using the names of Roman gods for the planets stems ultimately from Mesopotamian worship of the planets as deities, which Israel picked up during the period of Assyrian domination.

³⁰⁸ Amos 5:25–27. The quotation follows the LXX rather than the MT, with the rather significant additional change of *Damascus* to *Babylon*. Damascus was the largest city in and capital of Syria during Amos' lifetime, but had become somewhat eclipsed by the Greek Antioch by Luke's. It is still an important city, and one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities on the earth.

³⁰⁹ The Tabernacle was God's idea. Stephen will later imply that the Temple was merely man's.

³¹⁰ JST "pattern."

³¹¹ *Jesus* is the GR form of the name *Joshua* (or *Jeshua*); GR lacked the *sh* sound in Hebrew, and tended to add an *s* to the end of foreign men's names ending in *a*. Here it refers to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' successor.

³¹² Cf. v.44. David contrasted the luxurious palace in which he lived with the Tabernacle and was anxious to build God a suitable temple. David was forbidden, as having had too bloody a career, so the honor fell to Solomon. Even within the OT, the Temple is built on David and Solomon's initiative; God merely grants permission.

Solomon built him an house. ⁴⁸ Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

⁴⁹ **Heaven is my throne,
and earth is my footstool:
what house will ye build me? saith the Lord:
or what is the place of my rest?**

⁵⁰ **Hath not my hand made all these things?**³¹³

⁵¹ Ye stiffnecked³¹⁴ and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. ⁵² Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?³¹⁵ and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: ⁵³ Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*.

Stephen is Stoned

⁵⁴ When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man³¹⁶ standing on the right hand of God.^{317 57} Then they cried out with a loud voice,³¹⁸ and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, ⁵⁸ And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. ^{319 59} And they stoned Stephen,³²⁰ calling upon *God*, and saying,³²¹ Lord Jesus,

³¹³ Isaiah 66:1–2. Stephen thus comes back to the point he has been making repeatedly. He is reminding his hearers that God's presence is not confined to the physical bounds of the Temple. His implication is that the Temple is far more important to the Jews than to God.

³¹⁴ It was God himself who called Israel stiffnecked in Exo. 33:5.

³¹⁵ Jewish legend, such as is found in the Pseudepigrapha, expands on the OT stories of the prophets' rejection and martyrdom.

³¹⁶ Stephen is here using the title Jesus characteristically applied to himself. This is a rare instance of its being used in the NT by anyone other than Jesus, in fact, and the only time it is used in a direct quotation. There is no doubt but that he was referring to Jesus.

³¹⁷ This is a popular LDS proof-text. It is possible to reconcile most forms of Trinitarianism with Stephen's statement, however, and that Jesus and God the Father are distinct entities was not at issue for either Stephen or his listeners. Luke does not subscribe to the relatively high christology found, for example, in the Johannine literature and does not attribute such to Stephen. Cf. Luke 22:69, where Jesus tells the Sanhedrin that "hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God."

³¹⁸ Stephen's claim to have seen Jesus standing in an honored position is too much for his listeners.

³¹⁹ This is the first mention in Acts of Saul of Tarsus who later became the Apostle Paul. Paul is the most influential person in the history of Christianity save Jesus only, in part because of his extensive missionary labors, but more because of his epistles. If Paul is accepted as the author of everything in the NT from Romans through Hebrews, his writings occupy 122 pages in the LDS edition of the KJV, and Luke's only 103, which would make more of the NT the output of Paul's pen than any other man's. Even if Paul's authorship of some of the Pauline epistles is rejected, they still show his influence, and the fundamental issues with which Paul wrestled—

receive my spirit.^{322 60} And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice,³²³ Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.³²⁴ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.³²⁵

Chapter 8

The Aftermath of Stephen's Martyrdom

¹ AND³²⁶ Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all³²⁷ scattered abroad

most notably the role of grace and works in our salvation—have dominated Christian debate, particularly since the Reformation. Like Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah, he started his career as a persecuter of the Church and seems, indeed, to have been more zealous in that than were they. Alma, after all, did not imprison people for believing in Christ. Paul thus becomes a powerful example of the power of the Atonement to bring a complete reformation of life. Luke always refers to him as Saul through Acts 13:9a, and from Acts 13:9b onwards always as Paul. Paul himself never gives any indication that his Jewish name was Saul. (His Jewish name, by the way, is that of Israel's first king; Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin, and Saul was the most famous if not the most honorable Benjaminite of Israel's history.) We will refer to him consistently as Paul in the footnotes.

³²⁰ This is not an execution, but a lynching. The Romans did not trust the Jews with the right to execute malefactors; there was too much chance for a Roman to innocently violate some part of the obscure Jewish law and be killed as a result. Stoning was a Jewish punishment; the Romans would have used some other means of execution such as crucifixion. That the Jews could get away with this during the Roman occupation is puzzling. One explanation may be that there was an interregnum in Roman government between the dismissal of Pontius Pilate (sometime in AD 36) and the arrival of his successor, Marcellus. If this is the case, it is our first chronological peg on which to hang the narrative of Acts.

³²¹ JST “And they stoned Stephen; and he, calling upon God, said,” This removes an awkwardness of the current translation, which implies that those who stoned Stephen were the ones calling upon God.

³²² Cf. Luke 23:46b, where Jesus says, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”

³²³ Cf. Luke 23:46a, where Jesus is said to have “cried with a loud voice” just before dying.

³²⁴ Cf. Luke 23:34a, where (if the verse fragment is accepted as genuine), Jesus begs forgiveness for his executioners. Stephen is a bit less forgiving than Jesus, however. Jesus defends his executioners as being innocent therefore guiltless; Stephen uses the word “sin” (GR ἁμαρτίαν *hamartian*) to describe the men who killed him, implying that they knew what they were doing.

³²⁵ IE died. Sleeping was a common metaphor for death, both among the Jews and the Greeks.

³²⁶ Yet another awkward chapter transition. The break is usually taken today as being between the first part of 8:1a (“And Saul was consenting unto his death.”) and the remainder of the verse.

throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.² And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.^{328 3} As for Saul, he made havock of³²⁹ the church, entering into every house, and haling³³⁰ men and women committed *them* to prison.⁴ Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.³³¹

Philip the Evangelist Converts Simon Magus

⁵ Then Philip went down³³² to the city of Samaria,³³³ and preached Christ unto them.⁶ And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.⁷ For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies,³³⁴ and that were lame, were healed.⁸ And there was great joy in that city.⁹ But there was a certain man, called Simon,³³⁵ which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched³³⁶ the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:¹⁰ To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest,

³²⁷ This is sometimes taken as hyperbole, that only the Hellenists (of whom Stephen apparently was one) were scattered. Although the literal meaning of the text is most likely correct, it is not implausible that the Hellenists suffered the most in the persecution.

³²⁸ Not to be properly buried was a horrible fate for any Jew in the first century. It may be, therefore, that these are pious non-Christian Jews who buried Stephen. Cf. Tobit 1:12–19, 2:1–9 in the Apocrypha.

³²⁹ ἐλυμαίνετο *elumaineto* mistreated, abused.

³³⁰ σύρων *surōn* dragging.

³³¹ God is thus able to turn what appears to be a setback for the Church to the Church's advantage. Such a concept is common in the Scriptures. Joseph, for example, forgives his brothers partly because God has been able to turn their enmity to something that benefited the entire family (Gen. 50:20), and in Alma 26:24, the slaughter of over 1,000 pious Anti-Nephi-Lehis brings an even greater number of Lamanites to repentance and baptism.

³³² IE literally downhill; the elevation of Jerusalem is rather higher than that of Samaria.

³³³ Some GR MSS have "a city of Samaria." It is hard to tell which reading is correct based on the current textual evidence. (The article τὴν *tēn* is bracketed in the Nestle/UBS text, indicating the difficulty of deciding the issue on purely textual grounds.) The city named Samaria, which had given its name to the region, had by this point been replaced by a hellenized town named Sebaste. *Sebaste* means *revered* and is derived from the GR equivalent of the title *Augustus*; the town had been rebuilt by Herod the Great and given a name intended to flatter the Emperor. Luke might also have meant Neapolis/Nabulus, known in the OT as Shechem, the chief city of Samaria during NT times and the religious headquarters for the Samaritans. Another suggested candidate is the city Gitta, where, according to Justin Martyr's *Apology* I, 26, Simon Magus was born. Christ himself ministered briefly in Samaria (see, for example, John 5), but basically limited his ministry to the Jews except in unusual circumstances (see Matt. 10:5–6, 15:24, 3 Nephi 15:22–23). Philip's preaching in Samaria represents the first break in the early Church's hitherto exclusive focus on the Jews.

³³⁴ παραλελυμένοι *paralelumenoi* paralyzed.

³³⁵ This Simon is usually referred to as Simon Magus (Latin for Simon the Magician) because of his former career as a sorcerer.

³³⁶ ἐξιστάνων *existanōn* astonished, amazed.

saying, This man is the great power of God.^{337 11} And to him they had regard, because that of long time³³⁸ he had bewitched them with sorceries.¹² But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.¹³ Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued³³⁹ with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs³⁴⁰ which were done.¹⁴ Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.^{341 15} Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:¹⁶ (For as yet he³⁴² was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)¹⁷ Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.^{343 18} And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,¹⁹ Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.^{344 20} But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.²¹ Thou hast neither part nor lot³⁴⁵ in this matter:³⁴⁶ for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.²² Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.²³ For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness,³⁴⁷ and *in* the bond of iniquity.²⁴ Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.^{348 25} And they, when they

³³⁷ This should probably be capitalized *Great Power of God*, a title of obscure meaning. A similar title is used later in Gnosticism, which is one reason why there is frequently believed to be a link between Simon and Gnosticism.

³³⁸ IE because for a long time.

³³⁹ προσκαρτερῶν *proskarterōn* attended constantly.

³⁴⁰ τε σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις μεγάλας *te sēmeia kai dunameis megalas* signs and great [acts of] power.

³⁴¹ There is a certain irony that John should be among those to confer the Holy Spirit on Samaritan converts; he had earlier sought to destroy a Samaritan village by divine fire for its lack of hospitality towards Jesus (see Luke 9:51–56).

³⁴² It is unusual for a masculine pronoun to be used with the Holy Spirit, which is grammatically neuter in GR.

³⁴³ If Philip held the priesthood office of deacon—which is consistent with Luke's account of the calling of the Seven in ch. 6—then the modern understanding is that he would not have been able to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost, and that a Melchizedek Priesthood holder would be required for that. Note, however, that the text implies that Philip was able to baptize, which would not be possible for a deacon in the modern Church.

³⁴⁴ The term *simony* for the purchase of ecclesiastical office is derived from this incident.

³⁴⁵ κλῆρος *klēros*. The original meaning of the word was for something with an individual's mark thrown into a helmet; one was chosen at random, indicating the winner. (We do something similar with slips of paper in a hat or bucket.) From this, it acquired the meaning of a *piece of land allocated to someone, an allotment*, and hence an *inheritance*.

³⁴⁶ IE the Priesthood.

³⁴⁷ χολῆν πικρίας *cholēn pikrias* bile of bitterness. Bile is alkaline and therefore bitter. The phrase itself is a Semitism for *bitter bile*, that is, *bitterness*.

³⁴⁸ This verse implies that Simon repented. Later Christian tradition asserts that his repentance was, at best, temporary, that he later used his magic to oppose Peter and Paul, and

had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

Philip the Evangelist Converts the Ethiopian Eunuch

²⁶ And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza,³⁴⁹ which is desert.³⁵⁰ ²⁷ And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia,³⁵¹ an eunuch³⁵² of great authority³⁵³ under Candace³⁵⁴

that he was the first heresiarch, founding the Gnostic Simonian heresy (see, for example, Eusebius *Eccl. Hist.* 2.14). There is no reason given in Acts itself, however, to accept such traditions. The Western text adds at the end of this verse ὅς πολλὰ κλαίων διαλιμπάνεν *hos polla dlaiōn dialimpanen* who [referring to Simon] did not stop weeping. One might assume that his tears were tears of remorse, but one hostile Christian source asserts that he was crying tears of rage.

³⁴⁹ Gaza was one of the five cities traditionally inhabited by the Philistines, Israel's deadly enemies from the later part of the period of the judges through the early part of the reign of David. (The other four were Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath.) The Philistines probably migrated from the Aegean area around the thirteenth century BC driven out by an influx of other tribes. They ceased to be a serious danger to Israel after David's reign but did not vanish from history altogether until around the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Gaza continues to be an important city and is now among the areas hotly contested between the Palestinians and Israelis.

³⁵⁰ Presumably the Negeb, the desert area south of Judea proper. On a literal level, however, Gaza is not within the Negeb or any actual desert, nor does the road between Jerusalem to Gaza cross the desert at any point.

³⁵¹ Not the modern Ethiopia (Abyssinia), but the region south of the First Cataract of the Nile down south to the area around modern Khartoum, now part of southern Egypt and northern Sudan. This area is also called Nubia. The term *Ethiopia* comes from the GR Αἰθίοψ *Aithiops*, which means literally *burned-face* or *soot-face* and refers in a generic fashion to areas of Africa south of Egypt. Ethiopia had a small Jewish population at this point, most likely made of Jews who had migrated from the Egyptian Jewish settlement on the Elephantine. Ethiopic itself is a Semitic language distantly related to Hebrew and Aramaic.

³⁵² A man castrated, probably before puberty. Eunuchs were frequently employed in royal courts, both because they would be unable to commit adultery with women in the harem, but also because they could have no children of their own and hence would be less liable to pursue family ambitions at the expense of the monarch's. Whether or not this man was an actual eunuch is controversial. Not only does Dt. 23:1 forbid a eunuch from participation in Israel's religious life, but the word is used occasionally in the LXX to refer to a chamberlain (EG Gen. 39:1, 40:2). On the other hand, Isaiah 56:3–4 creates a loophole for a devout eunuch to use in order to participate in Israel's religious life. Nor can we determine for sure whether this was an actual Jew or a Gentile proselyte. Since Luke has yet to deal with the extension of the Gospel to Gentiles, however, the eunuch was probably a Jew. (Samaritans counted as semi-Jewish and not fully Gentile.) Note the use of "an eunuch." Modern English would write "a eunuch," as *eunuch* doesn't begin with a full vowel.

³⁵³ δυνάστης *dunastēs* powerful man. The first half of the word is from a root meaning *powerful* and giving rise to words in English such as *dynamo*, *dynamic*, *dynamite*, and *dynast* itself.

queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, ²⁸ Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias³⁵⁵ the prophet. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. ³⁰ And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read³⁵⁶ the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? ³¹ And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. ³² The place of the scripture which he read was this,

**He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
and like a lamb dumb before his shearer,
so opened he not his mouth:**

³³ **In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:
and who shall declare his generation?
for his life is taken from the earth.**³⁵⁷

³⁴ And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?³⁵⁸ ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. ³⁶ And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water:³⁵⁹ and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? ³⁷ And³⁶⁰ Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. ³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and

³⁵⁴ *Candace* (GR Κανδάκη *Kandakē*) is actually the title of the Ethiopian queen-mother, a GR transliteration of the native word, not the personal name of a reigning queen.

³⁵⁵ IE Isaiah.

³⁵⁶ Reading in antiquity was invariably done aloud. Writing lacked modern helps such as word breaks and punctuation. One therefore had to sound the words out as one read, and this was easier if one did it aloud.

³⁵⁷ Isaiah 53:7–8. This is a part of Isaiah’s famous fourth “servant song,” which has been taken by Christians generally as referring to Jesus. See Mosiah 14, where this passage is quoted by Abinadi with specific reference to Christ. (The other three Servant Songs are Isaiah 42:1–7, 49:1–6, and 50:4–11.)

³⁵⁸ The fourth Servant Song is the one with the most obvious Christological significance, to the point that the details of Christ’s life have been narrated so as to underscore this significance. More generally, however, and in keeping with the multi-layered meaning associated with much of Isaiah, it may not refer to Jesus *exclusively*. In any event, the identity of the Servant in each of the four Servant Songs has been a considerable matter of debate through the centuries.

³⁵⁹ Identified by tradition as the Wadi el-Hesi northeast of Gaza.

³⁶⁰ V. 37 is omitted by the better GR MSS. It is easy to see how it might have been added—there would have been some discomfort on the part of early clerics that the eunuch could be baptized without making at least a minimal confession of faith. Certainly such a confession is expected of convert baptisms in the modern Church and is known to have been required of converts anciently. Although the verse is undoubtedly ancient and is first attested at the end of the second century, the textual evidence for leaving it out is overwhelming. It was, in fact, missing from the main GR MS Erasmus used in the preparation of the TR. One MS to which he had access, however, included it in the margin and he therefore included it in his text on the basis “that it had been omitted by the carelessness of scribes.” It thus became part of the GR text underlying the KJV.

they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.³⁹ And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.^{361 40} But Philip was found at Azotus:³⁶² and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.³⁶³

Chapter 9

*The Conversion of Saul*³⁶⁴

¹ AND Saul, yet breathing out³⁶⁵ threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,³⁶⁶ ² And desired of him letters to Damascus³⁶⁷ to the

³⁶¹ Presumably he returned to Nubia. There is a long association of Ethiopia and the Sudan with Christianity, and the Ethiopic translation of the Bible is important in textual studies. Nonetheless, large-scale conversions did not take place until the fourth century AD.

³⁶² Known in OT times as Ashdod, another of the five Philistine cities. It is twenty miles north of Gaza.

³⁶³ Presumably Caesaria Maritima, about 50 km north of the modern Tel Aviv. It was the capital of the Roman government in Judea. See 10:1n.

³⁶⁴ This is the first of three accounts in Acts of Paul's conversion. (The other two are in 22:3–16 and 26:4–18 and are attributed to Paul himself.) The three versions differ in a number of details; see v. 7n below. There are not inconsiderable similarities with the account in the Book of Mormon of several miraculous conversions, most notably that of Alma the Younger, and this has been used by anti-Mormons to try to undermine the credibility of the Book of Mormon. At the same time, there are significant differences. Paul, for example, is not unconscious for any length of time, but merely blinded. More important, all of the miraculous conversions in the Book of Mormon involve some human intermediary, either in the form of a missionary or, in the case of Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah, family members. Paul's conversion is purely an act of divine grace. (Indeed, *all* conversions are acts of divine grace; it is God's power that transforms us. This is part of the lesson Luke is trying to teach us.) All these miraculous conversions can be taken as prototypical of the process of being "born again," where the old man is put away and the new man taken up, and have been replicated in not a few lives not recorded in Scripture. This section is also crucial to the continuing narrative in Acts. We have seen the first steps taken towards the preaching of the Gospel outside of Judea; now we see not only an arch-persecutor become a stalwart defender, but also the conversion of the man who will become the Apostle to the Gentiles and responsible for the spread of the Gospel message throughout Asia Minor, Greece, and on to Rome.

³⁶⁵ ἐμπνέων *empneōn* lit. breathing in.

³⁶⁶ It is not clear whether this is Caiaphas (high priest from 18–36) or his successor Jonathan (36–37). Paul's conversion was probably no later than AD 37, so it is almost certainly one or the other. (See note to v. 24, below.)

³⁶⁷ This is the first mention of Christians outside of the area of Christ's personal ministry. Luke's focus on individual personalities means that he does not always record who was the first to spread the Gospel message to a particular area. We must bear this in mind particularly with Paul's ministry; even though Paul's arrival in Rome and his preaching there forms the climax of Acts, Luke does let us know that Paul was not the first to preach there. Damascus was (and is)

synagogues,³⁶⁸ that if he found any of this way,³⁶⁹ whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.³⁷⁰ ³ And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: ⁴ And he fell to the earth,³⁷¹ and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul,³⁷² Saul, why persecutest thou me? ⁵ And he said, Who art thou, Lord?³⁷³ And the Lord said, I am³⁷⁴ Jesus whom thou persecutest.³⁷⁵ *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.³⁷⁶ ⁶ And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me

an important city in Syria, the capital of an Aramaic kingdom and enemy of Judah during much of the OT. It was part of the Roman Empire from 64 BC until the death of the emperor Tiberius (AD 37), when it came under the control of the Nabatean ethnarch of King Aretas IV Philopatr (8 BC—AD 40). The name *Damascus* is used as a code word in the DSS for the wicked world; this has occasioned some speculation that Paul's journey here is merely a symbolic one and that there is some connection with the Qumran sectaries. Such speculations are not at all likely to be true, however.

³⁶⁸ It would appear that the Romans granted the Jewish high priest limited jurisdiction over all Jews wherever they might be found. While this is not explicitly attested outside of Acts, it is consistent with the practices of Roman administration and there is some indirect outside corroboration for it (EG 1 Macc. 15:15 and following).

³⁶⁹ This is the first use of the term “way” (GR ὁδός *hodos* road) to refer to the life lead by those enlightened by the Gospel. The Aramaic equivalent (*derek* and *haderek*) is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls with an analogous meaning.

³⁷⁰ Presumably to be tried as heretics. The fact that he is operating with the high priest's authority implies that Christianity is seen as a Jewish heresy and not as a rival religion by the Jewish authorities. This is one of Luke's theses. As the first century wore on, Roman officials became increasingly aware of Christianity and unsure of how to deal with it. They were generally hostile to religious innovation, and so by positioning Christianity as a natural outgrowth of Judaism, Luke appears to be providing a basis for defending the Church's right to exist to the Roman government.

³⁷¹ Not surprisingly, there are persistent efforts to find a purely naturalistic explanation for Paul's experience. The most common is epilepsy, but there is no real reason to resort to such explanations. Even outside the Gospel tradition, visionary experiences are not unheard of in the absence of neurological disorders.

³⁷² Luke has hitherto referred to Paul as Σαῦλος *Saulos*, adding the ending required by GR grammar. Here he uses Σαούλ *Saoul*, which is based on the simple Aramaic form of Paul's name.

³⁷³ Given that Paul is here asking who is speaking to him, it is not likely that κύριε *kurie* should be taken as a title of respect for Deity and therefore capitalized as in the KJV. It might even be better rendered *sir* were that not to imply a merely human addressee.

³⁷⁴ Εγώ εἰμι *egō eimi*, with the pronoun explicitly present. This may be intended to link this experience with Moses' theophany at Sinai, where God reveals his name to be I AM. Such a linkage is frequent in John's Gospel.

³⁷⁵ By persecuting Christians, Paul has been persecuting Christ. Cf. Matt. 25:40, Luke 9:48, 10:16.

³⁷⁶ The phrase σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν *sklēron soi pros kentra laktizein* (it is hard for you to kick the goads) is found in two different locations in various MSS in the

to do? And the Lord *said* unto him,³⁷⁷ Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.⁷ And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.³⁷⁸ ⁸ And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man:³⁷⁹ but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus.⁹ And he was three days³⁸⁰ without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Saul is Baptized by Ananias

¹⁰ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias;³⁸¹ and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord.¹¹ And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus:³⁸² for, behold, he prayeth,¹² And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight.¹³ Then Ananias

Western textual tradition, by some in v. 4 and by others in v. 5. It is most likely to have been added here by assimilation to 26:14 and different scribes assimilated it to different places.

³⁷⁷ The first part of verse 6 (“And he trembling...the Lord *said* unto him”) is missing from better GR MSS.

³⁷⁸ The JST changes this verse to read, “And they who were journeying with him saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him who spake to him.” This is to make this account of Paul’s vision consistent with 22:9, where Paul is recounting himself his experience. There is, nonetheless, a certain irony in Joseph Smith introducing such a change. The various accounts of the First Vision Joseph wrote in his lifetime are inconsistent in a number of details, and anti-Mormons have frequently attempted to undermine confidence in Joseph’s experience by pointing to these inconsistencies. LDS have usually used as a defense the variations in the accounts of Paul’s conversion in Acts, all of which were written by one man over a relatively short period of time; if Luke can be inconsistent in Acts, it should not be surprising that Joseph Smith should be inconsistent in his various accounts authored over the course of the 1830’s. By making these accounts consistent, the JST would appear to be actually undermining this defense. This is not necessarily the case, of course, because the JST frequently corrects minor errors in the originals as well as restoring lost material. See also 22:9n.

³⁷⁹ Paul’s physical blindness is symbolic of the spiritual blindness under which he has been operating and of which he has only now been made aware. Cf. John 9, where Jesus contrasts the merely physical blindness of a man whom he heals and the spiritual blindness of the Jewish leaders who object to the healing having been performed on the Sabbath.

³⁸⁰ Alma the Younger was comatose for three days and three nights at the time of his conversion (Alma 36:10, 16; cf. Mos. 27:23), and of course there were three days between Jesus’ death and resurrection as traditionally counted. Luke is surely playing up the symbolic link with the latter.

³⁸¹ An otherwise unknown disciple already in Damascus. Note the irony that one of those whom Paul had intended to arrest would be the instrument for his healing. This is obviously a different Ananias from the notorious liar of 5:1.

³⁸² Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia (see 6:9n) and a large city with a mixed population, native non-Greek, Greek, and Jewish. Not only was the city prosperous and a cultural and intellectual center, but it had special privileges and rights granted by the Romans. That Paul, as a resident of Tarsus, should have been born a Roman citizen is not at all surprising.

answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints³⁸³ at Jerusalem.¹⁴ And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.¹⁵ But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:¹⁶ For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.¹⁷ And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales:³⁸⁴ and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.¹⁹ And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.²⁰ And straightway³⁸⁵ he preached³⁸⁶ Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.³⁸⁷ ²¹ But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? ²² But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this³⁸⁸ is very Christ.

The Plot Against Saul's Life

²³ And after that many days were fulfilled,³⁸⁹ the Jews took counsel to kill him:²⁴ But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.³⁹⁰ ²⁵

³⁸³ τοῖς ἁγίοις σου *tois hagiois sou* your holy ones; *saint* is derived from a Latin word meaning *holy one*. This is the first use of the term “saints” for the members of the Church in Acts. It is clear that the term applies to members in general and not those with a special sanctity. It is because of the word's NT use that it has been incorporated into the name of the modern Church, expressive of what we hope to become.

³⁸⁴ Cf. Tobit 3:17 in the Apocrypha. Tobit was burying the dead as an act of piety and was forced to sleep out of doors as a result. During the night, he got sparrow droppings in his eyes and was blinded. In Tobit's case, therefore, having something material removed from his eyes is a reasonable way for him to regain his sight. Here, Luke's language may be influenced by Tobit or otherwise be metaphorical.

³⁸⁵ εὐθέως *eutheōs* immediately.

³⁸⁶ ἐκήρυσσεν *ekērussen* he was proclaiming, preaching. The verb is in the imperfect tense, which here has an inceptive force: *he started to preach*.

³⁸⁷ This is the first occurrence of this title in Acts.

³⁸⁸ οὗτος *houtos* *thlsa*. In the absence of a formal third person pronoun in GR, demonstratives can be used with a pronominal force. Hence this could be *he [Jesus] is the very Christ*. (The KJV also omits the article before *Christ* although it is present in the GR.)

³⁸⁹ According to Galatians 1:17–18, Paul went from Damascus to Arabia then back to Damascus, and it was three years after his conversion before he fled from Damascus to Jerusalem.

³⁹⁰ According to Paul himself in 2 Cor. 11:32–33, it was the ethnarch of the king of the Nabatean Arabs, Aretas, who sought to kill Paul while he was in Damascus on the occasion of his escaping via a basket over the wall. (An ethnarch in this case would be a man appointed to have authority over certain foreigners in the city, rather comparable to our own consuls.) It is possible to reconcile both accounts without too much difficulty. If Paul's information is correct, then we are able to date Paul's conversion to sometime between AD 34 and 37, which is

Then the disciples³⁹¹ took him by night, and let *him* down by the wall in a basket.^{392 26} And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed³⁹³ to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.^{394 27} But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apostles,³⁹⁵ and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way,³⁹⁶ and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.²⁸ And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.²⁹ And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians:³⁹⁷ but they went about to slay him.^{398 30} Which when the brethren knew,³⁹⁹ they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.³¹ Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee⁴⁰⁰ and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

Miracles Performed by Peter

³² And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all *quarters*,⁴⁰¹ he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.^{402 33} And there he found a certain man named Æneas,⁴⁰³ which

consistent with the dating of Stephen's stoning around AD 36 (see 7:59n above). Jesus was crucified sometime from AD 29 to 33; this means that Luke's narrative from Acts 1 through Acts 8 take place within a single decade. (The first decade of the modern Church is similarly crowded, and includes the reception of virtually every revelation in the D&C.)

³⁹¹ The best MSS have the truly awkward reading οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ *hoi mathētai autou* his disciples. It is strange to think of disciples being designed as Paul's (as opposed to Jesus') so early in Paul's ministry. This is doubtless why the verse is changed in many MSS.

³⁹² σπυρίδι *spuridi* a large basket, a hamper.

³⁹³ ἐπείραζεν *epeirazen* tried, attempted. (*Assayed* is here a variant of *essayed*, an archaic term meaning *attempted*.) The GR verb is in the imperfect, carrying its usual nuance of repetition—Paul tried more than once.

³⁹⁴ Paul not unnaturally has trouble establishing his *bona fides* in Jerusalem. As a notorious persecutor, he will naturally have more difficulty than most people, but it was a general difficulty in the primitive Church. Note that in the modern Church, D&C 20:84 outlines a procedure to help deal with this sort of problem.

³⁹⁵ According to Galatians 1:18–20, Paul only met with Peter and James the brother of the Lord on his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion.

³⁹⁶ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ *en tē hodō* on the road.

³⁹⁷ As with the similar use of the term in 6:1, it is not clear what Luke means. Presumably, it is Jews of the Diaspora, among whom Paul would be counted.

³⁹⁸ ἐπεχείρουν ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν *epecheiroun anelein auton* were trying to put him away. The finite verb (ἐπεχείρουν *epecheiroun* undertook, lit. took it in hand) is in the imperfect tense, implying repeated attempts.

³⁹⁹ The JST changes this to, "When the brethren knew this," which is much smoother English. Note the presence of a similar construction in v. 37 below.

⁴⁰⁰ It is strange that, given the fact that Jesus himself was from Galilee, this is the only mention of the Church there in all of Acts.

⁴⁰¹ JST "these regions."

⁴⁰² Lydda was known as Lod in the OT (Ezra 2:33, 1 Chr. 8:12). It was on the road from Jerusalem to Joppa about two-thirds of the way along. Note that once again Luke does not

had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.³⁴ And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ⁴⁰⁴ maketh thee whole:⁴⁰⁵ arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.³⁵ And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron⁴⁰⁶ saw him, and turned to the Lord.⁴⁰⁷

³⁶ Now there was at Joppa⁴⁰⁸ a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas:⁴⁰⁹ this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds⁴¹⁰ which she did.³⁷ And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber.³⁸ And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa,⁴¹¹ and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them.³⁹ Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.⁴⁰ But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him*⁴¹² to the body said, Tabitha, arise.⁴¹³ And she opened

narrate the arrival of the Gospel message in Lydda. The patron saint of England, St. George the dragon-killer, was from Lydda.

⁴⁰³ Otherwise unknown. Although he is presumably a Jew, he bears a famous Greek and Roman name; Aeneas was the Trojan warrior from Homer's *Illiad* whom the Romans later coopted as the legendary ancestor of Romulus and Remus, founded Rome. Aeneas is the hero of Virgil's epic *Aeneid*, which celebrates that descent.

⁴⁰⁴ Peter makes it clear whose power is performing the miracle.

⁴⁰⁵ ἰαταί σε *iatai se* heals you.

⁴⁰⁶ IE the plain of Sharon, where Lydda was found. (GR lacks the "sh" sound found in HEB, hence the transliteration.) This is the coastal region from Joppa northwards to Mt. Carmel.

⁴⁰⁷ Typical Lucan hyperbole; there were considerable numbers of non-Christians left on the plain of Sharon long after Peter's ministry.

⁴⁰⁸ Joppa, now called Jaffa and a suburb of Tel Aviv, was an important port on the Mediterranean coast west northwest of Jerusalem. Note that once again Luke does not mention who first evangelized the area.

⁴⁰⁹ Both words mean *gazelle*. *Tabitha* is Aramaic and *Dorcas* is GR.

⁴¹⁰ ἐλεημοσυνῶν *eleēmosunōn* lit. acts of mercy. It can be used, as here, to mean *acts of almsgiving*.

⁴¹¹ The two towns are about ten miles (16 km) apart.

⁴¹² The JST removes "him." The implied object is unnecessary in modern English and only makes the phrasing more awkward.

⁴¹³ In Aramaic, this would be *Tabitha cumi*. Cf. Mark 5:41, where Jesus says *Talitha cumi* when he raises the daughter of Jairus. Luke's account of this miracle does not include Mark's Aramaic (see Luke 8:54), but since he used Mark as a source, he was doubtless aware of it. It may well be, therefore, that the similarity is deliberate. On the other hand, Luke could not count on his readers having read Mark's gospel, so he may not have meant this as a deliberate echo of Jesus' earlier miracle. Nonetheless, raising the dead is one of the most noteworthy of all miracles and is attributed in the OT only to Elijah and Elisha. That Jesus did it should have helped establish his prophetic credentials in the eyes of Israel. It is therefore important in Luke's narrative that Peter (and later Paul) raised the dead. It helps establish them as the heirs of Jesus' power and authority.

her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.⁴¹ And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up,⁴¹⁴ and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.⁴² And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.⁴³ And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.⁴¹⁵

Chapter 10

*Cornelius Sends for Peter*⁴¹⁶

¹ THERE was a certain man in Cæsarea⁴¹⁷ called Cornelius,⁴¹⁸ a centurion⁴¹⁹ of the band⁴²⁰ called the Italian⁴²¹ band,² A devout man, and one that feared God⁴²² with all his house, which

⁴¹⁴ ἀνέστησεν *anestēsen* stood [her] back up. This is the same word used to refer to the process of resurrection, although our modern understanding would be that this is a resuscitation and different from an actual resurrection in that Tabitha would one day die again.

⁴¹⁵ A trade whose foul odors made it unacceptable to many of the ancient Pharisees.

⁴¹⁶ Acts 9 and 10 together form a pivot around which Acts turns. Note that both involve a vision to an unbeliever followed by a vision to a believer who brings the unbeliever into the Church. In the first, the man who would be the great Apostle to the Gentiles is converted; in the second, the head of the Church is convinced that the Gospel should be explicitly spread to the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

⁴¹⁷ IE Caesarea Maritima, the Roman capital of Palestine. (This is different than the Caesarea Philippi where Peter made his confession of Jesus in Matt. 16.) Caesarea is on the coast about forty miles (65 km) north of Joppa. It had been built by Herod the great and named in honor of Cæsar Augustus who had given the site to Herod. That there are Roman troops here implies that the area is still under direct Roman control, dating Cornelius' conversion to before the reign of Herod Agrippa I (AD 41–44).

⁴¹⁸ Despite his name, Cornelius may not have been an ethnic Roman but possibly a Syrian in the Roman army. It was common for freed slaves to be adopted into the *gens* of the man who freed them, and Publius Cornelius Sulla had in 82 BC freed some ten thousand slaves, so the name Cornelius would not have been entirely uncommon in the Roman lower classes.

⁴¹⁹ An officer in command of a century, a group of (nominally) one hundred men. The rank roughly corresponds with our sergeant, in that centurions were non-commissioned, but their responsibilities were those of our captains.

⁴²⁰ σπείρης *speirēs* cohort. A cohort was a unit of between six hundred and one thousand men (six to ten centuries).

⁴²¹ The *Cohors II miliaria Italica civium romanorum voluntariorum* is known to have served in Syria from 69 BC onwards. This is probably the same cohort.

⁴²² Romans not infrequently found the rigid ethics of Judaism admirable, however baffling the arcana of the rituals seemed and however incomprehensible the Jewish refusal to participate in the official imperial cult might be. Many who found Judaism attractive never did become Jews, however, largely because of the requirement that they be circumcised. Luke uses the term φοβούμενος τὸν θεὸν *phoboumenos ton theon* (God-fearer), which is a semi-technical term referring to Gentile sympathizers of Judaism (rather like the original meaning of the term “Jack-Mormon”).

gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. ³ He saw in a vision evidently⁴²³ about the ninth hour of the day⁴²⁴ an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. ⁴ And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. ⁵ And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon,⁴²⁵ whose surname⁴²⁶ is Peter: ⁶ He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. ⁷ And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; ⁸ And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

⁹ On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:^{427 10} And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,^{428 11} And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel⁴²⁹ descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet⁴³⁰ knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:^{431 12} Wherein were⁴³² all manner⁴³³ of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and

⁴²³ φανερώς *phanerōs* clearly.

⁴²⁴ Mid-afternoon. This was a traditional hour for prayer.

⁴²⁵ This is the first time in Luke's narrative since Luke 6:14 that Peter's Jewish name has been used.

⁴²⁶ ἐπικαλεῖται *epikaleitai*, lit. *is referred to as* and which could mean either *is nicknamed* or *is surnamed*.

⁴²⁷ Noon.

⁴²⁸ ἔκστασις *ekstasis* lit. out-standing, a state of where one stands outside oneself, a trance. The word is the root of the English *ecstasy*. The word is used in the LXX in passages such as Gen. 2:21, 15:12 to translate the Hebrew תרדמה *taredemah* deep sleep. The word is derived from some forms of Greek divination, where the oracle would enter a frenzied state. It was believed that at such a time they were literally beside themselves and possessed by the god; their utterances, taken as the god's words, were then interpreted by a priest and written down.

⁴²⁹ σκεῦός *skeuos* a vessel, inanimate object, implement. It does not have the restricted meaning of *container*.

⁴³⁰ ὀθόνην *othonēn* a piece of fine linen, a sail, a sheet.

⁴³¹ There are three different participles present in different MSS for this verse: καταβαῖνον *katabainon* (descending), δεδεμένον *dedemenon* (tied), and καθιέμενον *kathiemenon* (let down). The KJV is based on a text which has all three; the reading *a certain vessel like a large sheet descending, being lowered by its four corners* is preferred by most modern translations.

⁴³² ὑπῆρχεν *hupērchen* existed.

⁴³³ πάντα *panta* all, every kind. Luke is given to hyperbole, but here he may mean this literally: *every* species of animal was shown to Peter, not merely a miscellaneous collection. Bear in mind that the ancient catalogs of animal species had a few hundred members, at most. Even allowing for the fact that this is a vision and not a zoological exhibition, it is not unreasonable for Peter to see every kind of animal of which he was aware.

wild beasts,⁴³⁴ and creeping things,⁴³⁵ and fowls of the air.⁴³⁶ ¹³ And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.⁴³⁷ ¹⁴ But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. ¹⁵ And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common. ¹⁶ This was done thrice:⁴³⁸ and the vessel was received up again into heaven. ¹⁷ Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, ¹⁸ And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

Peter Visits and Baptizes Cornelius

¹⁹ While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. ²⁰ Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. ²¹ Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what *is* the cause wherefore ye are come? ²² And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. ²³ Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. ²⁴ And the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. ²⁵ And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*. ²⁶ But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. ²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. ²⁸ And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation;⁴³⁹ but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. ²⁹ Therefore came I *unto you* without gainsaying,⁴⁴⁰ as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? ³⁰ And Cornelius said, Four days ago⁴⁴¹ I was

⁴³⁴ *Wild beasts* (τὰ θηρία *ta thēria*) is omitted from the better GR MSS; it was probably added from 11:6, where Peter recounts his vision.

⁴³⁵ One is tempted to prefer the translation *reptiles* (which comes, after all, from the Latin for *creeping*), but the ancients were probably not so specific. This would include reptiles, amphibians, insects, spiders, and so on. The GR is ἐρπετὰ *herpeta* (*creeping thing*), which is the root for English words such as *herpetology* (the study of reptiles) and *herpes*.

⁴³⁶ This list covers the major classifications used by the Jews for animals with the notable omission of fish, which were probably left out unintentionally.

⁴³⁷ It is probably no coincidence that such a vision came to Peter at lunch time. This is not merely a matter of Peter's hunger affecting his interactions with God; the vision also has a greater psychological impact when Peter's body is occupied with food.

⁴³⁸ Emphasizing the importance of the message. LDS cannot but compare the multiple visits of Moroni to Joseph Smith to reveal the existence of the Book of Mormon.

⁴³⁹ This is not actually required by the Law, but was traditional within first century Judaism. The risk of contact with something ritually unclean was too great.

⁴⁴⁰ ἀναντιρρήτως *anantirrētōs* without contradicting.

⁴⁴¹ Counting both the day of Cornelius' original prayer and of Peter's arrival. We would say "three days ago." Cf. the traditional assertion that Jesus was resurrected three days after his death, although the actual time involved was rather less than forty-eight hours.

fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,³¹ And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.³² Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.³³ Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

³⁴ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said,⁴⁴² Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:³⁵ But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.³⁶ The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)³⁷ That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;³⁸ How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power:⁴⁴³ who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.³⁹ And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:^{444 40} Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;⁴¹ Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.⁴² And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick⁴⁴⁵ and dead.⁴³ To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

⁴⁴ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.^{446 45} And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished,⁴⁴⁷ as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,⁴⁷ Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴² This is the last missionary speech in Acts attributed to Peter.

⁴⁴³ Thus making Jesus the “Anointed One,” IE the Christ.

⁴⁴⁴ See 5:30n.

⁴⁴⁵ ζώντων *zōntōn* living. An archaic English meaning for *quick* is *living, alive*, hence *quicksilver, living silver*.

⁴⁴⁶ This is sometimes referred to as “the Pentecost of the Gentiles” after the similar outpouring of the Spirit which is recounted in chapter 2. Certainly for Peter, this event is crucial, providing a decisive, incontrovertible, divine stamp of approval for the accepting of these Gentiles as full-fledged Saints.

⁴⁴⁷ Despite the fact that Peter has just said that God is no respecter of persons, his Jewish companions still find it astonishing that Gentiles should receive the Holy Ghost.

⁴⁴⁸ ἡμέρας τινάς *hēmeras tinas* for a few days. The KJV translation is literal but not the best possible.

Chapter 11

Peter Reports to the Brethren in Jerusalem

¹ AND the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. ² And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision⁴⁴⁹ contended⁴⁵⁰ with him,⁴⁵¹ ³ Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised,⁴⁵² and didst eat with them.⁴⁵³ ⁴ But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them,⁴⁵⁴ saying,⁴⁵⁵ ⁵ I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: ⁶ Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered,⁴⁵⁶ and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. ⁷ And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. ⁸ But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. ⁹ But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common. ¹⁰ And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. ¹¹ And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me. ¹² And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren

⁴⁴⁹ IE Jews. Even when Greeks and Romans were sufficiently attracted to Judaism as to want to convert, they would frequently balk at being circumcised and therefore not become full members of Israel.

⁴⁵⁰ διεκρίνοντο *diekrinonto* lit. separated themselves from him, hence *disagreed with him, contended with him, confronted him*.

⁴⁵¹ Peter's position at the head of the church does not absolve him from the need to satisfy the other members that his actions are correct. This may be taken as a variation of the principle of common consent enjoined upon the modern Church in the D&C (EG 26:2). It is clear from Acts that the full acceptance of Gentiles as fellow-Saints and the abandonment of the Law of Moses was a difficult transition for the primitive Church that took many years; contrast this with the experience of the Nephites, who were explicitly told by Christ that the Law was at an end (3 Nephi 15:4–5) and therefore were able to abandon it relatively quickly (4 Nephi 12). Even in the modern Church we have experienced difficult transitions, such as the cessation of the active practice of plural marriage, which lasted at least from the issuing of the OD 1 in the D&C in 1890 until the issuing of the so-called “Second Manifesto” in 1904.

⁴⁵² ἄνδρας ἀκροβυστίαν ἔχοντας *andras akrobustian echontas* men with a foreskin.

⁴⁵³ Strangely, the issue of baptizing Gentiles does not come up, only fraternizing with them—a nice psychological touch. They are willing to have Gentiles baptized in the Church so long as they do not have to actually *associate* with them.

⁴⁵⁴ ἀρξάμενος δὲ Πέτρος ἐξετίθητο αὐτοῖς καθεξῆς *arxamenos de Petros exetitheto autois kathexēs* lit. starting out, Peter laid [it] out to them point-by-point.

⁴⁵⁵ Peter's defense emphasizes four points where God has intervened to make his will known: first in Peter's vision, second in the Spirit's direction that he go to Cornelius, third the fact that Cornelius had seen an angel, and then finally in the outpouring of the Spirit upon Cornelius and his household. Note that the phrasing strongly echoes the account of the vision in ch. 10.

⁴⁵⁶ κατενόουν *katenooun* lit. put [my] mind down, to observe closely, to perceive.

accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: ¹³ And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; ¹⁴ Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. ¹⁵ And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. ^{457 16} Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. ¹⁷ Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? ¹⁸ When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

The Gospel Spreads to Antioch

¹⁹ Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen ⁴⁵⁸ travelled as far as Phenice, ⁴⁵⁹ and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. ²⁰ And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. ^{460 21} And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Barnabas and Saul go to Antioch

²² Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. ^{461 23} Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, ⁴⁶² was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. ²⁴ For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people ⁴⁶³ was added unto the Lord. ²⁵ Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek

⁴⁵⁷ IE on Pentecost, in ch. 2.

⁴⁵⁸ See 8:1, 4. Those persecuted have spread now even farther afield.

⁴⁵⁹ IE Phoenicia. This is the coastal region of the Eastern Mediterranean stretching northward from northern Israel. Anciently, the inhabitants were a Canaanite people who were noted for their daring sea-faring and were long rivals of the Greeks. The chief cities of Phoenicia were Tyre and Sidon. The name comes from the GR for "purple." The Phoenicians possessed the secret for making a purple dye that would not wash out easily. Much of their wealth derived from trade in this dye.

⁴⁶⁰ It would appear that the saints from Judea who spread northward because of persecution were not comfortable preaching to the Gentiles as yet, whereas those from outside Judea (Cyprus and Cyrene), who had grown up having to deal with Gentiles on a daily basis, were more comfortable in preaching to them. One may compare the ability of modern LDS to get along and work with non-members when they have been raised in a predominantly Mormon area as opposed to when they have been raised in an area where Mormons are the minority.

⁴⁶¹ In the modern Church, there are parallel instances where the Gospel message has spread to an area prior to the existence of a formal mission. (West Africa is a case in point.) Here Barnabas appears to have been formally set apart to follow up on the informal work which has already been proceeding.

⁴⁶² God's grace—his granting of unearned blessings—is here manifest in the spread of the Gospel in an area where there had been no formal mission sent.

⁴⁶³ ὄχλος ἱκανὸς *ochlos hikanos* a large body of people.

Saul: ²⁶ And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians⁴⁶⁴ first in Antioch.

²⁷ And in these days came prophets⁴⁶⁵ from Jerusalem unto Antioch. ²⁸ And there stood up one of them named Agabus,⁴⁶⁶ and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world:⁴⁶⁷ which came to pass in the days of Claudius⁴⁶⁸ Cæsar.⁴⁶⁹ ²⁹ Then the

⁴⁶⁴ This is the first use of the term in the NT and is a significant milestone for the Church, both in that “Christ” appears to have become by this point part of Jesus’ name and no longer merely a title, and in that it means that Christianity is now being seen as a distinct entity from Judaism—Jesus’ followers are no longer just a variety of Jew. As for why the name became attached to the Christians, we cannot tell from Luke’s brief notice. The most likely explanation is that, like “Quaker” and “Mormon,” it originated among outsiders and may have been intended as a term of derision. Cf. Alma 46:13–15 where Lehiite believers are said to have been called “Christian” as well.

⁴⁶⁵ This does not refer to a specific priesthood office, but rather those who had the spiritual gift of prophecy.

⁴⁶⁶ Otherwise unknown, although there is an Agabus (presumably the same man) mentioned in 21:10.

⁴⁶⁷ There is no famine known to have affected the entire Roman Empire during this period, let alone the whole world. There were, however, a number of famines afflicting the eastern Mediterranean, and a particularly severe one in Judea in the late 40’s. As is not uncommon, those who live through the disaster may have magnified its extent in their own eyes, giving rise to the idea that it was “throughout all the world.” (Note that Luke records that the Syrian saints were able to send relief to Judea, implying that the famine either did not affect them or was not as severe in Syria as in Judea.)

⁴⁶⁸ Tiberius Claudius Nero Germanicus was born in 10 BC and reigned as the fourth Roman emperor from AD 41–54. He is best known to people today through Robert Graves’ vivid historical novels about his life and the TV series derived therefrom. Claudius was physically unimpressive and had a speech impediment. His family did not think highly of him and kept him from the military and administrative career common to upper class Romans of his day. He turned instead to scholarship where he seems to have done well, although none of his works have survived. He became emperor upon the assassination of his nephew, the half-mad Caligula. A soldier found him cowering behind some curtains and the Praetorian Guard proclaimed him emperor as the only male member of the imperial family alive. He was conscientious and hard working, at least at first, but alienated the Senate first by accepting the throne at all, and then by using his freedmen as the equivalent of a cabinet. His lack of physical courage made him paranoid about assassination, particularly towards the end of his reign. Ironically, he is said to have been poisoned by his fourth wife in order to make way for her son to become the emperor Nero.

⁴⁶⁹ As his name implies, Claudius was not a member of the Caesarian clan into which the previous emperors had been adopted. Nor had he been formally appointed Caligula’s successor and adopted in himself. The name “Caesar” had, in fact, an opposite history to that of the word “Christ,” starting out as a personal name and becoming a title. Eventually, all emperors became known as “Caesar,” whether or not they had any relationship to the Caesarian family. The title survived into the 20th century in the forms *Kaiser* and *Tsar*.

disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa:^{470 30} Which also they did, and sent it to the elders⁴⁷¹ by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Chapter 12

James is Killed and Peter Imprisoned

¹ NOW about that time Herod the king⁴⁷² stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church. ² And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. ³ And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)^{473 4} And when he had apprehended⁴⁷⁴ him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions⁴⁷⁵ of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter⁴⁷⁶ to bring him forth to the people. ⁵ Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. ⁶ And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept⁴⁷⁷ the prison.

⁴⁷⁰ The NT Church never was able to achieve the centralized control that is the hallmark of the modern Church. Communication between different areas was difficult and sporadic. The result is that local authorities were required to take considerable initiative, as here, to deal with specific problems.

⁴⁷¹ Used generically as a term for leaders in the Church. We would probably say “the Brethren” in a similar situation.

⁴⁷² Herod Agrippa I, the brother of Herodias and grandson of Herod the Great. He was born in 10 BC and raised in Rome as a hostage, where he became friends with the future emperors Caligula and Claudius. Caligula gave him the territory of Philip the Tetrarch in AD 37 and let him use the title *King*. (Note that Luke correctly calls him *king* here, but does not use that title for Herod Antipas.) When Herod Antipas sought the same title for himself two years later, Caligula deposed and exiled him, giving his territory to Herod Agrippa I. In AD 41, Herod Agrippa I was granted the remainder of Judea, the first time the entire area had been under a single administration since the reign of Herod the Great. Herod Agrippa I was a cagey politician who is said to have helped the emperor Claudius in the first awkward months of his reign. As king, he sided consistently with the Pharisees, hence his hostility to the Christians. He died in AD 44, giving us another point around which to build a chronology of Acts; James' death must have taken place between 41 and 44.

⁴⁷³ As in Luke 22:1, Luke accepts the popular conflation of two feasts, the Unleavened Bread and Passover. Passover took place on the 14th of Nisan when the Passover Lamb was slaughtered and eaten. The seven days following, when only unleavened bread could be eaten, constituted the feast of Unleavened Bread. The proximity of the two holidays, and the fact that both commemorated the Exodus, led to their being treated as one eight-day holiday.

⁴⁷⁴ πιάσας *piasas* seized.

⁴⁷⁵ Four squads of four soldiers each.

⁴⁷⁶ τὸ πάσχα *to pascha* Passover. The translation adopted by the KJV implies that Easter (a Christian holiday, despite its pagan name) and the Passover had already become two separate feasts, which almost certainly was not the case at this early point in Christian history.

⁴⁷⁷ ἐτήρουν *etēroun* were guarding.

⁷ And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon⁴⁷⁸ *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote⁴⁷⁹ Peter on the side,⁴⁸⁰ and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands.⁸ And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.⁹ And he went out, and followed him; and wist not⁴⁸¹ that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.¹⁰ When they were past the first and the second ward,⁴⁸² they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord:⁴⁸³ and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.¹¹ And when Peter was come to himself,⁴⁸⁴ he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.¹² And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary⁴⁸⁵ the mother of John, whose surname was Mark;⁴⁸⁶ where many were gathered together praying.¹³ And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel⁴⁸⁷ came to hearken,⁴⁸⁸ named Rhoda.¹⁴ And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood

⁴⁷⁸ JST unto. GR ἐπέστη *epestē* lit. *stood upon*, but here *stood by*. Note the presence of an implied object (Peter), indicated in the KJV by the italics.

⁴⁷⁹ πατάξας *pataxas* struck, hit.

⁴⁸⁰ πλευρὰν *pleuran* lit. rib, but here *side* is an appropriate translation. English words such as *pleuresy* come from this root.

⁴⁸¹ οὐκ ᾔδει *ouk ēdei* did not know. *Wist not* is archaic for the same thing.

⁴⁸² φυλακὴν *phulakēn* guard, sentinel, guard-post. The root meaning of the English *ward* is *to guard* (cf. *warden*). From this, it was used to describe a district of a town under a particular guard, hence an administrative district of a town. The modern LDS meaning comes from the fact that the administrative districts in Nauvoo were identical with the ecclesiastical districts, as a matter of convenience.

⁴⁸³ αὐτομάτη *automatē* moved under its own power. The word is the root of our *automatic*.

⁴⁸⁴ ἐν ἑαυτῷ γεγόμενος *enheautō genomenos* lit. became into himself. The expression is used in Greek authors such as Sophocles and Xenophon to mean *came to his senses*.

⁴⁸⁵ One of several Marys in the NT, nothing is known of this one other than her being the mother of John Mark.

⁴⁸⁶ John Mark is traditionally considered to be the author of the second Gospel. He is identified with the Marcus, Barnabas' nephew, mentioned in Col. 4:10; certainly this explains the close association of Barnabas and John Mark in Acts. There is some speculation that the unnamed young man who ran away when Jesus was arrested was Mark (Mark 14:51–52). Christian tradition is that he became the first Bishop of Alexandria (Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.16, 24). His body is believed to be in St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice. His feast day in the Roman Catholic Church is 25 April, and in traditional Christian iconography, he is represented by a lion.

⁴⁸⁷ παιδίσκη *paidiskē* young girl, probably meaning here *a servant-girl, a maid*.

⁴⁸⁸ ὑπακοῦσαι *hupakousai*, whose root meaning is *to listen*, but which also has the specialized meaning for porters or door-wardens *to answer [a door]*. We should probably picture a semi-secret meeting, with Rhoda the servant appointed to keep an eye on who came to the door.

before the gate.¹⁵ And they said unto her, Thou art mad.⁴⁸⁹ But she constantly affirmed⁴⁹⁰ that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.⁴⁹¹ ¹⁶ But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.¹⁷ But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James,⁴⁹² and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.⁴⁹³ ¹⁸ Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.¹⁹ And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and *there* abode.

Herod's Horrible Death

²⁰ And Herod was highly displeased⁴⁹⁴ with them of Tyre⁴⁹⁵ and Sidon:⁴⁹⁶ but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain⁴⁹⁷ their friend, desired

⁴⁸⁹ μαίνη *mainē* You're crazy! The word is the root of English words such as *maniac* and *mania*.

⁴⁹⁰ διῴσχυρίζετο *diischurizeto* kept insisting. The root meaning is *to lean on, to rely on*.

⁴⁹¹ IE his guardian angel, which was popularly believed to look exactly like the person guarded.

⁴⁹² This is the first mention in the NT of James, the brother of the Lord, or James the Just, who is (with the possible exception of the Apostle James the son of Zebedee) the most significant of the various men named James in the NT. Elsewhere, as here, he functions as the leader of the Church in Jerusalem. He seems to have been the head of a conservative, pro-Law faction in the Church. At the very least, his influence was substantial and his support vital for any innovations to become accepted. He never is referred to as an apostle, but he is traditionally believed to have been the first bishop in Jerusalem (Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* 2.23). He is also one of the few NT figures to be mentioned by Josephus (*Ant.* 20.9.1 §200). The meaning of his traditional title "brother of the Lord" is disputed, but most LDS would be comfortable with the simplest interpretation, that he was a son of Mary and Joseph and therefore Jesus' (half-)brother. He is traditionally believed to be the author of the Epistle of James and is said to have been killed by the Jewish leaders shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Some identify him with James the son of Alphaeus, which would make him one of the original Twelve. This identification is unlikely but is accepted within Roman Catholicism, where his feast day is 3 May.

⁴⁹³ Luke fails to record where Peter went. One possibility is that he went to Rome (Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* 2.14.5). Given Luke's structure of Acts, whereby Paul is the hero of the last half and the book climaxes with Paul's arrival at Rome, it makes sense that if Peter were to have gone to Rome this early, Luke would gloss over the fact. Still, any possible hiding place for Peter is purely speculative and cannot be proven, and Peter does not appear on the scene again in Acts until chapter 15.

⁴⁹⁴ θυμομαχῶν *thumomachōn* furious, infuriated at.

⁴⁹⁵ Tyre had been one of the chief Phoenician cities of OT times and was still an important trading center, if not the metropolis it once had been. Situated on an island off the Mediterranean coast, it was virtually impregnable and had even successfully beaten off Nebuchadnezzar. Alexander the Great, however, had been able to conquer it by building a long causeway out from the mainland to the island and bringing up his siege engines.

peace; because their country was nourished by the king's *country*.⁴⁹⁸ ²¹ And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. ²² And the people gave a shout, *saying*, *It is* the voice of a god, and not of a man. ²³ And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.⁴⁹⁹ ²⁴ But the word of God grew and multiplied. ²⁵ And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Chapter 13

*Barnabas and Saul Called as Missionaries*⁵⁰⁰

¹ Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets⁵⁰¹ and teachers;⁵⁰² as Barnabas,⁵⁰³ and Simeon⁵⁰⁴ that was called Niger,⁵⁰⁵ and Lucius of Cyrene,⁵⁰⁶ and Manaen,⁵⁰⁷

⁴⁹⁶ Sidon was Phoenicia's other chief city, lying about 22 miles (35 km) north of Tyre in what is now Lebanon.

⁴⁹⁷ τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ κοιτῶνος *ton epi tou koitōnos* the man in charge of the [king's] bedroom, which is what a chamberlain is. Note that a chamberlain is an exceptionally trusted official, as he has physical access to the king while the king is asleep.

⁴⁹⁸ IE much of their food supply came from Herod's territory.

⁴⁹⁹ Once again Luke shows a horrible death coming upon a wicked man. Cf. 1:17–19. The GR translated *gave up the ghost* by the KJV is ἐξέψυχεν *exepsuxen* lit. out-souled.

⁵⁰⁰ The focus of Acts now shifts permanently to Paul. Luke describes here four journeys undertaken by Paul, which are traditionally considered his four “missionary journeys,” even though he is a prisoner and not a missionary in the last one. The first and shortest journey occupies Acts 13 and 14.

⁵⁰¹ IE those with the gift of prophesy, Spirit-led leaders. Cf. 11:27.

⁵⁰² As with the prophets earlier in the verse, this may not refer to a specific priesthood office so much as some who had the spiritual gift (or responsibility) to teach others.

⁵⁰³ Presumably, Barnabas is still functioning as the head of the Church in Antioch, as his name is mentioned first.

⁵⁰⁴ An alternate form of the name better known to us as Simon. Simeon Niger is otherwise unknown.

⁵⁰⁵ *Niger* is Latin for *Black* (hence terms like the obsolete *Negro* and place-names like *Nigeria*), prompting speculation that he was from a relatively dark-skinned background and might therefore be from North or even Sub-Saharan Africa. This, in turn, fuels speculation that he is the same as Simon of Cyrene, as Cyrene is a town in North Africa.

⁵⁰⁶ Lucius' name is the Latin form of Luke, naturally leading to the unlikely speculation in antiquity that they are the same person. There is a Lucius mentioned in Romans 16:21, who is likewise probably different from this one, who is otherwise unknown.

⁵⁰⁷ *Menaen* is a hellenized version of *Menachem*, which is Hebrew for *exhortation, comfort, consolation*. Menaen is otherwise unknown, but Josephus mentions a Menaen (*Ant.* 15.10.5) who had been given honors by Herod the Great. This may be the grandson of the earlier Menaen.

which had been brought up with⁵⁰⁸ Herod the tetrarch,⁵⁰⁹ and Saul.² As they ministered⁵¹⁰ to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.³ And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them,⁵¹¹ they sent *them* away.⁵¹²

Barnabas and Saul on Cyprus

⁴ So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia;⁵¹³ and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.^{514 5} And when they were at Salamis,⁵¹⁵ they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews:⁵¹⁶ and they had also John⁵¹⁷ to *their* minister.^{518 6} And when they

⁵⁰⁸ Ἡρώδου τοῦ τετραάρχου σύντροφος *Herōdou tou tetraarchou suntrophos* someone raised with Herod the Tetrarch. The word σύντροφος *suntrophos* also has the meaning *courtier* or *intimate friend* in specialized contexts, but is unlikely to have that precise nuance here.

⁵⁰⁹ IE Herod Antipas. Menaen is thus an aristocratic Jew, or at least moves in aristocratic circles. Luke may be deliberately attempting to show the broad ethnic and social nature of the early Christian community: a Cypriot Levite, a dark-skinned North African, a Jewish aristocrat, and a Pharisee intellectual are included in his list.

⁵¹⁰ λειτουργούντων *leitourgountōn* as they worshipped. The GR word (from which we derive the English *liturgy*) originally meant *to perform public service*, and later took on the meaning *to officiate in religious ceremonies*. Cf. D&C 137, which was received during the ceremony of washing feet.

⁵¹¹ As in 6:6, Luke refers to a generic laying on of hands without providing the modern nuance as to precisely what was involved. This is likely the equivalent of the modern setting apart to serve as a missionary.

⁵¹² Again, modern communications allows more centralized control of missionary work than was possible in the first century. Some other Christian churches, however, still follow this sort of model, where missionary work is done on the initiative of local congregations. The GR for *sent them away* is ἀπέλυσαν *apehusan* lit. released [them], let [them] go.

⁵¹³ Antioch's port city. It was founded in 301 BC by Seleucus I Nicator, one of Alexander the Great's generals who fought for supremacy after his death. There are few natural harbors in the Eastern Mediterranean, and this was not one of them. It was located sixteen miles (25 km) west of Antioch on of the mouth of the Orontes, on which Antioch was found.

⁵¹⁴ See 4:36n. They begin their missionary journey in Barnabas' homeland.

⁵¹⁵ The chief city on the eastern end of Cyprus.

⁵¹⁶ This was Paul's consistent pattern in all of his preaching: first, to preach to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles.

⁵¹⁷ That is John Mark.

⁵¹⁸ ὑπηρέτην *hupēretēn* servant. John Mark was possibly not present as a fellow missionary, but as an underling who cared for the physical needs of Barnabas and Paul. More likely, however, he had some role as a subsidiary preacher, one of the "ministers of the word" (cf. Luke 1:2, a translation of ὑπηρετάι τοῦ λόγου *hupēretai... tou logou*). There has been some speculation that John Mark, who traditionally was either a close associate of Peter or even himself a follower of Jesus during Jesus' mortal ministry, was present to provide a "living witness" to the preaching of Barnabas and Paul.

had gone through the isle unto Paphos,⁵¹⁹ they found a certain sorcerer,⁵²⁰ a false prophet,⁵²¹ a Jew,⁵²² whose name was Barjesus:⁵²³ ⁷ Which was with the deputy⁵²⁴ of the country, Sergius Paulus,⁵²⁵ a prudent⁵²⁶ man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. ⁸ But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation)⁵²⁷ withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. ⁹ Then Saul, (who also is called Paul⁵²⁸,) filled with the

⁵¹⁹ Paphos—strictly speaking, Paphos Augusta, ten miles (15 km) away from the older native Paphos—was on the southwest coast of Cyprus and the seat of the Roman governor. It was about 110 miles (175 km) from Salamis. The older Paphos was associated with the worship of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of beauty and physical love, who supposedly was born from the sea foam on the coast near the town.

⁵²⁰ μάγον *magon* magus. The word is the root of the English *magic* and *magician*. It originally was a technical term referring to a Zoroastrian priest, but later acquired the meanings *wizard* and even *imposter*.

⁵²¹ ψευδοπροφήτην *pseudoprophētēn*, which Luke is probably using (like magus) in an extended sense. Barjesus is not likely to be pretending to be a prophet of the God of Israel, but more generally a man of supernatural power.

⁵²² This rather surprising detail simply goes to show that the ancient Jews could be as unexpectedly a diverse lot as modern Mormons.

⁵²³ Aramaic for *son of Joshua/Jesus*. Luke does not make a point of this, so the contrast between a false “son of Jesus” on the one hand and Jesus’ true spiritual son on the other may not be intentional.

⁵²⁴ ἀνθυπάτω *anthupatō* proconsul. Luke uses the correct title for the governor of a senatorial province, one governed by a member of the senatorial class rather than a representative of the Emperor. Senatorial provinces were in more secure and less strategic provinces, where an occupying army was unnecessary. The chief magistrates of the Roman Republic had been the consuls, two of whom were appointed annually to rule jointly. Proconsuls were magistrates appointed to fulfill the consuls’ responsibilities in an area that they could not personally handle, such as a governorship or the command of an army. One typically served as a proconsul after achieving the consulship itself. The early Empire kept the forms of the Republic as much as possible while changing their meaning; consulships, proconsulships, and governorships (in senatorial provinces) were offered to the senatorial class as a means of giving them empty honors while keeping them from getting any real power that could threaten the Emperor.

⁵²⁵ This may be the same as the L. Sergius Paulus mentioned as a curator of the banks and channel of the Tiber by an inscription dating from the reign of Claudius. The Sergius Paulus mentioned here was proconsul in Cyprus from AD 46–48.

⁵²⁶ συνετῶ *sunetō* intelligent, sagacious. It is translated in Latin by *prudens*, hence the KJV rendering.

⁵²⁷ It is not clear how Luke intends Ἐλύμας *Elumas* to be a translation for either *Barjesus* or *magician*. The actual meaning of Elymas and, indeed, the language it comes from, is unknown.

⁵²⁸ Luke’s first use of Paul’s Roman name. Note that Luke never calls him “Saul” after this verse, except when Paul recounts his conversion and quotes the words spoken to him by Jesus; the change in name seems to be symbolic both of a shift in focus from a predominantly Jewish one to a largely Gentile one as well as a change in leadership from Barnabas to Paul.

Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,¹⁰ And said, O full of all subtilty⁵²⁹ and all mischief,⁵³⁰ *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert⁵³¹ the right ways of the Lord?⁵³² ¹¹ And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.⁵³³ And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.¹² Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed,⁵³⁴ being astonished⁵³⁵ at the doctrine⁵³⁶ of the Lord.⁵³⁷ ¹³ Now when Paul and his company⁵³⁸ loosed⁵³⁹ from Paphos, they came to Perga⁵⁴⁰ in Pamphylia:⁵⁴¹ and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.⁵⁴²

(Paul in his epistles never refers to himself as Saul; if we didn't have Luke's evidence, we would be unaware that he had any other name.) It would appear to be coincidence that Paul and Sergius Paulus bear the same Roman *cognomen*. We know that Paul was born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28), and as such probably bore a Roman name his whole life. One commonly chose a Roman name that was similar to one's Jewish name, and the Saul/Paul pair would fit the bill nicely.

⁵²⁹ δόλου *dolou* cunning, treachery. The root meaning of the word is *bait [for fish]*.

⁵³⁰ ῥαδιουργίας *radiourgias* wickedness, fraud. Phillips translates the whole phrase, "you monster of trickery and evil," and Fitzmyer, "you shyster and thoroughgoing fraud."

⁵³¹ διαστρέφων *diastrephōn* lit. turn aside, hence *distort, pervert*. (*Pervert* is a fairly literal Latin rendering of the GR word.)

⁵³² This goes back to Luke's characterization of Elymas as a "false prophet." By opposing God's true messengers and using magic to manipulate the supernatural, Elymas is misrepresenting the divine to Sergius Paulus and therefore perverting God's right way.

⁵³³ One assumes that the temporary nature of Elymas punishment is meant to help bring him to repentance, as was the case with Paul himself.

⁵³⁴ One presumes that he was baptized and became a member of the Church, although Luke does not explicitly say this. On the other hand, the cost of conversion would have been high indeed for one in the upper classes, and most especially one pursuing the most honorable career path available to a Roman, and Sergius Paulus may well have believed but not been baptized.

⁵³⁵ ἐκπλησσομένος *ekplēssomenos* lit. driven away [from one's senses], hence *astonished, amazed*.

⁵³⁶ διδαχῇ *didachē* teaching.

⁵³⁷ This could either mean *teaching about the Lord* by Paul, or *what the Lord teaches* through Paul.

⁵³⁸ οἱ περὶ Παῦλον *hoi peri Paulon* lit. those around Paul. Note that Luke is now treating Paul, not Barnabas, as the head of the mission.

⁵³⁹ ἀναχθέντες *anachthentes* set sail.

⁵⁴⁰ A river port near the central south coast of Asia Minor. They would likely not have sailed directly from Paphos to Perga, but would probably have changed from a sea-going vessel to a river boat in Attalia, downriver from Perga.

⁵⁴¹ See 2:10n.

⁵⁴² John Mark seems to have abandoned the mission; certainly when the prospect of his accompanying Paul and Barnabas again comes up, Paul is unwilling to take him on the basis of his desertion (15:36–37).

Barnabas and Paul in Asia Minor

¹⁴ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch⁵⁴³ in Pisidia,⁵⁴⁴ and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. ¹⁵ And after the reading of the law and the prophets⁵⁴⁵ the rulers of the synagogue⁵⁴⁶ sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and* brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. ¹⁶ Then Paul stood up,⁵⁴⁷ and beckoning with *his* hand said,⁵⁴⁸ Men of Israel, and ye that fear God,⁵⁴⁹ give audience. ¹⁷ The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. ¹⁸ And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners⁵⁵⁰ in the wilderness. ¹⁹ And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. ²⁰ And after that he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years,⁵⁵¹ until Samuel the prophet. ²¹ And

⁵⁴³ There were a number of cities named for Alexander the Great, his generals, and their descendants. Most of the kings of the Seleucid Empire were named Seleucus or Antiochus, and so there were cities called Antioch scattered throughout the Levant, the most famous of which was the capital of Syria. This was one of two Antiochs within Phrygia, a region in west-central Asia Minor and part of the province of Asia; the other lay somewhat to the west on the Meander river.

⁵⁴⁴ A region between Pamphilia and Phrygia, part of the province of Galatia. (Galatia covered the center of Asia Minor. It had been overrun by Gauls, whom we would now consider Celtic tribesmen, beginning in the third century BC; hence the name.) The Pisidian Antioch was not strictly speaking within Pisidia, but was close to the border. It was called “Pisidian” to distinguish it from the other Antioch in Phrygia.

⁵⁴⁵ The OT canon was still in the process of formation in the first century. The Law and the Prophets are two of the three divisions into which Jews now divide their Scriptures (the Writings is the third). As reckoned now, the Law consists of Genesis through Deuteronomy, and the Prophets of Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea through Malachi. Note particularly the exclusion of Daniel, considered one of the Major Prophets by Christians but placed among the Writings by Jews, possibly because of its relatively late date. That a reading from the Law and the Prophets was part of Jewish Sabbath synagogue worship is confirmed by external sources.

⁵⁴⁶ Synagogues could have one president or more than one. Normally, a sermon would follow the reading; here the ordinary procedure is changed to invite the visitors to speak.

⁵⁴⁷ Greek practice would be to stand and gesture for silence and attention. Cf. Luke 4:16 sqq. where Christ does the reading and then sits to preach a sermon.

⁵⁴⁸ This is the first of Paul’s sermons recounted in Luke. Paul will be the main speech-maker for the rest of the book.

⁵⁴⁹ This would appear to mean “God-fearers,” that is, Gentiles who were attracted to Judaism but would not commit themselves to be circumcised.

⁵⁵⁰ ἐτροποφόρησεν *etropophorēsen* put up with [them].

⁵⁵¹ This chronological notice is variously placed. It could be put before καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα *kai meta tauta* (and after this) and taken as the end of v. 19 (and is by EG the RSV), thus conforming to the traditional chronology, which has Israel in Egypt for four hundred years, plus forty years for the Exodus and ten for the Conquest of Canaan. The KJV follows a reading that places καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα *kai meta tauta* first and makes the whole phrase part of v. 20, indicating

afterward they desired a king.⁵⁵² and God gave unto them Saul⁵⁵³ the son of Cis,⁵⁵⁴ a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.⁵⁵⁵ ²² And when he had removed him,⁵⁵⁶ he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, **I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart,**⁵⁵⁷ which shall fulfil all my will.⁵⁵⁸ ²³ Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.⁵⁵⁹ ²⁴ When John⁵⁶⁰ had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.²⁵ And as John fulfilled his course,⁵⁶¹ he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But,

about 450 years for the period of the judges. This figure is reasonably consistent with the Book of Judges if one assumes that the various judges reigned sequentially. Modern scholars generally believe that the judges ruled Israel for only one or two hundred years, that few (if any) of them actually ruled all of Israel, and that their administrations were not sequential.

⁵⁵² 1 Samuel 8 contains Israel's request for a king, and Samuel's (and God's) response. The OT has a somewhat negative view of monarchy as an institution, although not so negative as the Book of Mormon, where there are numerous refusals on the part of God's chosen leaders to institute monarchy and where monarchy is actually abolished for a period of time.

⁵⁵³ Paul's namesake and fellow Benjaminite. Saul started out his reign well, but was unstable and eventually given to bouts of violent depression. His is one of the most tragic stories found in the OT.

⁵⁵⁴ Usually spelled *Kish*. (The *sh* sound found in Hebrew and English is missing in GR.)

⁵⁵⁵ The chronological information on the reign of Saul found in 1 Samuel is very confused. That his reign occupied the conveniently round number of forty years (one generation by Jewish reckoning) is also found in Josephus, but is considered too long by modern scholars.

⁵⁵⁶ Saul was formally deposed from his throne long before he died and ceased to occupy it. David, however, refused to fight Saul and preferred to wait for Saul's death before asserting his claim to be king. Even then, he was not crowned king of all Israel until all Israel asked him to be their king.

⁵⁵⁷ A conflation of Ps. 89:20 (LXX) and 1 Sam. 13:14.

⁵⁵⁸ This last phrase echoes Isa. 44:28 (LXX), where God speaks of the Persian King Cyrus the Great, who freed the Jews from the Babylonian Exile.

⁵⁵⁹ Paul's point here is that David—always the type of the ideal king in Jewish thought, despite his adultery with Bathseba and murder of her husband Uriah—is specifically a type of the Messiah. David (through God's power) freed Israel from its temporal enemies, and Jesus (through God's power) freed Israel from its spiritual enemies, sin and death.

⁵⁶⁰ Paul never mentions John the Baptist in his epistles, but that does not mean he never mentioned John in his preaching. John's ministry is attested in all four Gospels, with sufficient nuances and variations that there is no reason to doubt a widespread tradition regarding John in the primitive Church. (The overall historicity of John and his ministry is also attested by the Book of Mormon, D&C, and Pearl of Great Price.) Luke will also provide evidence later that an independent "church" of John the Baptist existed at least for a time, completely independent of Christianity (EG 18:24–25). At the same time, the sermon here closely parallels information in Luke's material on John, which is itself more extensive than is found in any of the other Gospels. It may be that the mention of John here is an aspect of Lucan, and not Pauline, composition or that Luke is expanding a somewhat briefer notice in his sources.

⁵⁶¹ ἐπλήρου... τὸν δρόμον *eplērou...ton dromon* finished his course/race. John is running ahead as Christ's herald.

behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes⁵⁶² of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose.^{563 26} Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God,⁵⁶⁴ to you is the word of this salvation sent.²⁷ For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.²⁸ And though they found no cause of death *in him*,⁵⁶⁵ yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.²⁹ And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.³⁰ But God raised him from the dead.^{566 31} And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.³² And we declare unto you glad tidings,⁵⁶⁷ how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,^{568 33} God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm,⁵⁶⁹ **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.**^{570 34} And as concerning that⁵⁷¹ he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption,⁵⁷² he said on this wise,⁵⁷³ I will give you the sure mercies of David.³⁵ Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*,

⁵⁶² ὑπόδημα *hupodēma* sandals.

⁵⁶³ λῦσαι *lusai* untie.

⁵⁶⁴ Another reference to believing Gentiles. Paul is never shown as hesitating over the salvation of Gentiles.

⁵⁶⁵ This statement should be taken as referring to *valid* causes to execute Christ; the Jewish leaders were themselves satisfied with their reasons for having him killed.

⁵⁶⁶ As usual, Luke attributes Christ's resurrection to God, not to Jesus himself. The focus here, however is the contrast (typical of Luke) between what man is proposing and God disposing.

⁵⁶⁷ The GR for *we declare...glad tidings* is εὐαγγελιζόμεθα *euangelizometha* we are announcing good. The word is the equivalent of the Anglo-Saxon *gospel* and forms the root for words such as *evangelist* (as used by non-Mormons).

⁵⁶⁸ IE that God would raise a Savior for Israel from David's seed (v. 23).

⁵⁶⁹ Various GR MSS of Acts have different notices for the number of the psalm, and there are some variations in the numbering of the psalms in various psalters. It is not known when the standard arrangement of the Book of Psalms was settled and it may possibly postdate Luke. Nonetheless, the quotation is indeed from what is now considered the second psalm. Note that this is the only place in the NT where a quotation is given an attribution more exact than the book in which it is found.

⁵⁷⁰ Ps. 2:7. This is a royal psalm, and the basic meaning of the verse is that the king, as anointed by God, is adopted as his son as a metaphorical way of expressing the fact that the king is God's temporal representative to his people. Naturally, as Jesus is Israel's spiritual King and *the* Anointed One, the psalm also has an extended application to him.

⁵⁷¹ ὅτι *hoti*, which usually means *because* or is used to indicate indirect quotations or some other logical relationship to what has gone before. Various translators have wrestled with how to make this intelligible English. AB—F has *as proof that* and the NRSV *as to his raising him from the dead*. Paul is about to argue that Jesus' resurrection fulfils prophecy and therefore really happened.

⁵⁷² διαφθοράν *diaphrhoran* destruction, ruin, blight, decay. Paul's argument here requires the word to be taken in the sense of the physical decay of the body after it is buried.

⁵⁷³ οὕτως εἶρηκεν ὅτι *houtōs eirēken hoti* he spoke thus, that.

Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.^{574 36} For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep,⁵⁷⁵ and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.^{576 37} But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.⁵⁷⁷

³⁸ Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: ³⁹ And by him all that believe are justified⁵⁷⁸ from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰ Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;⁵⁷⁹

⁴¹ **Behold, ye despisers,
and wonder, and perish:
for I work a work in your days,
a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.**⁵⁸⁰

⁴² And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.^{581 43} Now when the congregation was broken up,⁵⁸² many of the Jews and religious proselytes⁵⁸³ followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded⁵⁸⁴ them to continue⁵⁸⁵ in the grace of God.

⁵⁷⁴ Ps. 16:10. Cf. 2:25–32, where Luke attributes this same general argument to Peter but develops it at greater length.

⁵⁷⁵ ἐκοιμήθη *ekoimēthē* fell asleep.

⁵⁷⁶ IE his body decayed.

⁵⁷⁷ IE Christ's body did not decay, as it was in the tomb only about thirty-six hours (from pre-sunset on Friday to pre-dawn on Sunday).

⁵⁷⁸ δικαιούται *dikaiontai* made just, made righteous. This is a key term in Paul's theology of grace: it is *God* that cleanses us from sin and makes us righteous, not us. The modern grace vs. works debate is not directly addressed in the NT, but Paul and other NT authors certainly took it for granted that our actions are not irrelevant in this process.

⁵⁷⁹ IE the book of the minor prophets. See 7:42n.

⁵⁸⁰ Hab. 1:5.

⁵⁸¹ Better GR MSS have

ἐξιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν παρεκάλουν εἰς τὸ μεταξὺ σάββατον λαληθῆναι αὐτοῖς τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα *exiontōn de autōn parekaloun eis to metaxu sabbaton lalēthēnai autois ta rhēmata tauta* As they were going out, they urged them to speak about these things again the next Sabbath. This is a somewhat awkward sentence and is found in various forms in different MSS, trying to clarify what it leaves vague. The TR follows a tradition that it was the Gentiles who wanted to hear more, probably on the assumption that they were, after all, the ones who responded to Paul in general.

⁵⁸² λυθείσης δὲ τῆς συναγωγῆς *lutheisēs de tēs sunagōgēs* the synagogue being dispersed. The root sense of the verb is *to loose*.

⁵⁸³ τῶν σεβομένων προσηλύτων *tōn sebomenōn prosēlutōn* pious/worshipping proselytes.

⁵⁸⁴ ἔπειθον *epeithon* persuade, but here not necessarily implying success. A better translation might be *tried to persuade* or *urged*.

⁵⁸⁵ προσμένειν *prosmenein* to remain. By being active in Judaism, these Jews and Gentile converts had already taken the first steps in God's grace; Paul and Barnabas urge them to continue forward to baptism.

⁴⁴ And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.
⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold,⁵⁸⁶ and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you,⁵⁸⁷ and judge yourselves unworthy⁵⁸⁸ of everlasting⁵⁸⁹ life, lo,⁵⁹⁰ we turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*,

I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles,

that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.⁵⁹¹

⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.⁵⁹² ⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was published⁵⁹³ throughout all the region. ⁵⁰ But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable⁵⁹⁴ women, and the chief men⁵⁹⁵ of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.⁵⁹⁶ ⁵¹ But they shook off the dust of their feet against them,⁵⁹⁷ and came unto Iconium.⁵⁹⁸ ⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy,⁵⁹⁹ and with the Holy Ghost.

⁵⁸⁶ παρρησιασάμενοι *parrēsasamenoi* were bold, emboldened. *To wax* has an archaic meaning *to grow*, hence the moon waxes and wanes as it gets larger and smaller in the sky.

⁵⁸⁷ ἀποθεῖσθε *apōtheisthe* set it aside, set it away from.

⁵⁸⁸ οὐκ ἀξιόους κρίνετε ἑαυτοὺς *ouk axios krinete heautous* lit. do not judge yourselves worthy or not worthy do you judge yourselves. The Jews are assenting to their condemnation by rejecting Paul's message.

⁵⁸⁹ αἰωνίου *aiōniou* eternal.

⁵⁹⁰ ἴδου *idou* behold. *Behold* and *lo* are synonymous, both meaning *look!*

⁵⁹¹ Isaiah 49:6.

⁵⁹² JST "as many as believed were ordained unto eternal life," avoiding an implication of predestination.

⁵⁹³ διεφέρετο *diephereto* carried through, borne.

⁵⁹⁴ εὐσχήμονας *euschēmonas* lit. graceful, elegant. The word may here merely mean *rich*, but it does carry a nuance of society's best.

⁵⁹⁵ τοὺς πρῶτους *tous prōtous* lit. first, most prominent. Their Jewish enemies are attacking Paul and Barnabas by getting the upper crust to turn against them

⁵⁹⁶ ὁρίων *oriōn* borders.

⁵⁹⁷ Cf. Luke 9:5. The act is symbolic of wanting nothing to do with a town (Pilate's washing of his hands of Jesus' crucifixion is a similar gesture).

⁵⁹⁸ Iconium (modern Konya) is in south-central Asia Minor on an oasis near the edge of the central Anatolian plain. Ancient geographies place it either in Phrygia or neighboring Lycaonia, and the shifting of boundaries over time probably placed it in each at various periods, but ethnically it belonged to Phrygia. It was included in the Roman province of Galatia.

⁵⁹⁹ Both because they have been considered worthy to be persecuted as Christians, and because of the Holy Ghost that fills them.

Chapter 14

*Paul and Barnabas in Iconium*⁶⁰⁰

¹ AND it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. ² But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against⁶⁰¹ the brethren.⁶⁰² ³ Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which⁶⁰³ gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders⁶⁰⁴ to be done by their hands. ⁴ But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. ⁵ And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use *them* despitefully,⁶⁰⁵ and to stone them, ⁶ They were ware⁶⁰⁶ of *it*, and fled unto Lystra⁶⁰⁷ and Derbe,⁶⁰⁸ cities of Lycaonia,⁶⁰⁹ and unto the region that lieth round about: ⁷ And there they preached the gospel.

⁶⁰⁰ In contrast with the account of the mission in the Pisidian Antioch, the mission in Iconium is only briefly summarized. It may be that Luke feels he has set the overall pattern for Paul's preaching and need therefore only summarize as a rule, or it may be that the material available to him on Iconium was less detailed.

⁶⁰¹ ἐκάκωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς *ekakōsan tas psuchas* lit. made their souls evil [against], turned [them] against.

⁶⁰² Possibly just Paul and Barnabas, or perhaps the believers in Iconium in general.

⁶⁰³ IE who. The antecedent is "the Lord."

⁶⁰⁴ Cf. 5:12. As with Peter earlier, the miracles are an important part of the apostles' *bona fides*.

⁶⁰⁵ ὑβρίσαι *hubrisai* to abuse, maltreat, outrage. The word carries a sense of more than mere opposition or even violence, but verges on the commission of an atrocity. The verb's root is ὕβρις *hubris*, *overweening pride, insolence*. In the Greek myths, mortals who infringe upon the prerogative of the gods or who insult them are guilty of hubris (and invariably punished). An OT parallel would be the building of the Tower of Babel, and in the Book of Mormon, when the Nephites near the end of their history and are openly defiant towards God, they are guilty of hubris.

⁶⁰⁶ IE became aware.

⁶⁰⁷ A Roman colony about 25 miles (40 km) south-southwest of Iconium. The Romans established settlements of citizens—usually retired soldiers—in areas they conquered as a means of helping keep the region secure. The site of Lystra was discovered only in the late 19th century.

⁶⁰⁸ A town near the modern Zosta; its name may be derived from the native word for *juniper*. Derbe is, in fact, over sixty miles (96 km) from Lystra, and it may be that Luke is telescoping the overall ministry in Lycaonia in this summary (see v. 20, where Paul leaves Lystra for Derbe).

⁶⁰⁹ A district covering a plateau towards the southern end of the province of Galatia. Lycaonia lay north of Pamphylia and Cilicia and east of Pisidia.

A Healing in Lystra

⁸ And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent⁶¹⁰ in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: ⁹ The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, ¹⁰ Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.^{611 11} And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia,⁶¹² The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.^{613 12} And they called Barnabas, Jupiter,⁶¹⁴ and Paul, Mercurius,⁶¹⁵ because he was the chief speaker.^{616 13} Then the priest of Jupiter,⁶¹⁷ which was before their city,⁶¹⁸ brought

⁶¹⁰ ἀδύνατος *adunatos* lit. incapable, powerless. *Impotent* is the Latin-derived word meaning the same thing.

⁶¹¹ The parallels to the healing of a lame man by Peter in ch. 3 are unmistakable and doubtless deliberate. Paul's authority as God's representative is as certain as Peter's.

⁶¹² Asia Minor was a patchwork of different ethnic groups each with their own native religion and native language. Greek was the *lingua franca* of the entire eastern Mediterranean, and doubtless the language Paul used in preaching. The fact that Lystra was a Roman colony means that many of the inhabitants would have at least some Latin, as well. The exact nature of the Lycaonian dialect is unknown; it may be descended from Hittite.

⁶¹³ The Greek myths have several accounts of the gods walking among mortals in disguise. There is, in particular, a myth retold in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* of a time when Jupiter and Mercury visited the Phrygian couple Philemon and Baucis. The story may have been a general folktale in the region.

⁶¹⁴ Δία *Dia* Zeus. (The declension of the name Ζεύς *Zeus* is irregular.) Jupiter is the Roman god identified with the Greek god Zeus. Note that *Jupiter* is *not* the "Roman name" for Zeus. The ancients identified their gods with those of different regions, even though the two might have very different attributes—a significant example will be seen in ch. 19. (Here, for example, the local chief of the gods has been identified with and is called Zeus.) Even though the Romans adopted many of the Greek stories about Zeus and attributed them to Jupiter, the Roman perception of their god was rather different than the Greek one of theirs. Until the last century, the dominance of Latin in Western classical learning meant that it was standard practice to translate Ζεύς *Zeus* by *Jupiter*, even when translating Greek texts, as here. In modern times, many Christians are content to refer generically to "God" as the God of the Bible, even though Jews and the various Christian factions have very different ideas as to what the God of the Bible is like. Christian missionaries in proselyting distant areas have also tended to identify the local deities with the God of the Bible. Note, for example, the periodic identification of the vague, semi-deity *tien* of Chinese thought with the Christian God. Compare Ammon's identification of King Lamoni's "Great Spirit" with God in Alma 18:26–28.

⁶¹⁵ Ἑρμῆν *Hermēn* Hermes. (The name of the Roman equivalent is usually spelled *Mercury*.)

⁶¹⁶ Hermes was, among other things, the messenger of the gods; the fact that Paul is doing most of the talking makes it natural that he should be identified with Hermes. One presumes that Barnabas had a dignified appearance and bearing, from the identification of him with Zeus.

⁶¹⁷ The complexities of polytheism as practiced in the ancient world mean that this might have been a priest of the Roman Jupiter, or of the Greek Zeus, or of the local god identified with

oxen and garlands⁶¹⁹ unto the gates,⁶²⁰ and would have done sacrifice with the people.¹⁴ *Which* when the apostles,⁶²¹ Barnabas and Paul, heard *of*,⁶²² they rent their clothes,⁶²³ and ran in among the people, crying out,¹⁵ And saying,⁶²⁴ Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities⁶²⁵ unto the living God, **which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.**^{626 16} Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.¹⁷ Nevertheless he left not himself without witness,⁶²⁷ in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.¹⁸ And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.⁶²⁸

*Paul and Barnabas Return to Antioch*⁶²⁹

¹⁹ And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew⁶³⁰ *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead.^{631 20}

both, or any combination of the three. The most likely possibility is that he was a priest of the local god, identified with Zeus and Jupiter.

⁶¹⁸ πρὸ τῆς πόλεως *pro tēs poleōs* in front of the city. Pagan temples would often be outside the city walls.

⁶¹⁹ ταύρους καὶ στέμματα *taurous kai stemmata* bulls and garlands/wreaths. The GR ταῦρος *tauros* is best known to us as the name of one of the signs of the zodiac. Bulls were common in pagan sacrifices, and the flowers are to make the sacrifice more pleasant to the gods.

⁶²⁰ Either the gates of the city or the gates of the temple precinct.

⁶²¹ Luke refers to both Barnabas and Paul here as apostles. As elsewhere, it is not clear whether by this he means that they were numbered among the Twelve, or received the priesthood office of Apostle, or were merely acting as emissaries (the root meaning of the GR ἀπόστολος *apostolos*).

⁶²² The JST changes this to the much smoother, “When the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard this,”

⁶²³ A sign of horror.

⁶²⁴ Paul and Barnabas’ speech in vv. 15–17, although only three verses long, is frequently counted among the speeches of Acts. Certainly it shows the sort of sensitivity to audience that Luke depicts Paul as elsewhere displaying. The first step in preaching Christ to these pagans who know nothing at all of God is to turn them from their idols; hence there is no explicit reference to Christ in the speech.

⁶²⁵ τούτων τῶν ματαίων *toutōn tōn mataiōn* these foolish/empty things.

⁶²⁶ Exo. 20:11.

⁶²⁷ What follows is a line of argument that persists to the modern day and is a variety of what is referred to as “natural theology”: the existence of a Creator is demonstrated by that which he has created.

⁶²⁸ μόλις κατέπαυσαν τοὺς ὄχλους τοῦ μὴ θύειν αὐτοῖς *molis katepausan tous echlous tou mē thuein autois* they with difficulty kept the crowd from sacrificing to them. Like most human beings, the Lystrans are loathe to stop doing what they expect to do, even when told clearly that they should not do it.

⁶²⁹ Luke now briefly summarizes the return stage of the missionary tour, as Paul and Barnabas retrace their steps back to the Syrian Antioch.

Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city:⁶³² and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.²¹ And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,²² Confirming⁶³³ the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.⁶³⁴ ²³ And when they had ordained them⁶³⁵ elders in every church,⁶³⁶ and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.²⁴ And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.⁶³⁷ ²⁵ And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:⁶³⁸ ²⁶ And thence sailed to Antioch,⁶³⁹ from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.²⁷ And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed⁶⁴⁰ all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.²⁸ And there they abode long time with the disciples.

⁶³⁰ ἔσυρον *esuron* dragged.

⁶³¹ No doubt the Lystrans were embarrassed at having attempted to sacrifice to humans as if they were gods, and so were more easily persuaded towards violent retaliation. Note that stoning is a typically Jewish punishment. Luke does not record the presence of Jews in Lystra, although there may well have been some. Nonetheless, Paul's main enemies are those from the towns where he has already preached, who have followed him and are attempting to do away with him for once and for all.

⁶³² κυκλωσάντων δὲ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτὸν ἀναστὰς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν *kuklōsantōn de tōn mathētōn auton anastas eisēlthen eis tēn polin* when/since the disciples formed a circle around him, he standing up, went into the city. The sentence begins with a construction called a genitive absolute, which is frequently used in GR to indicate a temporal or causal relationship between two events. In this case, it is possible to read the sentence *because the disciples formed a circle around him*, implying that their faith worked a miracle and brought him back to life. The more likely meaning, however, is purely temporal (since that is how Luke usually uses the construction): Paul was merely left for dead and not actually killed, and could get up on his own without any miraculous intervention. Note that by using “as,” which can imply either a temporal or a causal connection in English, the KJV preserves the ambiguity.

⁶³³ ἐπιστηρίζοντες *epistērizontes* strengthening. This must not be taken as referring to the LDS ordinance of confirmation.

⁶³⁴ GR lacks formal markers for direct quotation like our quotation marks. This phrase is best taken as a direct quote introduced by the *that*, something like, “exhorting them to continue in the faith, and [saying], ‘We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.’”

⁶³⁵ αὐτοῖς *autois* for them, that is, the disciples.

⁶³⁶ We see here a very primitive stage for organizational development in the early Church, where elders lead the local congregations and not bishops. As with the modern Church, the full organization took some time to develop.

⁶³⁷ See 2:10n.

⁶³⁸ Downriver from Perga on the Mediterranean. See 14:13n.

⁶³⁹ Note that they do not make a follow-up visit to Cyprus.

⁶⁴⁰ ἀνήγγελλον *anēngellon* reported.

Chapter 15

Controversy over Circumcision

¹ AND certain men which came down from Judæa⁶⁴¹ taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.⁶⁴² ² When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension⁶⁴³ and disputation⁶⁴⁴ with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders⁶⁴⁵ about this question. ³ And being brought on their way by the church, they⁶⁴⁶ passed through Phenice⁶⁴⁷ and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. ⁴ And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and

⁶⁴¹ Nowhere is the problem of reconciling Luke's biographical information about Paul and what Paul himself says in his epistles more difficult than in dealing with Paul's visits to Jerusalem. It is generally accepted that Paul in Galatians 2 is giving his own account of the events Luke is narrating here, but that identification is by no means universal. Even if the two accounts are describing the same visit, they differ in details. Thus, in Galatians 2:12, Paul says that these brethren were specifically sent by James, whereas Luke implies that they had no formal commission. Paul also says that Peter backpedaled in the face of their opposition to his offering Gentiles full fellowship and that he, Paul, had to rebuke Peter for doing so. In this case, it is most probable that, unlike Paul, however, Luke is deliberately trying to downplay the level of conflict within the Church hierarchy. He therefore omits the fact that James sent these men, that they were likely official or semi-official representatives of the congregation in Jerusalem, and that Peter was in Antioch at the time and caved in to their demands.

⁶⁴² It is interesting that circumcision is linked with Moses, both here and in v. 5. Circumcision is actually a sign of the Abrahamic covenant and is distinct from the Law of Moses. Moroni 8:8 reveals that circumcision is no longer required for religious reasons; however, many LDS continue to circumcise male infants in conformity with the usual practice of the regions where they live.

⁶⁴³ ΣΤΑΣΕΩΣ *staseōs* in-fighting. The root meaning of the word is *standing still* (as the English *stasis* implies). It came to mean *a group of people who stand together, a political party*, or even *a party formed for seditious purposes, a faction*. From this, we get the meaning used here, *discord, sedition*. The word implies a very serious situation.

⁶⁴⁴ ΖΗΤΗΣΕΩΣ *zētēseōs* lit. an inquiry, debate.

⁶⁴⁵ By "apostles" Luke presumably means the Twelve, and by "elders" the leaders of the local congregation in Jerusalem. We do not know enough about the organization of first century Christianity to speculate much beyond that. From a modern perspective, only the Twelve need be consulted, but that perspective has been reached only after a century-and-a-half of organizational development and leadership by the First Presidency and the Twelve (as well as some specific revelations in the D&C). Even within our own Church, the dynamics of consensus building and decision making have changed over time.

⁶⁴⁶ οἱ μὲν οὖν προπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας *hoi men oun propemphthentes hupo tēs ekklēsiās* So, those who were sent along by the church. The KJV is evidently taking the initial οἱ *hoi* as a pronoun (*they*) instead of as an article. This is a possible reading, but it seems incorrect here.

⁶⁴⁷ IE Phoenicia. See 11:19n.

of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.⁵ But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees⁶⁴⁸ which believed, saying,⁶⁴⁹ That it was needful⁶⁵⁰ to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.⁶⁵¹

*The Council of Jerusalem*⁶⁵²

⁶ And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. ⁷ And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice⁶⁵³ among us, ⁶⁵⁴ that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel,⁶⁵⁵ and believe. ⁸ And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us; ⁹ And put no difference

⁶⁴⁸ Ironically, Paul was himself a Pharisee. In the modern Church, the fact that many of the earliest converts came from a Congregationalist background had an impact in its first few years of history. Converts today can generally be guided in their understanding of the gospel either by the wards or branches they join, or by missionaries and leaders. The first generations of both the primitive and the modern Churches had to feel their way along at the first.

⁶⁴⁹ The standard text of Acts does not link the Pharisees in v. 7 with the men of v. 1. The Western text states that the two were the same.

⁶⁵⁰ δεῖ *dei* it must be. The verb expresses a strong sense of necessity or even inevitability (EG Luke 9:22, where it is used in a prediction of the Passion).

⁶⁵¹ That things must be done the way they have always been done is not an assumption made by ancient Pharisees alone. In the modern Church, there continue to be people who cannot understand why a policy or practice instituted by Joseph Smith or Brigham Young has been done away. This is particularly true since the rhetoric urging the Saints to institute a practice often implies (or explicitly states) an eternal aspect to it that is simply not present. Joseph Smith's letter to Nancy Rigdon on happiness addresses this issue (TPJS 255–257).

⁶⁵² The meeting of Church leaders in Jerusalem to resolve this conflict is usually referred to as the Council of Jerusalem. It has had enormous influence, as it set the scriptural precedent for the Ecumenical Councils that have been a significant part of the history of the development of the Catholic churches. In the modern Church, doctrinal and policy matters are no longer settled at general meetings of the Church (although this was the case earlier in our history and is still done by the former RLDS Church, the Community of Christ). Even so, discussion of the issues and reaching consensus are still tools used by Church leadership as an indispensable aid in determining God's will and achieving the common consent we are commanded to have. Nonetheless, there are a number of inconsistencies between Luke's account here and both information available elsewhere in Acts and in Paul's epistles. It is generally believed today that Luke has accidentally conflated two different controversies (over the legal obligations of Gentiles and relations between Gentile and Jewish Christians) and presented them as if they were resolved at the same time. Note that Luke's account of the Council is in the exact middle of his book; it is the climax of the process started in ch. 9–10 with the conversions of Paul and Cornelius, and, indeed, the climax of Luke's story in Acts.

⁶⁵³ ἐξελέξατο *exelexato* selected, chose, here something like *decided*.

⁶⁵⁴ Better GR MSS have ὑμῖν *humin* you, instead of ἡμῖν *hēmin* us.

⁶⁵⁵ One of only two uses of εὐαγγελίου *euangelion* gospel, in all of Luke/Acts. The other is in 20:24.

between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now therefore why tempt⁶⁵⁶ ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?⁶⁵⁷

¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.⁶⁵⁸

¹² Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to⁶⁵⁹ Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

¹³ And after they had held their peace,⁶⁶⁰ James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me: ¹⁴ Simeon⁶⁶¹ hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.⁶⁶² ¹⁵ And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

¹⁶ **After this I will return,**

and will build again the tabernacle⁶⁶³ of David, which is fallen down;

and I will build again the ruins thereof,

and I will set it up:

¹⁷ **That the residue of men might seek after the Lord,**

⁶⁵⁶ πειράζετε *peirazete* to put to the test, which is the original meaning of *tempt*. *Tempt*, however, has come to mean primarily *to entice to do evil*, which makes no sense when applied to God. As a general rule, putting God to the test consists of demanding a sign of God to prove that he means what he says he means—namely that he is extending salvation to the Gentiles without obligating them to keep the full Law. Here, the phrase almost carries the extended meaning of telling God what to do.

⁶⁵⁷ This verse appears to have anti-Semitic overtones that are actually not there. “Yoke” (GR ζυγὸν *zugon*) does not necessarily imply an intolerable burden—see Matt. 11:29–30, for example. Peter’s point is not that the Law was burdensome, but that as a matter of practical reality, people were not able to live up to its obligations. If God in his mercy is willing to make the path easier for someone, by all means let Him.

⁶⁵⁸ This is a rather Pauline touch: salvation does not come to the Jews by means of their keeping the Law, it comes by God’s grace. The argument here even echoes Paul in Romans. The bestowal of the Holy Ghost—which is a manifestation of divine grace—came *before* Cornelius and his household acted upon their faith, in contrast to the Jewish disciples who received the Holy Ghost only after a lifetime of keeping the Law. In our anxiety to avoid implying that we do not have to act in order to receive salvation, we must never forget that we receive God’s grace because of his love, not because it is a wage we have earned.

⁶⁵⁹ ἤκουον *ēkouon* listened to.

⁶⁶⁰ σιγήσαι *sigēsai* fell silent. This is the same verb at the beginning of v. 12.

⁶⁶¹ Not only does James not call Peter by his Greek name, he uses as Jewish a form of the name as is possible to use. This is, by the way, the last mention of Peter in all of Acts. (Note that since Peter is nowhere else called Simeon in the NT with the exception of 2 Peter 1:1—where there are some textual grounds for doubting the text should read “Simeon” instead of “Simon”—a minority of commentators believe that in the original account of the Council, James’ speech was referring not to Simon Peter but, perhaps, to Simeon Niger [13:1]).

⁶⁶² An allusion to Dt. 14:2, “The LORD hath chosen thee [Israel] to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth.” God has earlier chosen Israel to be his people, and now he is choosing among the Gentiles a people for his name.

⁶⁶³ σκηνήν *skēnēn* tent.

**and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,
saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.**⁶⁶⁴

¹⁸ Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.⁶⁶⁵ ¹⁹ Wherefore my sentence is,⁶⁶⁶ that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: ²⁰ But that we write unto them,⁶⁶⁷ that they abstain from pollutions of idols,⁶⁶⁸ and *from* fornication,⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁴ Amos 9:11–12. James’ quote is remarkable in that it follows the LXX, which is different from the Hebrew, and the interpretation which he gives the passage—that Gentiles would someday “seek after the Lord”—is at variance with the Hebrew phrasing. The JPS translation of the *Tanakh* renders Amos 9:11–12, “In that day, I will set up again the fallen booth of David; I will mend its breaches and set up its ruins anew. I will build it firm as in the days of old, So that they shall possess the rest of Edom/And all the nations once attached to My name/—declares the LORD who will bring this to pass.” That is, the Jews would rule again all the lands (including Edom) that had been ruled by David. The most likely explanation for James making such an unexpected use of an OT scripture is that it is Luke who is supplying the specific quotation. While Luke knows the LXX extremely well, he does not appear to have been intimately familiar with the Hebrew OT and may not have known that the verse here was translated incorrectly.

⁶⁶⁵ This last phrase is likely an allusion of Isaiah 45:21.

⁶⁶⁶ ἐγὼ κρίνω *egō krinō* I judge. Note that James explicitly uses the pronoun, adding emphasis. The KJV is using *sentence* in its judicial sense, that is, as a synonym for *judgment*.

⁶⁶⁷ What follows is referred to as the Apostles’ (or Apostolic or Jerusalem) Decree. It consists of a surprisingly short list of prohibitions: idolatry, adultery, and eating meat with blood. Not all the Ten Commandments are included (murder, for example, and theft). It is generally assumed that this list was influenced by the Holiness Code of Lev. 17–18, which is a part of the Law to be followed not only by Jews, but by the Gentiles who live among them. The other possible influence is Genesis 9, where God makes a covenant with Noah that could reasonably be imposed on all of Noah’s descendants, and not just the Jews. In any event, the Decree should not be taken as the entire set of commandments imposed upon Gentile converts (see v. 19), but as a minimal list enabling Gentiles to be a part of the same community as their Jewish neighbors who still kept the full Law. This unobvious rationale for the wording of the Decree caused medieval scribes considerable problems, with the result that there are numerous textual variations for the Apostolic Decree, some of which omit the prohibition against strangled meat, some of which omit the prohibition against sexual immorality. The Western text expands the Apostolic Decree to include an exhortation to live the Golden Rule (in its negative form), and by omitting the provision against meat from strangled animals implies that prohibition against “blood” is one against bloodshed, i.e., murder.

⁶⁶⁸ τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων *tōn alisgēmatōn tōn eidōlōn* contamination from idols. The phrasing is generally taken as referring to meat offered to idols (cf. the early Christian manual, the *Didache* 6:3). Paul discusses the issue of eating meat sacrificed to idols in 1 Cor. 8, but in such terms as would imply that he was unaware of the absolute ban imposed by the Apostles Decree. If Luke’s chronology of Paul’s ministry in Acts is at all accurate, Paul ministered in Corinth only after the Council of Jerusalem. This is one point of evidence adduced to show that Luke is here conflating two different Church meetings dealing with two different issues, and that the Apostles’ Decree was only issued later on.

and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.^{670 21} For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.^{671 22} Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas,⁶⁷² and Silas,⁶⁷³ chief men among the brethren.²³ And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria⁶⁷⁴ and Cilicia.^{675 24} Forasmuch⁶⁷⁶ as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment.²⁵ It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,²⁶ Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.²⁷ We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth.²⁸ For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost,

⁶⁶⁹ πορνείας *porneias* sexual immorality. (The only use of the word in Luke/Acts is in connection with the Apostles' Decree). This is the root of English words such as *pornography*. It comes from a verb meaning *to sell* and its original reference was to prostitution. In the NT, it is used to refer to all forms of sexual immorality and not merely sex between unmarried partners, which is the meaning we sometimes give *fornication* today. If the Apostles' Decree is based on the Holiness Code, then it would here be specifically referring to the sexual prohibitions in Leviticus 18, which consist largely of a long list of various forms of incest and prohibitions against sexual relations with a menstruating woman, (male) homosexuality, and bestiality.

⁶⁷⁰ The prohibition against consumption of blood is a key point in the Noachic covenant (Gen. 9:4). (An animal killed by strangulation will still have its blood, hence the prohibition against strangled meat, as well.) It is also explicitly forbidden to Gentiles living among Israelites by the Holiness Code (Lev. 17:10). Although some modern Church leaders have taught that foods such as blood pudding should not be consumed by LDS, there is no formal policy on the matter.

⁶⁷¹ That is, if the Gentiles had wanted to live the Mosaic Law in full, they had already had opportunities (and still have them).

⁶⁷² Otherwise unknown. He does share, however, the surname of Joseph Barsabbas who was a candidate to replace Judas in the Twelve (1:23).

⁶⁷³ Silas is mentioned elsewhere in Acts (ch. 16–18) and, under the name Silvanus, in 2 Cor. 1:19, 1 Thess. 1:1–2 and 2 Thess. 1:1. He is also mentioned in 1 Peter 5:12 and is sometimes assumed to have been the actual writer of that epistle. Interestingly enough, “Silas” is an Aramaic variant of the name “Saul.”

⁶⁷⁴ The Roman province of which Antioch was a part. The region had formerly been the core of the Semitic kingdom of Aram, referred to in the KJV OT as Syria. It suffered a similar fate to the Jewish kingdoms to its south, becoming part of the large Mesopotamian empires: Assyria, Chaldea, Persia. After Alexander the Great's conquest of Persia and the collapse of his empire, it became the core of the Seleucid Empire, and then a Roman province after its conquest by Pompey the Great in 64 BC.

⁶⁷⁵ The standard form for the beginning of a Greek letter, *X to Y, greetings*. Note that it is addressed only to Antioch, Syria in general, and Cilicia. This restricted destination for the letter may help explain why it is not alluded to by Paul in any of his epistles, which are all addressed to congregations in different areas.

⁶⁷⁶ Vv. 24–26 echo Luke 1:1–4 as a model literary Greek sentence.

and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;²⁹ That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.^{677 30} So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:³¹ *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.³² And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*.³³ And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.³⁴ Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.^{678 35} Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

The Beginning of Paul's Second Missionary Tour

³⁶ And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do.³⁷ And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.³⁸ But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.³⁹ And the contention was so sharp between them,⁶⁷⁹ that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;⁴⁰ And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

Chapter 16

Timothy Joins Paul

¹ THEN came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus,⁶⁸⁰ the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed;⁶⁸¹ but his father

⁶⁷⁷ ἔρρωσθε *errōsthe* be well, which is, after all, what *fare ye well* and *farewell* mean. This is a standard closing for a Hellenistic letter.

⁶⁷⁸ V. 34 is missing in the better GR MSS and is most likely an addition which attempts to explain how Paul could take Silas on a mission with him (v. 40) if he had returned to Jerusalem (v. 33).

⁶⁷⁹ According to Galatians 2:11–14, Peter was visiting Antioch when the controversy in Acts 15:1–5 broke out, and actually backed down from his earlier position, withdrawing full fellowship from Gentile converts. Paul says that Barnabas sided with Peter in doing this (Gal. 2:13). It may well be, therefore, that Paul and Barnabas parted ways here not only because of their disagreement over John Mark, but that some bitterness remained from their earlier conflict in Antioch over Gentile fellowship. Paul's humanity is showing here; one cannot help but contrast Alma's reaction to his son Corianton, who abandoned a mission for a most ignoble reason (Alma 39:3) but is sent back to preach to the people regardless (Alma 42:31).

⁶⁸⁰ A thoroughly Greek name which means something like *one who honors God*. This is the first mention of Paul's frequent companion, who cowrote with Paul six of Paul's epistles, and to whom two of the Pastoral Epistles are addressed. The KJV variously uses "Timothy" and "Timotheus" (a Latinized version) for his name. Timothy is traditionally believed to have been the first Bishop of Ephesus, where he was stoned to death for opposing the local festival of

was a Greek: ² Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him ⁶⁸² because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. ⁶⁸³ ⁴ And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, ⁶⁸⁴ that were ordained ⁶⁸⁵ of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. ⁵ And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. ⁶⁸⁶ ⁶ Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region ⁶⁸⁷ of Galatia, ⁶⁸⁸ and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ⁶⁸⁹ ⁷ After they were come to Mysia, ⁶⁹⁰ they assayed ⁶⁹¹ to go into Bithynia: ⁶⁹² but the Spirit ⁶⁹³ suffered ⁶⁹⁴ them not. ⁶⁹⁵ ⁸ And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. ⁶⁹⁶ ⁹ And a vision

Katagongion in honor of Diana. His feast day in Roman Catholicism is 26 January. Note the presence of the name in 3 Nephi 19:4 as one of the Nephite Twelve.

⁶⁸¹ 2 Timothy 1:5 gives Eunice as the name of Timothy's mother and Lois as his grandmother's name. Note that Eunice (*good victory*) is also a good Greek name.

⁶⁸² No particular authority was needed to perform a circumcision.

⁶⁸³ A marriage between a Jewess and Gentile would have been illegal at this time, but despite that, one is traditionally a Jew if one's mother is a Jew, regardless of the legal status of one's parents' marriage. This explains why Paul circumcised Timothy. Circumcision would not be necessary at all for a Gentile convert (see Gal. 2:3, where Paul explains that Titus was left uncircumcised, being a Greek), but an uncircumcised Jew would offend those Jews among whom Paul wanted to minister. This, however, appears to contradict what Paul says about circumcision in 1 Corinthians 7:18–19. The Greeks themselves did not practice circumcision and would have looked on it as a bizarre form of self-mutilation, rather the way modern conservatives view tattooing and body piercing.

⁶⁸⁴ Luke portrays Paul and Silas as communicating the Apostles' Decree among the Christians of central Asia Minor, although it had not been specifically addressed to them. This sharing of communications from Church leadership among the various congregations helped enormously in the preservation of the New Testament as we now have it.

⁶⁸⁵ κερκρίμένα *kekrimena* lit., judged, here *decided upon*.

⁶⁸⁶ A typically Lucan summary.

⁶⁸⁷ χώραν *chōran* territory.

⁶⁸⁸ Galatia originally referred to a smallish territory in central Asia Minor. When a province was formed including Galatia, Phrygia, and other territories, it was given the name Galatia. The name can therefore refer to the province as a whole or to the smaller territory to which the name was originally attached. The latter is intended here.

⁶⁸⁹ Here, as always, the Roman province and not the continent. It is generally agreed that Paul's intention had been to follow the course of the Meander River down to Ephesus, the capital of Asia.

⁶⁹⁰ Mysia was a region at the northern end of the province of Asia (that is, the northwest corner of Asia Minor).

⁶⁹¹ ἐπείραζον *epeirazon* attempted.

⁶⁹² Bithynia was a region northeast of Mysia at the northern end of the province of Galatia.

⁶⁹³ Better GR MSS have τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ *to pneuma Iēsou* the Spirit of Jesus.

⁶⁹⁴ εἵλασεν *eiasen* allowed, permitted.

appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia,⁶⁹⁷ and prayed⁶⁹⁸ him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.¹⁰ And after he had seen the vision, immediately we⁶⁹⁹ endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.¹¹ Therefore loosing from⁷⁰⁰ Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia,⁷⁰¹ and the next *day* to Neapolis;⁷⁰² ¹² And from thence to Philippi,⁷⁰³ which is the

⁶⁹⁵ Paul is being “lead by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which [he] should do.” He has been forbidden to go westward into the Roman province of Asia, and now forbidden to go eastward as well. This would naturally leave him in something as a dilemma as to what to do next.

⁶⁹⁶ Alexandria Troas, a Roman colony on the coast of the Aegean Sea, not far from the traditional site of the city of Troy. It had been founded by 310 BC by Antigonos and came under Roman control by 133 BC. Its position at the northeast corner of Asia Minor, near the entrance to the Dardanelles, made it an important trade center.

⁶⁹⁷ Macedonia had been a semi-Greek, semi-barbaric kingdom to the north of Greece proper, but under its kings Philip II (382–336 BC) and Alexander III (“the Great,” 356–323 BC), Macedonia had perfected its army and conquered first Greece and then the vast Persian Empire. After Alexander the Great’s death, his empire fell apart and although Macedonia no longer ruled large tracts of Asia, it remained a key player in eastern Mediterranean politics. It was finally conquered and absorbed by Rome in 146 BC. In modern times, Macedonia is a region partly ruled by Greece and partly by the Slavic nations to its north. Macedonia’s association with the height of Greek imperial power in classical times is the reason why the region—and the very word “Macedonia”—is a matter of such bitter controversy between Greece and the various Slavic countries. As for this vision, a surprising amount of energy is spent by commentators trying to figure out how Paul knew the man was a Macedonian.

⁶⁹⁸ παρακαλῶν *parakalōn* called on [for help].

⁶⁹⁹ This is the first of the “we-passages” in Acts. Traditionally, these have been understood as representing sections of Paul’s ministry where he was actually accompanied by Luke. This, however, leaves the awkward problem of how a personal companion of Paul’s can be so unacquainted with Paul’s theology as Luke appears to be, and why there are so many discrepancies between Paul’s epistles and Acts, leading some to speculate that Luke has merely adopted verbatim the we-passages from someone else’s narrative. (A similar phenomenon occurs in the Book of Mormon. In the sections abridged by Mormon, “I” usually means Mormon himself. There are large stretches, however, where he is quoting other authors verbatim—most commonly Alma the Younger—where “I” refers to someone else. Nor does Mormon always make it clear when he begins quoting someone else. Sometimes one can only determine that from context, as in Alma 29.) Nonetheless, the most likely explanation for the “we-sections” of Acts is that they do represent periods of time when Luke was a member of Paul’s entourage.

⁷⁰⁰ ἀναχθέντες *anachthentes* setting sail.

⁷⁰¹ IE Samothrace, a large, mountainous island in the northeast corner of the Aegean sea. Samothrace is dominated by a mountain over 1.5 km (nearly one mile) high, making the island easy to spot from a distance and useful as a sailors’ landmark.

⁷⁰² *Neapolis* is GR for *New town* (the actual English equivalent is the place-name *Newton*), and is a name given to a number of Greek cities throughout the Mediterranean. The most famous is on the western coast of Italy, the modern Naples (the adjective *Neapolitan* shows

chief city⁷⁰⁴ of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony:⁷⁰⁵ and we were in that city abiding certain days.¹³ And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river⁷⁰⁶ side, where prayer was wont to be made;⁷⁰⁷ and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.

¹⁴ And a certain woman named Lydia,⁷⁰⁸ a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira,⁷⁰⁹ which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.¹⁵ And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*.⁷¹⁰ And she constrained⁷¹¹ us.

¹⁶ And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel⁷¹² possessed with a spirit of divination⁷¹³ met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:⁷¹⁴ ¹⁷ The same

the name's origin more clearly). The Neapolis mentioned here is the modern Kavalla, Philippi's port, on the Macedonian coast.

⁷⁰³ Named for Philip II of Macedonia, Alexander the Great's father, who founded it in the fourth century BC. In 42 BC, Philippi was the site of a battle between Brutus and Cassius, the assassins of Julius Caesar, and his successors, Octavius (who later became the Emperor Augustus) and Marc Anthony.

⁷⁰⁴ Not the capital city (which was Thessalonica), but the most prominent one.

⁷⁰⁵ Philippi had been founded long before the Romans came on the scene. A Roman settlement, however, had been made in Philippi to help keep the area firmly under Roman control.

⁷⁰⁶ Most commentators identify the river as the Gangites. That, however, is more than a Sabbath-day journey from the ancient city and is unlikely therefore to be used as a place of worship for pious Jews. The closer Crenides may therefore be meant, although it is rather too small to be considered a "river."

⁷⁰⁷ JST "where the people resorted for prayer to be made." The textual tradition of this verse is confused; the standard reading now is οὐ ἐνομίζομεν προσευχὴν εἶναι *ou enomizomen proseuchēn einai* lit. where we thought/expected prayer to be. The KJV follows a textual tradition that has οὐ ἐνομίζετο προσευχὴν εἶναι *ou enomizeto plroseuchēn* where prayer was thought to be, a rather odd phrase. It is possible that this is referring to a synagogue near the river, but it is more likely that it is referring to some sort of open-air (possibly informal) worship service.

⁷⁰⁸ Lydia would be an important friend to Paul in his work. Her name means *woman of Lydia*, an ancient kingdom in western Asia Minor.

⁷⁰⁹ A center for the trade in purple dye in the Roman province of Asia, north of Sardis. It had been founded in 300 BC by Seleucus I Nicator and was an important industrial center by the first century AD. The part of Asia to which Thyatira belonged had formerly been part of the kingdom of Lydia. Thyatira is one of the seven branches of the church to which the Book of Revelation is addressed.

⁷¹⁰ Hospitality in the ancient world was a sacred obligation. There was no reliable network of inns and hotels, and for someone to be able to travel at all, he would have to rely on strangers to take him in. Lydia is expressing her gratitude to those who brought her in as genuine a fashion as she can.

⁷¹¹ παρεβιάσατο *parebiasato* urged strongly, insisted.

⁷¹² παιδίσκην *paidiskēn* lit. little girl, here a *slave-girl*.

followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.^{715 18} And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

¹⁹ And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace⁷¹⁶ unto the rulers,^{717 20} And brought them to the magistrates,⁷¹⁸ saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,²¹ And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.^{719 22} And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes,⁷²⁰ and

⁷¹³ πνεῦμα πύθωνα *pneuma puthōna* a spirit [of a] python. The python was a dragon killed by Apollo at Delphi (hence the use of *python* to refer to a large snake). After the victory, the site became sacred to Apollo and was one of the most sacred oracles in all of Greece. The priestesses who uttered Apollo's oracles were therefore called *pythias*, and a *spirit of a python* came to mean an *oracular spirit*. Note that this is intended in a very literal fashion: there is a spirit that accompanies her and gives her oracular powers, what is generally known as a "familiar spirit." (The word *familiar* is a technical term in witchcraft, referring to a companion spirit sent by Satan to be the witch's servant. The term is used in the KJV to refer to oracular spirits.)

⁷¹⁴ μαντευομένη *manteuomenē* prophesying, acting as an oracle.

⁷¹⁵ This creates a minor problem for Latter-day Saints, as do some of the demon-possessed in the Gospels proclaiming Jesus to be the Christ (EG Luke 3:34 || Mark 1:24). The girl's oracular spirit cannot be God-given, as God does not work that way. The spirit must therefore be a demon, but why would one of Satan's followers go around telling people to follow Christ's true messengers and be saved? For most LDS, the only possible explanation is that this sort of testimony ultimately keeps people *from* believing the apostles' message in every particular (see, for example, DNTC 2:149). Luke probably saw no conflict here; he would not necessarily have seen all oracular spirits as being necessarily evil. Nonetheless, Paul finds it annoying (at the least) if not a positive hindrance to have this girl following him around and so exorcises her.

⁷¹⁶ ἀγορὰν *agoran* marketplace. Like a Roman forum, the marketplace in a Greek town was the central gathering point, where men would get together to discuss and argue over philosophy and politics. It therefore naturally became the administrative as well as financial center of the city.

⁷¹⁷ Paul alludes to his mistreatment in Philippi in 1 Thessalonians 2:2.

⁷¹⁸ Philippi, having become a Roman colony, gained a Roman administration. Here the chief magistrates of the town would be praetors, two in number. (The Romans frequently appointed magistrates in pairs to cancel out any tendency for one to act in his own self-interest over the common good.)

⁷¹⁹ Rome was generally tolerant of foreign religions that were well-established, but rather more hostile to the religious innovations and particularly to the active recruitment of Romans to abandon the faith of their fathers in favor of a new religion. (Indeed, it was technically illegal for a Roman to convert to a non-Roman faith.) Roman administration tended to be essentially conservative, and anxious to preserve social stability at the expense of social change. Note that Paul and Silas are accused here of proselyting Romans to Judaism, and not to Christianity.

⁷²⁰ IE Paul's and Silas's clothes, as part of the preparation for their beating.

commanded to beat *them*.^{721 23} And when they had laid many stripes upon them,⁷²² they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: ²⁴ Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

²⁵ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed,⁷²³ and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. ²⁶ And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.^{724 28} But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. ²⁹ Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, ³⁰ And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?^{725 31} And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. ³² And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. ³⁴ And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. ³⁵ And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants,⁷²⁶ saying, Let those men go. ³⁶ And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. ³⁷ But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans,⁷²⁷ and have cast *us* into prison; and now do they thrust us out

⁷²¹ The Roman official responsible for public beatings was the lictor, who carried a bundle of sticks bound around an axe as a symbol of his right to inflict corporal and even capital punishment. These bundles were referred to as *fascēs*. Mussolini attempted to build Italian nationalism by reviving the spirit of ancient Rome, through means such as the symbolic use of the *fascēs*, from which his party gained the name *Fascist*.

⁷²² πολλὰς τε ἐπιθέντες αὐτοῖς πληγὰς *pollas te epithentes autois plēgas* lit. and setting many blows on them.

⁷²³ A typical Lucan mention of prayer.

⁷²⁴ The jailer was responsible to keep security in his prison and would have been executed if there had been a mass escape. Romans felt that death was better than dishonor and had no moral compunctions against suicide; the jailer is, therefore, responding as an honorable Roman would be expected to respond.

⁷²⁵ It is not clear what the Roman jailer would have meant by this; Paul, however, does not care. For Paul, salvation comes from belief in Jesus, and it is to that belief that he urges the jailer.

⁷²⁶ ῥαβδούχους *rhabdouchous* lit., rod-carriers, and therefore here the lictors (see v. 22n). The word *serjeant* is a variant spelling for *sergeant*, which itself comes from the Latin *serviens* (*servant, slave*) via Old French.

⁷²⁷ That is, Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. The restrictions on citizenship in antiquity were generally onerous and naturalization difficult or even impossible—in Athens, for example, one could be a citizen only if one were free and both one's parents were citizens. One of the most remarkable features of Roman administration was its relatively generous policy of allowing people to become citizens by various means, such as serving in the army. Even the descendants of slaves could become full Roman citizens. Rome thus gained throughout its empire a cadre of men and women who had a vested interest in the government's stability and who acquired Roman language, law, and customs through becoming citizens. This helped

privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.^{728 38} And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.³⁹ And they came and besought them, and brought *them* out, and desired *them* to depart out of the city.⁴⁰ And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of* Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Chapter 17

Paul Travels to Thessalonica

¹ NOW when they had passed through Amphipolis⁷²⁹ and Apollonia,⁷³⁰ they came to Thessalonica,⁷³¹ where was a synagogue of the Jews: ² And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days⁷³² reasoned with them out of the scriptures, ³ Opening⁷³³ and alleging,⁷³⁴ that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. ⁴ And some of them believed, and consorted with⁷³⁵ Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

⁵ But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy,⁷³⁶ took unto them certain lewd fellows⁷³⁷ of the baser sort,⁷³⁸ and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and

enormously in the creation of a large, stable empire. Here, Paul and Silas have been treated illegally; the *lex Porcia* forbade the scourging of Roman citizens.

⁷²⁸ Cf. D&C 42:91. Paul and Silas have been publicly mistreated; their vindication should therefore also be public. The town's leaders cannot get away with quietly covering up their mistake.

⁷²⁹ Amphipolis was an important trading center about 50 km (30 miles) west of Philippi, and the capital of the first Roman district of Macedonia. It had been colonized by Athens in 436 BC. Its name (literally *both-town*) derives from the fact that it was encircled by the Strymon River and built on both sides thereof. Paul would have traveled from Philippi to Amphipolis along the Via Egnatia.

⁷³⁰ Another town on the Via Egnatia. Apollonia was 40 km (25 miles) southwest of Amphipolis. Its modern name is Pollina.

⁷³¹ The modern Salonika, Thessalonica was a free city and capital of the second Roman district of Macedonia. It also lay on the Via Egnatia about 50 km (30 miles) due west of Apollonia. Thessalonica had been founded in 316 BC by one of Alexander the Great's generals, Cassander, and named after his wife, Alexander's half sister and Philip II's daughter.

⁷³² This should probably not be taken as an indication that Paul was only three weeks in Thessalonica. We know from Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians and from other data in Acts that he left a thriving congregation there, which probably took more than three weeks to establish. Luke may mean that Paul preached in the Jewish synagogue on three separate but not consecutive Sabbaths.

⁷³³ διανοίγων *dianoigōn* lit. opening, here carrying the additional nuance of *explaining*.

⁷³⁴ παρατιθέμενος *paratithēmenos* lit., layout out, here *presenting evidence*.

⁷³⁵ προσεκληρώθησαν *proseklērōthēsan* joined with.

⁷³⁶ ζηλώσαντες *zēlōsantes* being jealous.

⁷³⁷ ἀγοραίων *agoraiōn* lit. someone who hangs around in the market, hence *a loafer, trouble-maker*.

assaulted the house of Jason,⁷³⁹ and sought to bring them out to the people.⁶ And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city,⁷⁴⁰ crying, These that have turned the world⁷⁴¹ upside down are come hither also;⁷ Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king,⁷⁴² *one* Jesus.⁸ And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city,⁷⁴³ when they heard these things.⁹ And when they had taken security⁷⁴⁴ of Jason, and of the other,⁷⁴⁵ they let them go.

Paul in Berea

¹⁰ And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea⁷⁴⁶: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews.¹¹ These were more noble⁷⁴⁷ than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched⁷⁴⁸ the

⁷³⁸ πονηροὺς *ponērous* lit. evil. AB—F uses *worthless*.

⁷³⁹ Apparently Paul's host. Luke does not bother to describe him further, implying that he may have been well known in the Church generally. *Jason* is a Greek name (and one of the few names from Greek mythology still in use), but that gives no indication as to Jason's nationality.

⁷⁴⁰ πολιτάρχας *politarchas*, of which *rulers of the city* is a good translation. There is external evidence that title was indeed used for city magistrates in Thessalonica in the first century.

⁷⁴¹ οἰκουμένην *oikoumenēn* inhabited regions of the world. This is, by any standard, a wild exaggeration, but Luke is given to hyperbole and is using here one of his favorite words.

⁷⁴² βασιλέα *basilea* king (as opposed to other forms of supreme power known among the Greeks such as tyrannies). There is a certain irony here. To begin with, the Roman emperors refused the Latin title *rex* (king) because of its connotations to the Roman people. (Americans have a similar aversion to the word *king*, which is why Joseph Smith's symbolic anointing as a king was kept secret.) The Greeks had no problems with the title, however, and so the emperors were freely called *king* among them. The early Christians, however, avoided calling Jesus a king because of its current use among the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean—there would be too many chances for misunderstanding. So Paul is accused of calling Jesus something he probably never would have called him, and not reverencing the Emperor with a title the Emperor would have disallowed among his own people.

⁷⁴³ πολιτάρχας *politarchas* city-rulers. There is external evidence that the word was actually used for magistrates in Thessalonica in the first century; as usual, Luke is accurate in his use of terminology for political office.

⁷⁴⁴ ἵκανόν *hikanon* lit. something appropriate, here *security*, *bail*; that is, Jason is posting a bond to guarantee Paul's good behavior.

⁷⁴⁵ λοιπῶν *loipōn* others.

⁷⁴⁶ The modern Verria, about 80 km (50 miles) west-southwest of Thessalonica. The ancient name of the town is usually spelled Berea (GR Βέροια *Beroia*).

⁷⁴⁷ εὐγενέστεροι *eugenesteroi* lit. of better birth, which is what "more noble" would have meant to a 17th century English audience. Because of the association of the upper classes with generous behavior (largely through wishful thinking), it carries here the nuance *noble-minded*. The Latin equivalent is *generosus*.

⁷⁴⁸ ἀνακρίνοντες *anakrinontes* examining, researching carefully.

scriptures⁷⁴⁹ daily, whether those things were so.¹² Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men,⁷⁵⁰ not a few.¹³ But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.¹⁴ And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to⁷⁵¹ the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.¹⁵ And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens:⁷⁵² and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

Paul Arrives in Athens

¹⁶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.⁷⁵³ ¹⁷ Therefore disputed⁷⁵⁴ he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market⁷⁵⁵ daily with them that met with him.¹⁸ Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans,⁷⁵⁶ and of the Stoicks,⁷⁵⁷ encountered him. And some said,

⁷⁴⁹ τὰς γραφὰς *tas graphas* the [holy] writings.

⁷⁵⁰ τῶν Ἑλληνίδων γυναικῶν τῶν εὐσχημόνων καὶ ἀνδρῶν *tōn hēllēnidōn gunaikōn tōn euschēmonōn kai andrōn* more honorable Greek women and men. The KJV translation is fairly literal but makes worse English than Luke's Greek. The word εὐσχημόνων *euschēmonōn* implies exceptional elegance and nobility of character.

⁷⁵¹ ὥς ἐπι *eōs epi*, which here means *as far as*. An alternate reading found in some GR MSS is ὡς ἐπι *hōs epi*, which would mean *as if* (implying that they were throwing off pursuit and that he *really* went by land).

⁷⁵² Athens was one of the great cities of ancient Greece and is its modern capital. The days of Athens' greatest glory—when it invented democracy, defeated Persians at Marathon and Salamis, established a small empire over the islands of the Aegean Sea, and reached astonishing heights in literature, architecture, and philosophy—were now some four centuries past. Athens was no longer the intellectual center of the Greek world, but it was still an important university town, where innumerable Greek and Roman aristocratic youths were sent to get a proper education in philosophy; and, as now, it played host to throngs of tourists who remembered what it once had been.

⁷⁵³ κατείδωλον *kateidōlon* full of idols. That Athens had a particularly large concentration of shrines to various gods is attested by other writers. Paul's reaction here is largely visceral, as a devout Jew encountering paganism in all its glory. A modern LDS might well be equally distressed at going into a Catholic cathedral with all its iconography.

⁷⁵⁴ διελέγετο *dielegeto* discussed. The word implies less rancor than does *disputed*, although it does mean that he and his listeners were probably disagreeing. The word gives us the English *dialogue*.

⁷⁵⁵ See 16:19n.

⁷⁵⁶ One of the most important schools of Greek philosophy of the time, the Epicureans had been founded by Epicurus (342–270 BC), who taught that the most rational course of action in a world of meaningless random chance such as ours would be to maximize genuine pleasure. For the ancient Epicureans, this (theoretically) meant moderation, since excess would in the long run lead to a loss of pleasure. Nonetheless, the word today means someone given to mindless hedonism. The most famous exposition of Epicureanism is the long poem, *De Rerum Natura* (*On the Nature of Things*) by the first century BC Latin writer Lucretius.

What will this babbler⁷⁵⁸ say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods.⁷⁵⁹ because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.⁷⁶⁰ ¹⁹ And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, ⁷⁶¹ saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? ²⁰ For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. ²¹ (For all the Athenians and strangers⁷⁶² which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)⁷⁶³

⁷⁵⁷ The name is usually spelled “Stoics.” The Stoics had been founded by Zeno (335–263 BC), whose school received its name from the portico or colonnade (GR στοά *stoa*) where he taught. Stoics felt that life was controlled by the all-pervading Logos, and that one could do little or nothing to change one’s fate. The best to do, therefore, would be to control one’s passions and learn to live with the situation in which one was placed. This gave rise to the modern meaning of *stoic* as one who bears tribulation dispassionately. Since Stoicism emphasized a rigid devotion to duty and responsibility, it was particularly popular among the Romans. Probably the most famous Stoic writer is the second century Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius.

⁷⁵⁸ σπερμολόγος *spermologos* lit. seed-eater, used to refer to granivorous birds. It came to mean a person who, like a bird pecking here and there at seeds, picks up unsystematic scraps of knowledge, a know-it-all, or a gossip. *Babbler* is a good English translation: Paul is seen as running on and on without really saying anything worthwhile.

⁷⁵⁹ ξένων δαιμονίων *xenon daimoniōn* foreign daemons. A *daemon* could be a god or a goddess, or a sort of guardian spirit and personification of a man’s native talent. It can also refer to lesser spirits, not quite gods. In the NT, the word is used most frequently to refer to devils (giving rise to the English word *demon*).

⁷⁶⁰ That is, they appear to have taken “Jesus” and “Resurrection” as the names of two gods (or actually one god and one goddess) whom Paul preached. In GR, personal names regularly appear with a definite article, and abstractions (such as Chance) were often worshipped as deities, so their mistaking “the resurrection” for a goddess named “Resurrection” is not entirely surprising.

⁷⁶¹ Ἀρεῖον Πάγον *Areion Pagon* Ares’ hill, a hill just west-northwest of the Acropolis. It was an important open-air space where speeches could be made. Athens’ supreme judicial council, which met there at one point, is also called the Areopagus. It is not clear in which sense Luke intends the name to be taken. Most commentators today prefer the idea that he appeared before the council, but it was traditionally assumed that he means the hill, where a bronze plaque now stands with the GR text of this passage. Paul would thus be preaching in an important public location. The speech Luke attributes to him here is very appropriate for the audience. It is focused more on the Jewish God as the universal God of all humanity. Instead of the usual quotes from Jewish scriptures, it features a quote from a Greek poet.

⁷⁶² ξένοι *xenoi* foreigners. It is the root of English words such as *xenophobia* and *xenon*.

⁷⁶³ As Athens’ most famous export was higher education, it should not be surprising that the population was given to the exchange of philosophical ideas.

*Paul's Speech on the Areopagus*⁷⁶⁴

²² Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill,⁷⁶⁵ and said, *Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.*⁷⁶⁶ ²³ For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.⁷⁶⁷ Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. ²⁴ God that made the world⁷⁶⁸ and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; ²⁵ Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; ²⁶ And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined⁷⁶⁹ the times⁷⁷⁰ before appointed,⁷⁷¹ and the bounds of their habitation; ²⁷ That they should seek the Lord, if haply⁷⁷² they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:⁷⁷³ ²⁸ For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said,⁷⁷⁴ **For we are also his offspring.**⁷⁷⁵ ²⁹

⁷⁶⁴ Paul's speech on the Areopagus is one of the few lengthy speeches in Acts that does not follow the typical pattern of Christ-centered preaching. As usual, it is impossible to determine how substantial the information was that Luke had at hand regarding what Paul really said, but it would be typical of both Paul and Luke to give a refocused sermon based on the unique needs of the audience. Here, dealing with pagan intellectuals, the speech downplays many of the issues common to the speeches given to Jews and focuses on God's universal care for all humanity. Indeed, there are distinct Stoic echoes in the speech.

⁷⁶⁵ Ἰε the Areopagus (see v. 19n). Mars is the Roman god identified with the Greek Ares.

⁷⁶⁶ δεισιδαιμονεστέρους *deisidaimonesterous* extremely God-fearing, religious. It can carry the negative connotation *superstitious*. That nuance is not likely here; Paul is buttering up his audience.

⁷⁶⁷ Such altars are known from elsewhere in Greece. They were intended to provide in a generic fashion for the worship of all the deities not otherwise covered—one might be reminded of modern tombs for unknown soldiers. Paul takes the inscription in a slightly different sense, as referring to the God of whom the Athenians know nothing.

⁷⁶⁸ κόσμον *kosmon* ordered world, universe. As the term means, in essence, *all where order and natural law prevail*, it becomes the root for our word *cosmos* meaning the entire Universe. It is also the root of *cosmetics*, which bring order and beauty (one hopes) to the face.

⁷⁶⁹ ὁρίσας *horisas* set boundaries for, marked off. The word gives rise to the English *horizon*.

⁷⁷⁰ καιροὺς *kairous* [appropriate] times, seasons. The definite article is missing in the GR.

⁷⁷¹ The whole phrase means that God determined in advance the rise and fall of empires, bounding the periods of time when they would hold sway.

⁷⁷² ἄρα *ara*, a particle that usually means something like *therefore*. Here, the KJV takes it in the sense *perhaps* (for which *haply* is an archaic equivalent). AB—F takes the whole phrase εἰ ἄρα γε *ei ara ge* as *perhaps*, thus, “so that people might seek for God, perhaps even grope for him.”

⁷⁷³ JST “That they should seek the Lord, if they are willing to find him, for he is not far from every one of us;”

⁷⁷⁴ A slight variation on the usual formula in Greek rhetoric for introducing a direct quote from a poet; the use of a plural “poets” is conventional.

Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead⁷⁷⁶ is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.^{777 30} And the times of this ignorance God winked at,⁷⁷⁸ but now commandeth all men every where to repent:^{779 31} Because he hath appointed a day,⁷⁸⁰ in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained;⁷⁸¹ *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.⁷⁸²

³² And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked:⁷⁸³ and others said, We will hear thee again of this *matter*.^{784 33} So Paul departed from among them. ³⁴ Howbeit

⁷⁷⁵ This is a quote from an astronomical poem, the *Phaenomena*, by one Aratus who was born around 315 BC and who was, like Paul himself, from Tarsus. This is the only unambiguous quotation from Greek literature in the NT.

⁷⁷⁶ θεῖον *theion* divinity. The translation chosen by Tyndale and used in the KJV provides Mormonism with one of its key theological terms.

⁷⁷⁷ Common Jewish anti-idol rhetoric. How can the created be used to encompass the Creator? The more sophisticated pagans knew, of course, that the statues they used in worship were not actually the deities represented, but the average man in the street could not be counted on to make the same distinction. In the modern Church, we have a similarly subtle distinction between temples as literal houses of God (places where he dwells) and symbolic houses of God. Paul would side with the latter interpretation (see v. 24).

⁷⁷⁸ ὑπεριδὼν *hyperidōn* lit. overlooked.

⁷⁷⁹ It is at this point that Paul shifts from a generalized speech that almost every Greek intellectual could agree with, or at least, understand, to something more firmly derived from Judaism that would be foreign to them. Reformation of character was an important part of most Greek philosophical schools, but the full meaning of the word μετανοέω *metanoēō* would be foreign to them as would Paul's eschatological motivation for it.

⁷⁸⁰ The concept of an end of the world would have been strange to Paul's hearers. They had a concept of the world's beginning, but no strong sense that God (or Zeus, or whoever) would ever bring it to a close. (The study of the end of the world is called *eschatology* from GR words meaning *study of the last*.)

⁷⁸¹ Ἰησοῦς *IE Jesus*. This is the only reference to Christ in Paul's speech, and a decidedly vague one, at that. The word translated here *ordained* is ὀρίσεν *ōrisen* (here meaning *appointed*), which has already occurred several times in this speech. Jesus' death and resurrection is as much a part of God's plan as, say, the Athenian victory at Marathon.

⁷⁸² As usual in Acts, the Father resurrected Jesus, thus providing him with his *bona fides* to be identified as the Savior. This final phrase in GR is ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν *anastēsas auton ek nekrōn* resurrected him from the dead. The translation chosen by the KJV breaks the literary link between the end of Paul's speech and his audience's reaction by using two different translations for the same word here.

⁷⁸³ None of the Greek schools of philosophy foresaw a physical resurrection of the dead. The idea was certainly new to them, and to some, at least, a little bizarre.

⁷⁸⁴ Luke uses the classical μὲν...δε *men...de* construction here, which implies a contrast between two things: the people who mocked Paul and those who wanted to hear him again. Nonetheless, it may be that Luke has misunderstood the second reaction, and that the Athenians who claimed to want to hear Paul again were merely being polite in putting him off. (Modern missionaries are familiar with both types of reaction.) The fact is that Athens was not an

certain men clave⁷⁸⁵ unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite,⁷⁸⁶ and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Chapter 18

Paul Travels to Corinth

¹ AFTER these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;⁷⁸⁷ ² And found a certain Jew named Aquila,⁷⁸⁸ born in Pontus,⁷⁸⁹ lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla,⁷⁹⁰

important early center for Christianity, and to all indications, Paul's mission here was not a rousing success as had been the case at Philippi and Thessalonica and would be the case in Corinth and Ephesus.

⁷⁸⁵ κολληθέντες *kollēthentes* lit. were glued, here *stuck fast to*. (*Collagen*, used today in cosmetics and plastic surgery, is a general name for a number of proteins found in connective tissue. The name—literally *glue-maker*—comes from the fact it was first found in animal parts used to make glue.)

⁷⁸⁶ The name “Dionysius” has come down to us in modern English as *Dennis* or *Denisa*. Dionysius the Areopagite is probably so called because he was a member of the Areopagus council. He is traditionally believed to have been the first bishop of Athens (Eusebius *Eccl. Hist.* 3.4). A later mystic, probably from the fifth century AD, wrote under his name and is called the pseudo-Dionysius. Much medieval thought on subjects such as the nature of the heavenly hierarchy derives from him. Both Dionysius and the pseudo-Dionysius have sometimes been identified with the first bishop of Paris, St. Denis (ca. AD 250).

⁷⁸⁷ Like Athens, Corinth had been one of the great cities of classical Greece. Sitting astride the “narrow neck of land” that connected the Peloponessus with the European mainland, Corinth dominated trade routes between the two as well as controlling all shipping which was transferred between the Gulf of Corinth on the north and the Saronic Gulf on the south in order to avoid the long trip around the Peloponnesus. Politically, Corinth was generally an opponent of Athens and jealous of Athenian supremacy at sea. The Greek Corinth had been razed in 146 BC when the Romans conquered Achaia: it was a deliberately brutal act designed to prevent future rebellions in Greece. The site of Corinth was deserted for a century before Julius Caesar ordered it to be resettled. This later, more Roman, Corinth where Paul preached is often called Neocorinth to distinguish it from the older Greek city. It also had a rather different character from the older Corinth, which had a reputation for sexual excess, even by Greek standards. Corinth's most notable temple, for example, had been dedicated to Aphrodite, the goddess of sexual love, and was said to have some two thousand temple prostitutes serving there. The Greeks even had a word, κορινθιάζεσθαι *korinthiazesthai*, which literally meant *to act like a Corinthian* and was used to mean *to live a life of debauchery*. Modern commentators generally feel that this exaggerated reputation was probably never really deserved (for example, temple prostitution is otherwise unknown among the Greeks) and certainly did not reflect Neocorinth's first-century character. In Paul's time, Neocorinth was the capital of the province of Achaia and the most important town, commercially and administratively, in Greece.

⁷⁸⁸ Aquila (his name is Latin for *eagle*) and his wife Priscilla or Prisca were important patrons for Paul for the next several years. They were also leaders in the establishment of the Church in Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome. Paul does not include Aquila and Priscilla in his list of

(because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:)⁷⁹¹ and came unto them.³ And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought:⁷⁹² for by their occupation they were tentmakers.⁷⁹³⁴ And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded⁷⁹⁴ the Jews and the Greeks.⁵ And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia,⁷⁹⁵ Paul was pressed in the spirit,⁷⁹⁶ and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*.⁶

people he baptized in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:14–16); they would appear to have been Christians already when they arrived in Corinth.

⁷⁸⁹ Pontus was a province that stretched along the northern coast of Asia Minor. See 2:9n.

⁷⁹⁰ Also known as Prisca. Curiously, she is sometimes mentioned first when she and her husband are both named (EG Rom. 16:3), which implies she was the more prominent of the two.

⁷⁹¹ This was probably some time in 49 or 50 AD. According to Suetonius (*Claudius* 25), “Because the Jews were continually making disturbances at Chrestus’ instigation, he expelled them from Rome.” It is generally assumed that “Chrestus” is Suetonius’ mistake for “Christus,” and that Rome was the site of Jewish-Christian friction such as we have already seen in Paul’s ministry and will see again. (The use of “Chrestus” for “Christus” could have originated as a deliberate slur on the part of anti-Christians; Chrestus [Χρηστός *Chrēstos*] means *good, worthy* and was a common slave’s name. It would be similar to the use made of early anti-Mormons of the coincidence that *mormon* [μορμών *mormōn*] is GR for a sort of boogie monster.) Claudius generally tried to be tolerant of Judaism; after all, one of his few friends growing up had been Herod Agrippa I. Unlike later Christian exiles of Jews from their borders, Claudius is here trying to keep the peace, not promote religious purity. This is, by the way, the first mention of the city of Rome in Acts.

⁷⁹² Paul argues in 1 Cor. 9 that it is reasonable that someone devoting himself full-time to the work of the Church should be supported by the Church. He seems, however, to have preferred to avoid doing so himself. Even in the modern Church, there are situations where people (missionaries or General Authorities, for example) have a stipend provided for them by the Church so that they do not need to engage in temporal employment. We are sometimes over-anxious to play up the difference between our lay (that is, untrained, unprofessional, volunteer) clergy and the paid (that is, professional) clergy in other churches and forget that the distinction is *not* a matter of receiving physical support from the church.

⁷⁹³ As tents were commonly made of leather, Paul is sometimes described as a leatherworker. There is, however, some controversy as to whether or not cloth tents were also in use.

⁷⁹⁴ ἐπειθέν *epeithen* persuaded. The verb is in the imperfect tense, which implies repeated actions—in this case, meaning that Paul was attempting to persuade them, but not necessarily succeeding.

⁷⁹⁵ This would appear to be the occasion for Paul’s writing 1 Thessalonians, which is the earliest of all the books of what is now the New Testament. According to 1 Thessalonians, Timothy had actually joined Paul briefly in Athens and then been sent back to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2:17–3:5).

⁷⁹⁶ Other GR MSS have συνείχετο τῷ λόγῳ *suneicheto tō logō* occupied with the word, that is, wholly dedicated to preaching. (The root meaning of συνέχω *sunechō* is *to hold together*.) If this reading is adopted, then it would appear that Silas and Timothy had brought

And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment,⁷⁹⁷ and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean.⁷⁹⁸ from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

⁷ And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus,⁷⁹⁹ *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard⁸⁰⁰ to the synagogue. ⁸ And Crispus,⁸⁰¹ the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. ⁹ Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: ¹⁰ For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. ¹¹ And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Paul Before Gallio

¹² And when Gallio⁸⁰² was the deputy⁸⁰³ of Achaia,⁸⁰⁴ the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, ¹³ Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth

funds with them so that he no longer needed to support himself (see 2 Cor. 11:8–9). The KJV follows the reading συνείχετο τῷ πνεύματι *suneicheto tō pneumati* was urged on by the Spirit.

⁷⁹⁷ A symbolic gesture comparable to shaking off the dust of one's feet. Paul is disavowing any responsibility for their obduracy (see 13:51).

⁷⁹⁸ Cf. Jacob 1:19, 2:2.

⁷⁹⁹ His name is variously given in GR MSS as Justus, Titus Justus, and Titius Justus, with the last having the greatest MSS support. As with many of the people Paul encounters in Corinth, Justus bears a Roman name. Some commentators have assumed that Luke's description of him as "*one* that worshipped God" (σεβομένου τὸν θεόν *sebomenou ton theon* reverent to God) implies that he was a Gentile. Nothing else is known of him.

⁸⁰⁰ συνομοροῦσα *sunomorousa* lit. with-bordering, was next to.

⁸⁰¹ Crispus is also mentioned in 1 Cor. 1:14 as one of the few whom Paul personally baptized in Corinth, but he is otherwise unknown.

⁸⁰² Lucius Junius Gallio Annaeus. His birth-father, Lucius or Marcus Annaeus Seneca (c. 50 BC–c. AD 40), was a famous rhetorician and his brother, also Marcus Annaeus Seneca (c. 3 BC–AD 65), was an important philosopher who had been given the post of supervising the education of the Emperor Claudius' step-son, Nero. (Gallio himself had been adopted into the Gallio family. Adoption was common and open in the Roman upper classes, and the adoptee frequently ended up with a close association with both families.) After the younger Seneca was forced to commit suicide because of his involvement in a plot against Nero, Gallio was disgraced and was compelled to commit suicide himself. He was governor of Achaia either in 51/2 or 52/3, with the earlier date the more likely. In either case, this is one of the more important and certain chronological pegs for Acts. Gallio is also probably the most aristocratic and prominent Roman to appear on stage in Acts.

⁸⁰³ ἀνθυπάτου *anthupatou* proconsul. That is, Gallio held the rank of proconsul and was acting as the governor of the (senatorial) province of Achaia.

⁸⁰⁴ Ancient "Greece" consisted of all the places where Greeks had settled. This included the Greek mainland, the western fringe of Asia Minor, and colonies scattered throughout the shores of the Black and Mediterranean Seas. Our name Greece, in fact, comes from the Latin *Magna Graeca*, the coastal regions of southern Italy where Greek colonies such as Naples were found. The Greek's own name for their homeland was and is Ἑλλάς *Hellas*. The Greek

men to worship God contrary to the law.^{805 14} And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong⁸⁰⁶ or wicked lewdness,⁸⁰⁷ O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you.^{808 15} But if it be a question of words and names, and *of* your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of such *matters*.^{809 16} And he drave them from the judgment seat.¹⁷ Then all the Greeks⁸¹⁰ took Sosthenes,⁸¹¹ the chief ruler of the synagogue,⁸¹² and beat *him* before the judgment seat.⁸¹³ And Gallio cared for none of those things.⁸¹⁴

mainland—modern Greece—was originally divided into a large number of small city-states or regions such as Attica (Athens), Boeotia (Thebes) and Lacedaemonia (Sparta). Achaia (or Achaëa) was originally one of these regions, centered on the northern coast of the Peloponnesus. The Romans used the name for the province which they organized containing the bulk of Greece after their conquest.

⁸⁰⁵ The phrasing is probably deliberately ambiguous. The Jews think of Paul as guilty of violating the Law of Moses, which was no cause for prosecuting him before the Roman governor. Similarly, “God” could mean either Jehovah, the God of the Jews, or Zeus/Jupiter. Paul’s opponents may be hoping that Gallio would take them as meaning that Paul had violated Roman law and discouraged worship of the Roman state gods. If so, they have underestimated Gallio and certainly won themselves no favor in his eyes.

⁸⁰⁶ ἀδίκημα *adikēma* injustice, crime.

⁸⁰⁷ ῥαδιούργημα πονηρόν *rhadiourgēma ponēron* lit. wicked recklessness. It would here refer to a non-violent crime such as fraud.

⁸⁰⁸ κατὰ λόγον ἂν ἀνεσχόμεν ὑμῶν *kata logon an aneschomēn humōn* it would be logical/reasonable to put up with you.

⁸⁰⁹ Gallio is showing a kind of reaction that was generally typical of the way the Romans liked to think they governed. So long as taxes were collected and the peace maintained, they preferred to avoid involvement in local affairs. Luke may be deliberately trying to make a point here—that the earliest reaction of the Roman authorities towards Christianity was neutral; it was not seen as an illegal religious movement, but merely a variety of the legal Judaism. Nonetheless, by having Gallio cutting off discussion before Paul even has a chance to speak, Luke is characterizing him as being disdainful towards the whole process.

⁸¹⁰ Better GR MSS have simply πάντες *pantes* all [they], not specifying who *they* are. This reading may be preferred on the basis of *lectio difficilior*, that is, it is more likely that a scribe added a detail where Luke is confusingly vague than the other way around. If this reading is adopted, it is possible that it was Sosthenes’ own Jewish adherents beat him for failure to secure a conviction. (Some minor MSS actually specify that it was the Jews.) But if it is Greeks who beat Sosthenes, what was their motivation other than general anti-Semitism?

⁸¹¹ There is a Sosthenes who is mentioned in 1 Cor. 1:1 as co-author of that epistle with Paul. It is impossible to determine at this point whether the two men are the same or not, but it is plausible that they are. It makes sense that Paul should choose as a coauthor for his epistle a prominent Jewish convert from Corinth.

⁸¹² Either Crispus and Sosthenes shared the post, or Crispus was replaced, perhaps for becoming a Christian.

⁸¹³ βήματος *bēmatos* lit., step, referring originally to a raised platform from which a tribune would speak. Perhaps a better English translation would be *bench*. The actual site of Gallio’s βῆμα *bēma* has been located by an archaeological expedition on the south side of the agora.

End of Paul's Second Journey and Beginning of His Third

¹⁸ And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn *his* head in Cenchrea.⁸¹⁵ for he had a vow.⁸¹⁶ ¹⁹ And he came to Ephesus,⁸¹⁷ and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.²⁰ When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;²¹ But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem:⁸¹⁸ but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.²² And when he had landed at Cæsarea, and gone up,⁸¹⁹ and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.²³ And after he had spent some time *there*, he departed, and went over *all* the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁴ Regardless of the reading one adopts as to who beat Sosthenes, Luke is again characterizing Gallio as not caring what happens to Jews.

⁸¹⁵ Corinth proper was not situated on either the Corinthian or Saronic Gulfs but had smaller, satellite towns that served as her actual ports. Cenchreae was the port on the Saronic Gulf.

⁸¹⁶ Shaving one's head at the end of a vow is typical for a nazirite (Num. 6). This was an institution where someone would take a special vow of unusual dedication to God for a period of time during which they would avoid all fermented products or even anything coming from grapes and not cut one's hair. Samson was a nazirite for life, and John the Baptist is frequently thought of as having been one, too. It may seem rather atypical of Paul to take on so Jewish an obligation at this stage of his career. Although the phrasing is ambiguous, and Aquila may be the one referred to, it is most likely Paul. (Some Latin MSS state that it was Aquila whose head was shaved, and some even say that it was both Aquila and Priscilla.) Note that Luke appears to be confused here on the details of a nazirite vow. One cut one's hair at the *end* of the period vowed, not at the beginning. See 21:23–24.

⁸¹⁷ Ephesus was an ancient Greek settlement on the western coast of Asia Minor near the mouth of the Cayster river. Anciently, one could sail up the Cayster to Ephesus, but the coast has silted up in the centuries since. Ephesus had a population of about half a million and was the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire (after Rome, Alexandria, and the Syrian Antioch). It served, with Pergamum, as the capital of the Roman province of Asia. Paul became closely associated with Ephesus and it was one of the important early centers of Christianity.

⁸¹⁸ The detail that Paul intended to keep the Passover in Jerusalem is present in both the Western and Byzantine text traditions, with the KJV derived from the latter. It is missing, however, in the Alexandrian text and most modern critics feel it should be omitted.

⁸¹⁹ Paul would appear to have made a quick trip to Jerusalem at this point, which Luke does not mention. If the reading in v. 21, which says that he intended to keep the Passover in Jerusalem, is adopted, this would make sense. Moreover, one could only be released from a nazirite vow properly at the Temple. Luke's use of the participle ἀναβὰς *anabas* (having gone up) is also a clue, as it is regularly used to refer to travel to Jerusalem. On the whole, then, it would appear that the church that Paul salutes in the next phrase is the mother church in Jerusalem.

⁸²⁰ The transition from Paul's second missionary journey to his third is almost non-existent—he sails back to Antioch and leaves again with no narrative break. Luke also fails to specify how long he was in Antioch. As a result, many modern commentators feel that the

Conversion of Apollos

²⁴ And a certain Jew named Apollos,⁸²¹ born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. ²⁵ This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord,⁸²² knowing only the baptism of John.⁸²³ ²⁶ And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. ²⁷ And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him:⁸²⁴ who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: ²⁸ For he mightily⁸²⁵ convinced⁸²⁶ the Jews, *and that* publicly,⁸²⁷ shewing⁸²⁸ by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

division between the two missionary journeys is artificial and that the second and third journeys together form one long tour.

⁸²¹ Apollos bears an excellent Greek name, a short form of the relatively common name Appolonios and derived from the name of the god Apollo himself. After he came to Corinth, he became (like Paul) the center around which a faction developed (1 Cor. 1:11 sqq.). He is also mentioned in Titus 3:13.

⁸²² Better GR MSS have τοῦ Ἰησοῦ *tou Iēsou* of Jesus. If this reading is adopted, then Apollos may have picked up fragments of Christianity on which he himself built. In modern times, there have been instances, most notably in west Africa, where people acquired copies of the Book of Mormon or other LDS literature and founded their own Mormon churches based on what they read. This may be the same sort of thing.

⁸²³ It may seem strange to modern Christians and to Latter-day Saints particularly, but from what Luke tells us in Acts there was a sort of “Church of John the Baptist” that persisted for some time after John’s death. Depending on which reading is adopted in this verse, Apollos may be the first “member” of this church whom we encounter in Acts, but there will be more. John the Baptist may very well have been better known among many first century Jews than Jesus. John, after all, was in the mold of a reforming prophet, denouncing the corruption that many felt existed among their own leaders. Thus, John could be looked on favorably by a number of Jews without having to go to the trouble of actually paying attention to what he was saying. Jesus, however, was a radical who turned Judaism on its head altogether.

⁸²⁴ Compare D&C 20:84, where a similar sort of “letter of introduction” is required in the modern Church. (It still occasionally happens that individuals will move into a new ward intending to exploit its resources before their membership records catch up with them.)

⁸²⁵ εὐτόνως *eutonōs* vigorously.

⁸²⁶ διακατηλέγχετο *diakatēlencheto* refuted. The verb is in the imperfect, which Luke uses here as elsewhere to indicate what Paul was spending his time doing without any implication of success.

⁸²⁷ δημοσίᾳ *dēmosia* in public. “Publicly” is, of course, an archaic spelling.

⁸²⁸ Pronounced “showing.”

Chapter 19

Paul Travels to Ephesus

¹ AND it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth,⁸²⁹ Paul having passed through the upper coasts⁸³⁰ came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,⁸³¹ ² He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?⁸³² And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.⁸³³ ³ And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.⁸³⁴ ⁴ Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.⁵ When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.⁸³⁵ ⁶ And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.⁷ And all the men were about twelve.⁸³⁶ ⁸

⁸²⁹ The Western text family replaces this phrase with a notice that Paul was prevented by the Spirit from going to Jerusalem as he wished (presumably as mentioned in 18:21) but was sent to Asia instead.

⁸³⁰ IE by a more northerly route, rather than following the Meander valley.

⁸³¹ Note that Luke treats these men sympathetically. Although their beliefs are defective, he appears to consider them in some sense "Christians."

⁸³² εἶπέν τε πρὸς αὐτοὺς, Εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες *eipen te pros autous, ei pneuma hagion elabete pisteusantes* lit. He said to them if believing you've received the Holy Spirit. This is an awkward combination of direct and indirect quotation that is not infrequent in GR. There is some controversy over the translation of the participle. Most modern translators would prefer *when you believed*, which is more natural but also tends to imply that receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost comes when one turns to Christ and becomes a believer, and not with a formal ceremony which follows that act. The KJV translation tends to imply that one first believes and then at some later date one receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is a more unnatural reading of the GR, but possible. LDS doctrine is that there is a distinction between receiving the Holy Ghost and receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and that the latter comes only with a formal bestowal by appropriate priesthood authority following baptism. Paul's question is consistent with LDS doctrine, no matter how one translates it (EG if he's referring to their "believing" as being part of a process entered into once but extended over time). This would, in any event, not be an appropriate proof-text to use for the idea that "the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost" comes temporally after having "faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."

⁸³³ That they should have received any kind of training in a Jewish-derived faith and been baptized "unto John's baptism" without hearing anything at all about the Holy Ghost is almost inconceivable. Luke's point, however, is that John's message about a second baptism "with the Holy Ghost and with fire" had not reached them (see Luke 3:16).

⁸³⁴ As with Apollos (18:23), we have here an instance where John's message has spread farther than Jesus'.

⁸³⁵ John naturally had proper authority to baptize. Unless they were actually baptized by John himself, the odds are that they were baptized in imitation of what John did by someone not formally authorized to do so. In such a case, they would naturally require rebaptism.

⁸³⁶ A suspicious number, but that it is the same as the number of apostles and tribes of Israel would seem to be coincidence.

And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things⁸³⁷ concerning the kingdom of God.⁹ But when divers⁸³⁸ were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way⁸³⁹ before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.^{840 10} And this continued by the space of two years;⁸⁴¹ so that all they which dwelt in Asia⁸⁴² heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.¹¹ And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:^{843 12} So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs⁸⁴⁴ or aprons,⁸⁴⁵ and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

The Sons of Sceva

¹³ Then certain of the vagabond⁸⁴⁶ Jews, exorcists,⁸⁴⁷ took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul

⁸³⁷ IE *persuading [people concerning] the things*. The NRSV has “argued persuasively about.” The KJV has the advantage of being literal, but grossly misleading.

⁸³⁸ ΤΙΛΕΣ *tines* some [people].

⁸³⁹ τὴν ὁδὸν *tēn hodon* the Way, the gospel.

⁸⁴⁰ The Western text family adds the detail that Paul taught daily from the fifth hour to the tenth (that is, from roughly eleven in the morning to four in the afternoon). There is considerable feeling that this may be a genuinely accurate tradition, as it was the usual time for a midday siesta and not for instruction, meaning the hall would not otherwise be in use. (Paul also supported himself while in Ephesus according to 20:34, meaning that he could continue his regular trade and still teach during the daylight hours if he taught during the lunch break.) As for Tyrannus, he is otherwise unknown; nor do we know whether he himself taught at the hall or simply was its owner. The name is attested in first century Ephesus, however.

⁸⁴¹ It was during this period of time that Paul’s letters to the Corinthians were written, including the lost “0 Corinthians” mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9. Note that in 20:31, Paul says that he had been in Ephesus for three years.

⁸⁴² Typical Lucan hyperbole. Paul’s message could not reasonably spread throughout the entire Roman province while he stayed headquartered in Ephesus. Nonetheless, Ephesus would be an excellent base of operations for missionary activity in the region, and Paul had numerous assistants with him (EG Epaphras who preached in Colossae; Col. 1:7).

⁸⁴³ Paul is not generally seen as a miracle-worker, and it was certainly not a part of his ministry that he himself emphasized. For Luke, however, the working of miracles is consistently used as a means of emphasizing the legitimacy of Paul’s preaching. Here, in particular, he is able to contrast the results of Paul’s priesthood with the magic practiced by others in Ephesus.

⁸⁴⁴ σουδάρια *soudaria* a kerchief, from the Latin *sudarium*. This is a small piece of cloth used to wipe off sweat or worn to keep sweat out of the eyes.

⁸⁴⁵ σιμικίνθια, *simikinthia* from the Latin *semicinctium*, apron, cloth worn about the waist.

⁸⁴⁶ περιερχομένων *perierchomenōn* lit. going-about [like a beggar]. The NRSV and AB—F have “itinerant.” Luke is beginning his account with a scarcely positive appraisal of those whom he is characterizing.

⁸⁴⁷ Jesus and his disciples were not the only ones to attempt to cast out demons. Since mental illness was usually interpreted as demonic possession in antiquity, there would be a thriving trade in exorcism in the place of modern psychiatry.

preacheth.^{848 14} And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the priests,⁸⁴⁹ which did so.¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?¹⁶ And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.¹⁷ And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.¹⁸ And many that believed⁸⁵⁰ came, and confessed, and shewed⁸⁵¹ their deeds.¹⁹ Many of them also which used curious arts⁸⁵² brought their books⁸⁵³ together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.^{854 20} So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

*The Silversmiths' Riot*⁸⁵⁵

²¹ After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must⁸⁵⁶ also see

⁸⁴⁸ Magical spell-books were fairly indiscriminate about the sources they used for the names of the gods they invoked. Several exist, for example, that invoke the Jewish god under various pronunciations of his name. It is not surprising that some should attempt to use Jesus' name.

⁸⁴⁹ ἀρχιερέως *archiereōs*. This is the word usually used for the high priest in Jerusalem, but no high priest named Sceva is known. The KJV therefore adopts this translation to imply that Sceva was a local Levitical authority, which is certainly a possibility. It is also possible that Sceva was an ethnic Jew but an "apostate" follower of idolatry, or that he was advertising himself as a Jewish high priest to boost his income. The name Sceva itself is a Roman name, but so many Jews had Roman names that this is in and of itself meaningless.

⁸⁵⁰ Since Luke is here emphasizing the various forms of magic practiced in Ephesus and this verse is sandwiched between the humiliation of the sons of Sceva (false exorcists) and the magicians mentioned in v. 19, it is usually assumed that he means members of the Church who had continued to practice magic on the side or who had turned back to it.

⁸⁵¹ ἀναγγέλλοντες *anangellontes* reported on. That is, they divulged and made public what they had done in secret. Magic and secrecy were closely linked; although one would probably use the same spell-books as other sorcerers, one nonetheless would have variations on the standard spells or new spells which served as trade secrets and were guarded jealously.

⁸⁵² περίεργα *perierga* magic.

⁸⁵³ Ephesus was a well-known center for magic and the occult arts, including a set of spells referred to as the *Ephesia grammata*, which were doubtless included in the spell-books here burned. Spell-books themselves were a wide-spread and common form of ancient literature; one cannot help but think of modern self-help books.

⁸⁵⁴ That is, fifty thousand drachmae, what a working man would earn in three lifetimes.

⁸⁵⁵ Paul refers in 1 Cor. 15:32 to fighting "wild beasts" in Ephesus. This is a literal impossibility, as he was a Roman citizen and would not have been condemned to fight in the games. It is generally believed that his statement is, instead a metaphorical description of the opposition to his preaching in Ephesus (cf. 2 Cor. 1:9–11) and refers, most specifically, to the silversmiths' riot.

⁸⁵⁶ Luke uses the impersonal verb δεῖ *dei* here, implying inevitability; it is Paul's destiny to visit Rome.

Rome.^{857 22} So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus;⁸⁵⁸ but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.²³ And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.^{859 24} For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines⁸⁶⁰ for Diana,⁸⁶¹ brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;^{862 25} Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs,⁸⁶³ ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.²⁶ Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:²⁷ So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.²⁸ And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.²⁹ And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius⁸⁶⁴ and Aristarchus,⁸⁶⁵ men of Macedonia,

⁸⁵⁷ By mentioning Paul's planned itinerary here, Luke is able to portray the events that follow through the end of the book as being providential. The silversmiths' riot and subsequent need to leave Ephesus, Paul's arrest in Jerusalem and transport to Rome as a prisoner—all these are merely God's way of arranging for Paul to follow the plan the Spirit guided him to adopt. Note that Luke glosses over Paul's intention to eventually visit Spain as well (Rom. 15:24, 28); this fits in with the overall geographical organization of his work, which climaxes in Rome, not Spain.

⁸⁵⁸ *Erastus* means *beloved* and was a common name, just as its Latin equivalent, *Amanda*, is today. There are several Erastuses associated with Paul's ministry, but whether or not they are the same person is impossible to determine.

⁸⁵⁹ τῆς ὁδοῦ *tēs hodou* the Way, the Gospel.

⁸⁶⁰ Terra cotta models of the Artemision have been found, but no silver ones. It may be that Luke is mistaken and that Demetrius made small silver replicas of the statue of Artemis, but not of her temple.

⁸⁶¹ Ἀρτέμιδος *Artemidos* Artemis, the Greek goddess identified with the Roman goddess Diana. Nothing exemplifies the sometimes bizarre nature of the identification of one deity with another than the Ephesian Artemis. The Greek Artemis was Apollo's twin sister, the daughter of Zeus by Leto, and the goddess of the hunt and the moon. Her most notable characteristic was her almost fanatical chastity. She dismissed nymphs from her entourage who did not remain chaste and actually killed a mortal, Actaeon, who accidentally saw her bathing by turning him into a stag and having his own hounds tear him to pieces. Artemis of Ephesus, however, was an earth-mother fertility goddess similar to Cybele or Ashtoreth, usually depicted with (among other things) a torso covered with multiple smooth, round objects which might be breasts, eggs, or bull testicles, all symbols of fertility. The temple of Artemis outside Ephesus was called the Artemision. The Artemision was repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt; the one mentioned here was completed around 350 BC. It was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

⁸⁶² As the Artemision was the religious center of a major city, it was naturally the focus of a vigorous tourist trade.

⁸⁶³ ἄνδρες *andres* lit. men. This is a customary form used to open a speech and is found repeatedly in Acts, but generally in connection with another word. Standing by itself, a translation such as *gentlemen* or *sirs* seems reasonable.

⁸⁶⁴ The Romans had remarkably few first names in their repertoire. One of the most common was Gaius, or Caius—a spelling dating from before C and G became distinct in the

Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.^{866 30} And when Paul would have entered in unto the people,⁸⁶⁷ the disciples suffered him not.³¹ And certain of the chief of Asia,⁸⁶⁸ which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself⁸⁶⁹ into the theatre.³² Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly⁸⁷⁰ was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore⁸⁷¹ they were come together.³³ And they drew Alexander⁸⁷² out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.³⁴ But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.³⁵ And when the townclerk⁸⁷³ had appeased the people, he said, *Ye* men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana,⁸⁷⁴ and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter?^{875 36} Seeing then

Roman alphabet. Gaius is frequently abbreviated when giving a Roman's name, as in C. Julius Caesar. There are several men named Gaius mentioned in the NT; this may possibly be the same as the one mentioned in Acts 20:4, although this Gaius is said to be from Macedonia and the one in 20:4 from Derbe.

⁸⁶⁵ Aristarchus is also mentioned in 20:4 and 27:2. There is an Aristarchus mentioned in Col. 4:7 and Phil. 24. As is frequently the case, we have insufficient information to know for sure whether or not they are all the same man, but it seems reasonable to assume they are.

⁸⁶⁶ A natural gathering point. The theater in Ephesus has been excavated and could hold some 24,500 people.

⁸⁶⁷ δῆμον *dēmon*, meaning the people as a political body. It is the root of our word *democracy* (rule of the people). Ephesus was a free city and had a *demos* that exercised political functions as an assembly of the people; but as the town clerk will shortly observe, this is not a legal council meeting.

⁸⁶⁸ Ἀσιάρχων *Asiarchōn* Asiarchs. These were men selected by the cities of Asia to preside over local religious activities on behalf of the emperor and over the Imperial cult itself. (They may have had other responsibilities as well.) They would naturally be involved in a conflict such as this, and it is noteworthy that some, at least, are intervening on Paul's side.

⁸⁶⁹ δοῦναι ἑαυτὸν *dounai heauton* lit. give himself, here *give himself up, turn himself over*.

⁸⁷⁰ ἐκκλησία *ekklēsia* assembly. The word is usually used in Acts to mean *church* or *congregation*, but here and elsewhere in this chapter it has its basic political meaning.

⁸⁷¹ ἢ why. "Wherefore" is the opposite of "therefore."

⁸⁷² Otherwise unknown. His name was a popular one then as now, for obvious reasons.

⁸⁷³ γραμματεὺς *grammateus* lit. scribe, clerk. There were two town officials with this title, the People's Clerk and the Council Clerk. It is not clear which one is meant here, but it makes little difference. Luke's point in either case is that the response from the town's government is favorable to Paul.

⁸⁷⁴ A cult title for the Ephesian Artemis. Again, this sort of name is more appropriate for Cybele than for the Greeks' virgin huntress.

⁸⁷⁵ Zeus was a sky god. It would be natural, therefore, to associate any meteorite seen to have fallen to the ground with Zeus. Meteorites that are seen to fall are frequently taken as divine or sacred. The most notable modern example is probably the Black Stone in the Kaaba in Mecca. (It is naturally impossible to run tests on the Black Stone to confirm or deny its meteoric origin.) There is no other mention of the statue in the Artemision having been made from a

that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.³⁷ For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches,⁸⁷⁶ nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.³⁸ Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies:⁸⁷⁷ let them implead one another.^{878 39} But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.⁴⁰ For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar,⁸⁷⁹ there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.^{880 41} And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

Chapter 20

Eutychus Falls and is Healed by Paul

¹ AND after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples,⁸⁸¹ and embraced⁸⁸² *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia. ² And when he had gone over those parts,⁸⁸³ and

meteorite, and the statue itself no longer exists. Since Demetrius is complaining that Paul criticized the worship of idols “made with hands” (v. 26), the clerk is diplomatically reminding his auditors that *their* idol was made by Zeus, not by men.

⁸⁷⁶ ἱεροσύλους *hierosulous* a temple-robber, sacreligious person. The sanctity of temples made them a natural place to store valuables in the days before modern banking. They also would tend to accumulate wealth as the devout dedicated objects to the god or goddess. Naturally, this also made them a favorite target for thieves, invaders, or even greedy governments.

⁸⁷⁷ ἀνθύπατοι *anthupatoi* proconsuls. The use of the plural is technically incorrect, as only one proconsul served at a time. Here, however, reference is being made to ordered government in the abstract, not to a particular administration.

⁸⁷⁸ ἐγκαλείτωσαν ἀλλήλους *enkaleitōsan allēlois* bring charges against each other. That is, let Demetrius and Paul fight it out in the courts.

⁸⁷⁹ στάσεως *staseōs* strife. Ephesus was a free city, meaning that the Romans left it to run its own internal affairs. If, however, it were to be the scene of rioting, they might change their mind and formally incorporate it into their province.

⁸⁸⁰ συστροφῆς *sustrophēs* lit. with-turning, here *a mass of men, a mob*. The Latin *concourse* has a similar meaning.

⁸⁸¹ Better GR MSS have μεταπεμψάμενος ὁ Παῦλος τοὺς μαθητὰς καὶ παρακάλεσας *metapempsamenos ho Paulos tous mathētas kai parakalesas* Paul sent for the disciples and exhorted [them]. Luke is no longer dealing with Paul's proselyting directly. In chapter 20, he portrays Paul as wrapping up his missionary work and turning instead to exhorting and strengthening congregations he has already established.

⁸⁸² ἀσπασάμενος *aspasamenos*, whose root meaning is *greeting*. It can also have the sense *embrace*, which is a more reasonable translation in this context. The KJV sometimes translates the word *saluted*, which would work well here (see 21:7).

⁸⁸³ διελθὼν δὲ τὰ μέρη ἐκεῖνα *dielthōn de ta mere ekeina* having gone through those regions. It was likely during this period of time that Paul composed 2 Corinthians. He is also likely to have made the side-trip mentioned in Romans 15:19, which took him into Illyricum (a Roman province along the eastern side of the Adriatic, corresponding to Albania and what used

had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,^{884 3} And *there* abode three months.⁸⁸⁵ And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.⁴ And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater⁸⁸⁶ of Berea,⁸⁸⁷ and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus⁸⁸⁸ and Secundus;⁸⁸⁹ and Gaius of Derbe,⁸⁹⁰ and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus⁸⁹¹ and Trophimus.^{892 5} These going before tarried for us at Troas.^{893 6} And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread,⁸⁹⁴ and came unto them to Troas in five days;⁸⁹⁵ where we abode seven days.⁷ And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread,⁸⁹⁶ Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.⁸ And there were many lights⁸⁹⁷ in the upper

to be Yugoslavia). Luke may have been unaware of this trip, or he may have left it out deliberately as his focus is now on Paul's strengthening of established congregations and not his proselyting work. Note that Luke also fails to mention Paul's collecting funds for the relief of the Church in Jerusalem. The collection is a major theme in Paul's epistles to the Romans and Corinthians (e.g., Rom. 15:25–27, 1 Cor. 16:1–4, 2 Cor. 8:1–9:15, Gal. 2:10). Again, Luke may not have known about the collection, or he may have not brought it up because it was irrelevant to the story he was telling.

⁸⁸⁴ Ἑλλάδα *Hellada* Hellas. See 18:12n.

⁸⁸⁵ This may be when Paul composed Romans. It is likely that he visited some of the established congregations in mainland Greece, such as in Corinth or even Athens.

⁸⁸⁶ This may be the same as the Sosipater mentioned in Rom. 16:21.

⁸⁸⁷ See 17:10n.

⁸⁸⁸ See 19:29n.

⁸⁸⁹ Otherwise unknown. Secundus' name is Latin for [*son*] *number two*; the relative lack of Latin personal names meant that number-names such as Secundus, Septimus, or Decimus were common.

⁸⁹⁰ The idiosyncratic MS D has Dorberus instead of Derbe. Dorberus is a town in Macedonia near Philippi, which would make it possible for this Gaius to be the same as the one mentioned in 19:29 without problems regarding his place of origin.

⁸⁹¹ This may be the same as the letter-bearer mentioned in Col. 4:7–9 and Eph. 6:21–22.

⁸⁹² Trophimus was a Gentile. Jews who saw him with Paul in Rome assumed that Paul brought him into the temple, which provoked the riot leading to Paul's arrest (21:29). There is also a Trophimus mentioned in 2 Tim. 4:20, who may be the same man.

⁸⁹³ See 16:8n.

⁸⁹⁴ This dates Paul's return to Jerusalem in the spring, probably of AD 57 or thereabouts.

⁸⁹⁵ The trip from Troas to Philippi, sailing with prevailing winds, only took two days in 16:11. Here the trip is made against the wind and took over twice as long.

⁸⁹⁶ This notice has an important role in the history of sabbatarianism, that branch of Christianity that believes that Saturday should still be observed as the Sabbath. It would appear from this verse that by the mid-50's, Christians were already meeting together on Sunday for at least some of their worship services. Unfortunately, Luke does not tell us where or when this innovation was made. One assumes that it was done with the approval of appropriate Church leadership or even by a specific revelation, but there is no information in the NT on the subject.

⁸⁹⁷ It is not clear why Luke includes this detail. Does he mean to imply that it was stuffy and smoky, thus contributing to Eutychus' falling asleep? Is it part of the overall Christ-centered symbolism of his account? Is Luke countering anti-Christian literature, which asserted that the

chamber, where they were gathered together.⁹ And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus,⁸⁹⁸ being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching,⁸⁹⁹ he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft,⁹⁰⁰ and was taken up dead.¹⁰ And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him*⁹⁰¹ said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.⁹⁰² ¹¹ When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread,⁹⁰³ and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.¹² And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

Paul Arrives in Miletus

¹³ And we⁹⁰⁴ went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos,⁹⁰⁵ there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.¹⁴ And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.⁹⁰⁶ ¹⁵ And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios;⁹⁰⁷ and the next *day* we arrived at Samos,⁹⁰⁸ and tarried at Trogyllium,⁹⁰⁹ and the

Christians met in secret and in darkness? Note that Eutychus is sitting next to a window that is big enough for him to fall out, so he presumably had fresh air to breathe.

⁸⁹⁸ “Eutychus” (GR Εὐτυχος *eutuchos*) means *lucky*, which leads some commentators to speculate that Luke is here adapting a folk-tale rather than recounting history. Of course, “Lucky” may merely have been a nickname given Eutychus as the result of this incident.

⁸⁹⁹ Somehow, it is reassuring to know that even in the first century, some people had trouble staying awake during long sermons.

⁹⁰⁰ τριστέγου *tristegou* lit. third roof (a stegosaurus is a *roof-lizard*), here *third floor*.

⁹⁰¹ συμπεριλαβὼν *sumperilabōn* lit. *with-about-taking [him]*. Paul’s actions echo Elijah’s and Elisha’s when they raised the dead (1 Kings 17:21–22, 2 Kings 4:34–35).

⁹⁰² Some commentators have found Luke’s language sufficiently ambiguous as to doubt that Eutychus was actually dead. Most, however, assume that he was indeed killed by the fall (Luke does, after all, use the adjective νεκρός *nekros* dead in v. 9).

⁹⁰³ As in v. 7, this is likely a reference to what we now call the sacrament and other Christian churches call either the Lord’s Supper or the Eucharist. If so, then one should note that the raising of Eutychus is bracketed by partaking of the sacrament, before and after. Since the sacrament is tied in with symbols of Christ’s raising us from spiritual death, this is doubtless deliberate on Luke’s part—what Paul did for Eutychus is a type of what Christ does for us all.

⁹⁰⁴ JST “he,” which is an interesting change. Traditionally, Luke’s account of Paul’s journey from Troas to Jerusalem is taken as one of the “we-passages” of Acts, where Luke was presumably a companion of Paul as he traveled. If the JST reading is adopted, then the pronoun “he” lacks a clear antecedent—it cannot be Paul, after all, as he was going by land to Assos—and the transition to a first person plural narrative in v. 14 is more awkward.

⁹⁰⁵ A port at the northwestern corner of Asia Minor, just southwest of Troas on the other side of a small cape. Luke does not explain Paul’s mysterious behavior here—why embark from Assos and not Troas? Why does Paul send the others by boat and he himself go by land?

⁹⁰⁶ The chief city of the island of Lesbos in the Aegean. Lesbos is best known in the modern world for its female poet, Sappho, who wrote passionate love-poetry to other women. She probably did this because it was conventional to do so, but her poetry nonetheless gives us our word *lesbian* meaning a female homosexual.

⁹⁰⁷ A large island eight kilometers (five miles) off the coast of Asia Minor, west-northwest of Ephesus.

next day we came to Miletus.⁹¹⁰ ¹⁶ For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia:⁹¹¹ for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

Paul Bids Farewell to the Ephesian Elders

¹⁷ And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. ¹⁸ And when they were come to him, he said unto them,⁹¹² Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,⁹¹³ ¹⁹ Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations,⁹¹⁴ which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: ²⁰ And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, ²¹ Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God,⁹¹⁵ and faith toward⁹¹⁶ our Lord Jesus Christ. ²² And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: ²³ Save that⁹¹⁷ the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. ²⁴ But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. ²⁵ And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I

⁹⁰⁸ Another island in the eastern Aegean, some mile-and-a-half (two kilometers) off the coast of Asia Minor. Samos lies southwest of Ephesus.

⁹⁰⁹ A peninsula opposite Samos on the coast of Asia Minor. The notice that Paul's company "tarried at Trogyllium" is missing from better GR MSS.

⁹¹⁰ The modern Balat, Miletus was a large city near the mouth of the Meander river, whose winding course gives us the word *meander*. Miletus was only about forty miles (60 km) due south of Ephesus, but travel between the two would have been difficult. Overland travel was never easy in antiquity, and to sail between Ephesus and Miletus would require detouring westward around Trogyllium.

⁹¹¹ Miletus is, of course, just as much a part of Asia as Ephesus. Luke uses the verb χρονοτριβῆσαι *chronotribēsai*, which means *to waste time, loiter*. Luke may have misunderstood Paul's motivations here. Waiting for the Ephesian elders to meet him in Miletus would have added four or five days to his trip. It would have been much more convenient to meet them in Samos, which they could have easily reached by boat. It may be that Paul realized that his return to Ephesus might meet with a second riot and felt it prudent not to risk that.

⁹¹² The speech that follows is in the genre of farewell speeches. It serves as the formal conclusion to Paul's proselyting in Acts. Farewell speeches are often in the form of blessings and are frequent in Scripture (EG Jacob, Moses, Jesus, Lehi, Alma) and even in the modern Church (such as Bruce R. McConkie's farewell Conference sermon). This speech is also pastoral, that is, concerned with the problems of administering the Church, as opposed to being kerygmatic (proclaiming Christ) or apologetic (a legal defense).

⁹¹³ τὸν πάντα χρόνον *ton panta chronon* the whole time.

⁹¹⁴ πειρασμῶν *peirasmōn* trials.

⁹¹⁵ τὴν εἰς θεὸν μετάνοιαν *tēn eis theon metanoian* lit. the towards-God repentance, meaning something like "the repentance that turns one towards God."

⁹¹⁶ Ἰησὺ *Iēsu* "on the name of."

⁹¹⁷ πλὴν ὅτι *plēn hoti* except that.

have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.^{918 26} Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*.²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.⁹¹⁹

²⁸ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,⁹²⁰ to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.^{921 29} For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.^{922 30} Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things,⁹²³ to draw away disciples after them.³¹ Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.³² And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.³³ I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.³⁴ Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.³⁵ I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring

⁹¹⁸ Paul's career after the end of Acts is sketchy, and what little we know about it is based on controversial deductions from epistles attributed to Paul which may or may not be genuine. It is not clear whether Paul was correct in believing that he would never visit the Ephesian saints again.

⁹¹⁹ The parallels with Jacob's thinking in Jacob 2:2 are unmistakable. In both cases, a Church leader feels bearing moral responsibility for the sinfulness of others if he fails to instruct them properly.

⁹²⁰ ἐπίσκοπους *episkopous* lit. overseers, but this is the root of our word *bishop* and is elsewhere translated *bishop* in the KJV (EG 1 Tim. 3:1). When the KJV was published, there was considerable theological infighting between Catholics and Protestants and even between the high- and low-church branches of Protestantism over the English-language Bibles published. Such conflicts frequently influenced the decisions made as to how to translate certain words, ἐπίσκοπος *episkopos* among them. Thus here, Protestant translations such as the Geneva Bible (1560), the Bishop's Bible (1568) and the KJV use *overseers* and the Catholic Douay-Rheims translation of 1610 has *bishops*. As Luke nowhere else uses the word ἐπίσκοπος *episkopos* and tends to show individual congregations as ruled by groups of elders rather than by single individuals, he is likely *not* to have in mind someone corresponding to our modern bishops. If so, the translation *overseer* is to be preferred.

⁹²¹ Unusually high Christology for Acts. The one who "purchased [the Church] with his own blood" is, of course, Jesus, who is here being equated with God, whereas elsewhere in Acts "God" means the Father, not Jesus. Some GR MSS therefore change the phrase "the church of God" to "the church of the Lord," indisputably meaning Jesus in both cases. Even in the modern Church, although we believe that Jesus is God, when we refer to "God" without qualification we usually mean God the Father, not God the Son.

⁹²² LDS frequently use this verse as a prophecy of the Great Apostasy, but that is probably reading more into it than it deserves, as "grievous wolves" (a common metaphor for false teachers) can come into the Church without it becoming entirely apostate. Certainly such has been the experience of the modern Church, which has had struggles with false doctrine being taught almost from the day it was founded. Most such "wolves" are well intended if misinformed, but some are not. John C. Bennett is probably the best example of the latter.

⁹²³ διεστραμμένα *diestrammena* twisted, distorted things. *Perverted* is the Latin equivalent.

ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.⁹²⁴

³⁶ And⁹²⁵ when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed⁹²⁶ with them all. ³⁷ And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, ³⁸ Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

Chapter 21

Paul's Company Comes to Palestine; Paul Provokes a Riot in the Temple

¹ AND it came to pass, that after we were gotten⁹²⁷ from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos,⁹²⁸ and the *day* following unto Rhodes,⁹²⁹ and from thence unto Patara.⁹³⁰ ² And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. ³ Now when we had discovered⁹³¹ Cyprus, we left it on the left hand,⁹³² and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.⁹³³ ⁴ And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up⁹³⁴ to Jerusalem.⁹³⁵

⁹²⁴ A saying not found in any of the canonical Gospels. Such a saying is called an *agraphon* (GR for *unwritten thing*). As with the Golden Rule, found in Christ's teaching, this particular aphorism was not uncommon, although variously worded.

⁹²⁵ This is the last paragraph break in the KJV. The reason why the text is not divided into paragraphs beyond this point is unknown. We will continue to break the text of Acts into paragraphs, but they will now follow the paragraphing of the NRSV and not the KJV.

⁹²⁶ A typically Lucan notice.

⁹²⁷ ἀποσπασθέντας *apospasthentas* lit. torn away from. The implication is that this was a reluctant parting on Paul's part, as well.

⁹²⁸ Usually written "Cos," this is one of the many islands in the Aegean, almost due south of Miletus. Its chief city is also known as Cos.

⁹²⁹ Both a large island off the southeastern coast of Asia Minor and its capital city. Rhodes had earlier been one of the chief trading centers of the eastern Mediterranean, and its Colossus, a giant statue of the sun-god Helios, had been one of the Seven Wonders of the World before being destroyed by an earthquake.

⁹³⁰ A town on the Asia Minor mainland opposite Rhodes.

⁹³¹ ἀναφάναντες *anaphanantes* having come in sight of.

⁹³² εὐώνυμον *euōnumon* lit. well-named, a common euphemism for the generally ill-omened left side.

⁹³³ ἀποφορτιζόμενον τὸν γόμον *apophortizomenon ton gomon* unload [her] cargo.

⁹³⁴ μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν *mē epibainein* not to go to.

⁹³⁵ An interesting manifestation of the Spirit, given the divine providence that is paving Paul's way to Rome. Paul himself knew what awaited him in Jerusalem but was heading to his fate with eyes open (see 20:23). Except for this verse, however, at no point does Luke imply that Paul is acting contrary to God's will. One assumes that these disciples were told by the Spirit, as were others, that imprisonment awaited Paul in Jerusalem; but it was probably decided on their own and not under the influence of the Spirit that this implied that Paul should not be going there. There is a similarly complicated situation surrounding the martyrdom of Joseph Smith.

⁵ And when we had accomplished those days,⁹³⁶ we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. ⁶ And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

⁷ And when we had finished *our* course⁹³⁷ from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais,⁹³⁸ and saluted⁹³⁹ the brethren, and abode with them one day. ⁸ And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven;⁹⁴⁰ and abode with him. ⁹ And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. ¹⁰ And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet,⁹⁴¹ named Agabus.⁹⁴² ¹¹ And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle,⁹⁴³ and bound his own hands and feet,⁹⁴⁴ and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles. ¹² And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁴ And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

¹⁵ And after those days we took up our carriages,⁹⁴⁵ and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶ There went with us also *certain* of the disciples of Cæsarea, and brought with them one Mnason⁹⁴⁶ of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

¹⁷ And when we were come to Jerusalem,⁹⁴⁷ the brethren received us gladly. ¹⁸ And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James;⁹⁴⁸ and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ And when

⁹³⁶ ἐξαρτίσαι *exartisai* fulfil, complete. The sense here is that they had concluded their business in Tyre, presumably unloading and reloading the ship.

⁹³⁷ πλοῦν *ploun* voyage.

⁹³⁸ An important port town on the Mediterranean coast, also known as Acre and Acco. It is the modern Tel el-Fikhkhar, just north of the modern city of Haifa.

⁹³⁹ ἀσπασάμενοι *aspasamenoi* greeting.

⁹⁴⁰ See 6:5n.

⁹⁴¹ As always in Acts, this refers to someone with the gift of prophecy (cf. v. 9), and not someone holding a particular priesthood office.

⁹⁴² See 11:28n.

⁹⁴³ ζώνην *zōnēn* belt, (lower) girdle. This is the source of our word *zone*.

⁹⁴⁴ Agabus is here following in the tradition of various OT prophets, most notably Ezekiel, in acting out his prophecy as well as speaking it.

⁹⁴⁵ ἐπισκευασάμενοι *episkeusasamenoi* getting ready.

⁹⁴⁶ Otherwise unknown.

⁹⁴⁷ In the spring of AD 57 or 58.

⁹⁴⁸ Note that neither Peter nor John is mentioned. Traditionally, both were still alive. Peter is believed to have died under Nero's persecution of the Christians in the mid-60's, and modern Scripture reveals that John did not die but was translated (3 Nephi 28:6–7, D&C 7). John's public ministry did not cease until the end of the first century. James is functioning, as elsewhere, in Acts, as the head of the congregation in Jerusalem. Given the relatively informal nature of the first century hierarchy, he appears to be functioning also as president *pro tempore* of the Church in the absence of Peter, John, and the rest of the Twelve.

he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. ²⁰ And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands⁹⁴⁹ of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.⁹⁵⁰ ²¹ And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake⁹⁵¹ Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs. ²² What is it therefore?⁹⁵² the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. ²³ Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; ²⁴ Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads:⁹⁵³ and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. ²⁵ As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written *and* concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. ²⁶ Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

²⁷ And when the seven days⁹⁵⁴ were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, ²⁸ Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all *men* every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple,⁹⁵⁵ and hath polluted this holy place. ²⁹ (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian,⁹⁵⁶ whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) ³⁰ And all the city was moved,⁹⁵⁷ and the people ran together:⁹⁵⁸ and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were

⁹⁴⁹ μυριάδες *muriades*, whose literal meaning is *tens of thousands*, but, as in modern English, *myriad* could simply refer to a vague, large number.

⁹⁵⁰ ζηλωταὶ τοῦ νόμου *zēlōtai tou nomou*, for which *zealous of the law* is a literal if wooden translation. Modern translations prefer “zealous for the law.” These are Jewish Christians who do not object to Gentiles being admitted to the Church without having to keep the full Law, but who do hope that Jewish Christians will continue to do so as part of their cultural heritage. Their concern is that Paul’s teaching will eventually lead to what ultimately came about—that Jews as well as Gentiles could be good Christians and not keep the Law.

⁹⁵¹ ἀποστασίαν *apostasian* apostatize from, lit. stand away from. The charge, of course, is false and could not be substantiated from anything in either Acts or Paul’s epistles.

⁹⁵² τί οὖν ἐστὶν *ti oun estin* lit. what then is [it]? More colloquially, *What is it we should do?*

⁹⁵³ See 18:18n.

⁹⁵⁴ Luke seems to be confusing the purification rites at the end of a nazirite’s vow with the seven days’ purification needed if a nazirite is accidentally defiled (Num. 6:9–12).

⁹⁵⁵ Gentiles were forbidden to go further into the temple than the Court of the Gentiles. Slabs were erected with a warning in Greek and Latin, warning Gentiles of the death penalty that awaited them if they went further.

⁹⁵⁶ See 20:4n.

⁹⁵⁷ ἐκινήθη *ekinēthē* lit. moved, stirred up, aroused.

⁹⁵⁸ One cannot help but be reminded of the silversmiths’ riot in Ephesus. There, as here, Paul is seen as a threat to the traditional way of life and is in danger of being lynched. Note in

shut.⁹⁵⁹ ³¹ And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain⁹⁶⁰ of the band,⁹⁶¹ that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³² Who⁹⁶² immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them.⁹⁶³ and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. ³³ Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. ³⁴ And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.⁹⁶⁴ ³⁵ And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people. ³⁶ For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

³⁷ And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? ³⁸ Art not thou that Egyptian,⁹⁶⁵ which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men⁹⁶⁶ that were murderers?⁹⁶⁷ ³⁹ But Paul said, I am a man *which am* a Jew of Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, a

particular that it is an Ephesian gentile (Demetrius, Trophimus) who is the immediate cause of the rioting in both cases, although for different reasons.

⁹⁵⁹ Presumably this means the temple police closed the gates of the temple to prevent the rioting from spilling over into the temple precincts and profaning it. Luke may intend a symbolic meaning here, too: the heart of Judaism is being closed to Paul because of the obstinacy of a small number of Jews.

⁹⁶⁰ χιλιάρχη *chiliarchō* [military] tribune. This is a military officer in charge of a cohort of (nominally) one thousand men. It corresponds roughly with our rank of lieutenant, although there are more men under a tribune's command. This would often be the first military rank for a Roman aristocrat working his way up the military and political ladder.

⁹⁶¹ σπείρης *speirēs*, whose root meaning is anything wound up (hence our *spiral*). Among its meanings is a body of men-at-arms. When referring to the Roman army, it is used both for a maniple (two centuries with one hundred men each) or a full cohort.

⁹⁶² ὅς *hos*. Although this is a relative pronoun (*who*), it can serve as a personal pronoun (*he*) and is doing so here.

⁹⁶³ There was a large Roman fort, the Antonia, at the northwest corner of the temple precincts, connected to them by two staircases. The Romans kept soldiers in Jerusalem both to keep anti-Roman activity at a minimum but also in case riots broke out as here. The Antonia had originally been built by the Maccabees, but it was rebuilt by Herod the Great and named for his friend Marc Antony. In addition to holding a detachment of Roman troops, the high priest's vestments were kept in the Antonia between festivals.

⁹⁶⁴ παρεμβολήν *parembolēn* encampment, fortress.

⁹⁶⁵ Josephus (*Ant.* 20.169–172, *JW* 2.261–263) recounts the story of an Egyptian prophet who brought a mob to the Mount of Olives to watch the walls of Jerusalem fall. His uprising was suppressed by the Roman soldiers.

⁹⁶⁶ Josephus gives this number as 30,000. In Greek numerals, 4,000 is written with Δ and 30,000 with Λ. It is generally believed that the similarity between the two resulted in the confusion. 4,000 is the more probable figure.

⁹⁶⁷ σικαρίων *sikariōn* terrorists, assassins. The *sicarii* were so called because of the type of dagger (*sica*) they used. They were devoted to an immediate, violent overthrow of what they considered the oppressive Roman imperialist regime.

citizen⁹⁶⁸ of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.⁴⁰ And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue,⁹⁶⁹ saying,⁹⁷⁰

Chapter 22

Paul's Defense

¹ MEN, brethren, and fathers,⁹⁷¹ hear ye my defence⁹⁷² *which I make* now unto you.

² (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

³ I am verily a man *which am* a Jew,⁹⁷³ born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city⁹⁷⁴ at the feet of Gamaliel,⁹⁷⁵ *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous⁹⁷⁶ toward God, as ye all are this day.⁹⁷⁷ ⁴ And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. ⁵ As also the high priest

⁹⁶⁸ Multiple citizenship was possible and common in imperial Rome. Paul is, at least, a citizen of both Tarsus and Rome itself. (Roman citizenship, strictly speaking, would still refer to citizenship in the city of Rome itself, no matter one's domicile.)

⁹⁶⁹ τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ *Hebraidi dialektō*. The root meaning of διάλεκτος *dialektos* is *a* debate, discourse, hence *the language one speaks while making a discourse, a dialect, accent*. Paul presumably spoke Aramaic, a language closely related to Hebrew, which was the *lingua franca* of the region, but some commentators argue that he was actually speaking Hebrew here.

⁹⁷⁰ This is the single most awkward chapter division in the Bible, and the only place where a chapter in the KJV does not end with a period.

⁹⁷¹ Ironically, Paul begins his first defense speech with the same words that Stephen had used under not dissimilar circumstances; see 7.1.

⁹⁷² ἀπολογία *apologias*. The word gives rise to the English *apology*, but its basic meaning is *legal defense*. Plato's *Apology*, for example, is his account of Socrates' defense speech before the Athenians on charges of impiety and corrupting the young. Apologetics as a branch of theology that deals with defending religion from attack. Much of the best work being done by modern LDS intellectuals is apologetic in nature.

⁹⁷³ ἐγὼ εἰμι ἄνθρωπος Ἰουδαῖος *egō eimi anēr Ioudaios* lit. I am a Jewish man. The explicit presence of the pronoun gives the phrase particular emphasis: *I really am a Jew*.

⁹⁷⁴ ἀνατεθραμμένος δὲ ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ *anatethrammenos de en tē polei tautē*, which is ambiguous. The particle *de* connects two thoughts. It usually (but not always) carries a slight contrastive sense, and so it can be translated either as *and* or as *but*, depending on the sense of the passage. ταῦτος *tautos* can similarly mean either *this* or *that*, depending on context. The phrase might therefore mean either *and raised/educated in that city [Tarsus]* or *but raised/educated in this city [Jerusalem]*. The latter is the more likely meaning.

⁹⁷⁵ See 5:34n.

⁹⁷⁶ ζηλωτῆς ὑπάρχων *zēlōtēs huparchōn* being a zealot. The KJV rendering can imply a contrast (*I used to be zealous but I'm not zealous now*) that is not present in the GR.

⁹⁷⁷ This all squares with Paul's self-portrait in his epistles.

doth bear me witness,⁹⁷⁸ and all the estate of the elders:⁹⁷⁹ from whom also I received letters⁹⁸⁰ unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

⁶ And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon,⁹⁸¹ suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. ⁷ And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? ⁸ And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. ⁹ And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.⁹⁸² ¹⁰ And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. ¹¹ And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

¹² And one Ananias,⁹⁸³ a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*,⁹⁸⁴ ¹³ Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour⁹⁸⁵ I looked up upon him. ¹⁴ And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. ¹⁵ For thou shalt be his witness⁹⁸⁶ unto all men of what thou hast seen and

⁹⁷⁸ It is odd that Paul should appeal to (apparently) the current high priest. Paul received his commission to prosecute the Christians of Damascus the better part of a generation earlier, while Caiaphas was still high priest. The high priest at the time of his arrest was Ananias, son of Nedebaeus.

⁹⁷⁹ πρεσβυτέριον *presbuterion* body of elders. The KJV uses *estate* in an archaic sense, as a political body representing a certain class of people (as in the Estates-General of pre-Revolutionary France). Though the high priest had changed since Paul's conversion, there would have been many men still in the Sanhedrin who would have personally remembered Paul the persecutor.

⁹⁸⁰ ἐπιστολὰς *epistolās*, which can mean both *letter* and *epistle*. The distinction between the two words that we sometimes make in modern English is missing in NT Greek.

⁹⁸¹ This detail is missing from ch. 9. Including it emphasizes that what Paul underwent was an objectively real experience.

⁹⁸² This blatantly contradicts the account of Paul's conversion in 9:7 (q.v.); the JST corrects 9:7 to remove the contradiction. Some, however, would resolve the contradiction by an appeal to the GR. The verb "hear" used in 9:7 takes a genitive object, but here the same verb takes an accusative object. The NASB and NIV translate the former by *heard* and the latter by *understood*—they heard the voice, that is, but did not understand it. This approach is based on the assumption that the Biblical text *cannot* contradict itself, however, and is not universal. For example, the NRSV uses *heard* in both cases. The actual verb is the same in both places.

⁹⁸³ See 9:10n.

⁹⁸⁴ Paul's characterization of Ananias and the emphasis on Ananias' Jewishness is appropriate for his audience. Note that he does not even explicitly identify Ananias as a Christian.

⁹⁸⁵ αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ *autē tē hōra*. While "the same hour" is literally accurate, it is probably too weak. The NIV, for example, has "at that very moment."

⁹⁸⁶ μάρτυς *martus* witness. See v. 20n.

heard.¹⁶ And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

¹⁷ And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;⁹⁸⁷ ¹⁸ And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.¹⁹ And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:²⁰ And when the blood of thy martyr⁹⁸⁸ Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.²¹ And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send⁹⁸⁹ thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

Paul's Audience Threatens to Riot; He is Taken into Custody by the Romans

²² And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.²³ And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,⁹⁹⁰ ²⁴ The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging,⁹⁹¹ that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.⁹⁹² ²⁵ And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?²⁶ When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.²⁷ Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.²⁸ And the chief captain answered, With a great

⁹⁸⁷ ἐκστασει *ekstasei* a trance. Cf. 10:10. There are no other accounts of this vision. It is notable, however, in its location. It is typical of Luke to explicitly mention that so momentous an event took place within the Temple. In the context of Paul's defense, it also strengthens his characterization of himself as a pious Jew. It outrages his Jewish audience, however, when they hear that so blasphemous an event should take place within their holiest place.

⁹⁸⁸ μάρτυρος *marturos* lit. witness. LDS may prefer the translation "testifier." The word quickly gained a specialized meaning within Christianity, referring to one who died for his testimony of Jesus, a significance the word *martyr* still has. Stephen is still considered the first Christian martyr in the specialized sense. (Technically, of course, there are people in the Book of Mormon who were killed because of their testimonies of Jesus long before Jesus was born, but that is an irrelevant detail here.) Cf. v. 15, where the same word is used in its original sense. There is a transformation here, from Paul the witness of the martyrdom of Stephen the witness, to Paul the witness of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

⁹⁸⁹ ἐξαποστελῶ *exapostelō* I will send out. The verb is closely related with ἀποστέλλω *apostellō* and hence with ἀπόστολος *apostolos* apostle.

⁹⁹⁰ Throwing dust into the air is a symbolic act, although some commentators take it as meaning that the Jews were throwing at Paul the only thing that was at hand to throw.

⁹⁹¹ Scourging was frequently used by the Romans to interrogate prisoners. It was a brutal technique that would often leave the prisoner crippled if not dead. It was also illegal to use on Roman citizens.

⁹⁹² The tribune could probably not understand Aramaic and therefore not know what Paul said. Even if he had understood the words, it is unlikely he would have comprehended what Paul was talking about or why his audience reacted as they did.

sum obtained I this freedom.⁹⁹³ And Paul said, But I was *free* born.⁹⁹⁴ ²⁹ Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.⁹⁹⁵

³⁰ On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands,⁹⁹⁶ and commanded⁹⁹⁷ the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

Chapter 23

Paul Addresses the Sanhedrin

¹ AND Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. ² And the high priest Ananias⁹⁹⁸ commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.⁹⁹⁹ ³ Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou* whited wall.¹⁰⁰⁰ for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? ⁴ And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? ⁵ Then said

⁹⁹³ We will learn in 23:26 that the tribune's name is Claudius Lysias. He probably took the name Claudius in honor of the reigning emperor upon purchase of his citizenship. Claudius' wife Messalina boosted sales of Roman citizenship as a means of raising money for herself.

⁹⁹⁴ There is a sense of one-upsmanship here. The tribune is rattled to find out that he was about to torture a Roman citizen and therefore brags about his own citizenship and the financial security that allowed him to acquire it, implying, perhaps, that Paul looked rather shoddy for a Roman. Paul trumps that; his father was a free Roman citizen, and so, therefore, was he.

⁹⁹⁵ The JST transfers the detail that the captain loosed Paul from his bands here from v. 30. The standard text shows the captain as leaving Paul in chains even though he was afraid of retribution for chaining a Roman citizen; the JST corrects this point. Some GR MSS also make this alteration, but in this case it would seem to be an uninspired but lucky correction, rather than the survival of a correct original.

⁹⁹⁶ That Paul was released from his chains is a detail lacking in better GR MSS. In any event, he was still a prisoner.

⁹⁹⁷ ἐκέλευσεν *ekeleusen* urged, commanded. The word is too strong; Lysias did not have authority to order a meeting of the Sanhedrin. There are other difficulties with Luke's account that follows; it may be that Lysias requested an informal gathering and not a formal trial before the Jewish council.

⁹⁹⁸ This is the third Ananias in Acts. Ananias son of Nedebeaus was high priest from AD 47 to 58 and is therefore nearing the end of his time in office in this chapter. Notoriously corrupt and pro-Roman, he was hated by the Jews and killed by a mob in AD 66.

⁹⁹⁹ Luke is unclear as to why Ananias ordered Paul to be struck. Did he think Paul was being presumptuous in claiming to have a clear conscience before God? Was he upset that Paul started speaking without being asked? Or that Paul addressed the members of the Sanhedrin as "brothers" and not "fathers"? In any event, one must not lose sight of Luke's point—that Paul was scrupulous to keep the Law, and Ananias was not.

¹⁰⁰⁰ τοῖχε κεκοιανμένε *toiche kekoniamene* O whitewashed wall! That is, Paul sees Ananias as a man who is covering his corrupt heart with a thin veneer of a righteous appearance.

Paul, I wist not,¹⁰⁰¹ brethren, that he was the high priest:¹⁰⁰² for it is written, **Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.**¹⁰⁰³

⁶ But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees,¹⁰⁰⁴ he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.¹⁰⁰⁵ ⁷ And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit:¹⁰⁰⁶ but the Pharisees confess both.¹⁰⁰⁷ ⁹ And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.¹⁰⁰⁸ ¹⁰ And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.

¹⁰⁰¹ JST "I did not know," removing an archaism.

¹⁰⁰² It stretches one's credulity to believe that Paul would not know who presided at meetings of the Sanhedrin. Luke, however, may not have known, or it may be that we should picture Paul as trying to cover gracefully over an unfortunate outburst. Or it might be that this is not a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin, leaving some doubt as to who is presiding, or that Paul is ironic here—judging from the man's behavior and violation of the Law, he could not possibly be the high priest. Again, however, Luke's fundamental goal is to portray Paul as obedient to the Law.

¹⁰⁰³ Exo. 22:27.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Paul had of course known this all along. Luke means that he suddenly realized that it gave him an opening to exploit.

¹⁰⁰⁵ This was one of the main points of doctrinal contention between the two parties. The Sadducees rejected anything not explicitly mentioned in the Law. As there are no passages in the Law that teach of a resurrection, they therefore would not accept it (see v. 8). Some commentators find it unlikely that a meeting of the Sanhedrin could be disrupted by Paul raising so obvious a point; human beings, however, have been known to let the most trivial of causes distract them from relatively weighty matters.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Luke's statement that the Sadducees denied "angel" and "spirit" is unclear and is not attested outside the Bible. Angelic appearances are frequent in the Torah, for one thing, and it is difficult to know what Luke felt they denied in the case of "spirit." It may be that the Sadducees believed that angels appeared in far antiquity but did so no more, as do some modern Christians. One common theory is that the Sadducees did not believe that men could be resurrected either as (embodied) angels or as spirits; that is, that they believed that there was *no* contact between the dead and the living.

¹⁰⁰⁷ ἀμφότερα *amphotera*, which usually means *both of two* (an *amphibian* is an animal that leads a *both-life*), but can mean *all* and does here. *Both* can on rare occasions mean *all* in English, as well.

¹⁰⁰⁸ This is similar to Gamaliel's advice in 5:33–39. There is no question here of the Pharisees actually accepting Paul's statement that he saw the resurrected Jesus and was commanded to become a Christian. They seem more interested, however, in scoring off their political opponents in the Sanhedrin than pursuing justice in Paul's case.

¹¹ And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must¹⁰⁰⁹ thou bear witness also at Rome.

¹² And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.¹⁰¹⁰ ¹³ And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy. ¹⁴ And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. ¹⁵ Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near,¹⁰¹¹ are ready to kill him.

¹⁶ And when Paul's sister's son¹⁰¹² heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul. ¹⁷ Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. ¹⁸ So he took him, and brought *him* to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee. ¹⁹ Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me? ²⁰ And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire¹⁰¹³ somewhat of him more perfectly.¹⁰¹⁴ ²¹ But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee. ²² So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou* tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

²³ And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen¹⁰¹⁵ two hundred,¹⁰¹⁶ at the third hour of the night;¹⁰¹⁷ ²⁴ And provide *them* beasts,¹⁰¹⁸ that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe¹⁰¹⁹ unto Felix the governor.¹⁰²⁰ ²⁵ And he wrote a letter after this manner:¹⁰²¹

¹⁰⁰⁹ δεῖ *dei*, indicating, as always, absolute necessity or even destiny.

¹⁰¹⁰ Such an approach to religion is not restricted to first century Jews. One cannot help but wonder what they did when it became clear that Paul was irrevocably out of their reach.

¹⁰¹¹ JST “before he come near,” removing an archaism but retaining the subjunctive.

¹⁰¹² This is the only mention in the entire NT of Paul's family. Were they Christians? Did Paul's sister live in Jerusalem, too? Did he have any other siblings, a wife, or children? What of his parents? We have no way of knowing, although some hints in 1 Corinthians suggest that he *may* have been married himself at one point.

¹⁰¹³ διαγινώσκειν *diaginōskein* lit. discern, but in a legal context, *render judgment*. They are to pretend they wish to pursue Paul's case further.

¹⁰¹⁴ ἀκριβέστερον *akribesteron* more accurately, more precisely.

¹⁰¹⁵ δεξιολάβους *dexiolabous*, the meaning of which is uncertain. *Spearmen* is a common guess.

¹⁰¹⁶ The total company is thus 470 and represents roughly half the company under Lysias' command. This is an astonishingly large escort. Luke is emphasizing Lysias' desire to keep Paul safe.

¹⁰¹⁷ ἸΕ, roughly nine o'clock p.m.

¹⁰¹⁸ κτήνη *ktēnē* mounts, pack animals.

²⁶ Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent¹⁰²² governor Felix *sendeth* greeting. ²⁷ This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.¹⁰²³ ²⁸ And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: ²⁹ Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law,¹⁰²⁴ but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. ³⁰ And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what *they had* against him. Farewell.

³¹ Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.¹⁰²⁵ ³² On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle.¹⁰²⁶ ³³ Who, when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him. ³⁴ And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what

¹⁰¹⁹ Such a large movement of troops would, of course, come to the attention of Paul's enemies; but even if they suspected that Paul was the reason behind the expedition and somewhere within it, they would be helpless to act.

¹⁰²⁰ Antonius Felix (whose name means *happy* in Latin) was a freedman of Antonia Minor, the daughter of Marc Anthony and mother of the emperor Claudius. Felix' brother was Claudius' favorite, Pallas. Felix served as procurator of Judea from perhaps 52 to 59/60; the information on his period in office is inconsistent. Unlike other Roman governors of the region whose reputation is mixed depending on the writer, nobody has anything good to say about Felix. The Roman historian Tacitus, in a particularly memorable passage, characterizes him as one who "exercised the power of a king in the spirit of a slave." (*Histories* 5.9) Felix may be taken as a type of the lower-class scoundrel whose association with Claudius helped make the emperor odious to the Senatorial class.

¹⁰²¹ The phrase *after this manner* (GR ἔχουσιν τὸν τύπον τοῦτον *echousan ton tupon touton* lit. having this pattern) may be Luke's explicit admission that he did not actually have the letter in front of him (which would, in any case, be unlikely). It is most probable that Luke was aware of the general tenor of Lysias' letter to Felix and composed something appropriate for the occasion. Certainly the letter found here follows the proper pattern for Roman correspondence from an underling to his superior.

¹⁰²² κρατίστῳ *kratistō*, the same term of address used by Luke of Theophilus (Luke 1:3). Strictly speaking, Felix as a freedman and not a knight should not be so addressed. Either Lysias is buttering him up, or Luke slipped.

¹⁰²³ Lysias is lying here, of course, and trying to impress his commander with his foresight. According to 22:27, Lysias did not find out that Paul was a Roman until well after he had been rescued, when Lysias was about to torture him to find out what the rioting was about.

¹⁰²⁴ One is reminded of Gallio's attitude in 18:14–16.

¹⁰²⁵ A town some forty miles (sixty kilometers) along the road from Jerusalem to Caesarea. It was built in 9 BC by Herod the Great, probably on or near the site of the OT town Aphek, and named for Herod's father, Antipater. Traveling there by night would require considerable effort on the part of the infantry accompanying Paul.

¹⁰²⁶ The journey from Antipatris to Caesarea would be through largely Gentile territory and could be done in a more leisurely fashion during the day, nor would so large an escort be needed.

province he was. And when he understood that *he was* of Cilicia;^{1027 35} I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.¹⁰²⁸

Chapter 24

The Case Against Paul

¹ AND after five days Ananias the high priest descended¹⁰²⁹ with the elders, and *with* a certain orator¹⁰³⁰ *named* Tertullus, who informed¹⁰³¹ the governor against Paul. ² And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse *him*, saying,¹⁰³²

Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness,¹⁰³³ and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation¹⁰³⁴ by thy providence,^{1035 3} We accept *it* always, and in all places, most noble¹⁰³⁶ Felix, with all thankfulness.^{1037 4} Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee,¹⁰³⁸ I

¹⁰²⁷ Why this should make a difference is unclear. Cilicia and Judea were both at this time part of the province of Syria, so Felix may have felt that the case reasonably belonged within his jurisdiction. Or it may be that Felix simply did not want to proceed until he knew he could fob the case off on someone else if it got too sticky.

¹⁰²⁸ πραιτωρίῳ *praitōriō* praetorium, the headquarters of the *praetor* or governor. Here it refers to the palace of Herod the Great, which had become the residence of the Roman governor.

¹⁰²⁹ κατέβη *katebē* came down. As usual, Luke has chosen a word appropriate for Palestine's geography: Jerusalem's altitude is considerably greater than Caesaria's.

¹⁰³⁰ Although the law and legal forms were important to the Romans, actual advocacy of a particular legal position was sometimes more a matter of how well it was presented than the actual merits of the case. (Nor did the Romans have the modern English and American concept of case law.) Cases were therefore argued by orators whose main training was to make the most polished and persuasive presentation possible.

¹⁰³¹ ἐνεφάνισαν *enephanisan* lit. to make visible, here *to bring forth charges, to indict*.

¹⁰³² Tertullus' speech, although clearly a Lucan composition and not the actual words spoken by Tertullus, is a masterpiece, the first half consisting of a flattering address to Felix, and the last half of a strong denunciation of Paul.

¹⁰³³ This was actually true. Felix ruthlessly suppressed the party of the Sicarii (assassins/terrorists). Ironically, Felix' general cruelty and rapaciousness were a direct cause of a rebellion worse than that of the Sicarii, namely the Jewish revolt of AD 66. Some commentators, nonetheless, are reminded of the bitter statement of an opponent to Roman power as quoted by Tacitus, that the Romans "make a desert and call it 'peace.'" (*Agricola* 30)

¹⁰³⁴ τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ *tō ethnei toutō*. An ἔθνος *ethnos* is a nation in the sense of a people with common customs and language (it is the root of our word *ethnic*). By referring to the Jews as *this nation*, Tertullus may be starting out his speech by distancing himself from the Jews. "I am not a Jew," he may be implying. "I am a Greek; you may trust what I say." At the same time, he does seem to include himself as a Jew later in his speech.

¹⁰³⁵ προνοίας *pronoias* foresight, prudence.

¹⁰³⁶ κράτιστε *kratiste*. See 23:26n.

¹⁰³⁷ As Lysias had done (and Paul would yet do), Tertullus is currying Felix' favor shamelessly. Such sycophancy is not limited to antiquity (witness the KJV's dedicatory epistle to

pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.⁵ For we have found this man a pestilent fellow,¹⁰³⁹ and a mover of sedition¹⁰⁴⁰ among all the Jews throughout the world,¹⁰⁴¹ and a ringleader of the sect¹⁰⁴² of the Nazarenes.¹⁰⁴³ ⁶ Who also hath gone about to profane the temple:¹⁰⁴⁴ whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.¹⁰⁴⁵ ⁷ But the chief captain Lysias¹⁰⁴⁶ came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,⁸ Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom¹⁰⁴⁷ thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

King James) and continues in some places to the present day. It was, nonetheless, expected of an orator arguing a legal case; the Romans called it *captatio benevolentiae* (reaching to catch good will).

¹⁰³⁸ ἵνα δὲ μὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖόν σε ἐγκόπτω *hina de mē epi pleion se enkoptō* that I hinder you/get in your way no further, implying that Felix has much more important things to do than deal with a silly little matter of internal Jewish affairs.

¹⁰³⁹ λοιμὸν *loimon* a plague, pest. Paul is a flea on the Roman body politic.

¹⁰⁴⁰ στάσεις *staseisa*. See 15:2n. This is, of course, a political charge, and one to which the Romans would pay attention above all others.

¹⁰⁴¹ οἰκουμένην *oikoumenēn*, a favorite word of Luke's. It literally means *inhabited regions of the world*, but Tertullus is referring specifically to the only parts of the world Felix would care about—the areas controlled by Rome directly or indirectly. Even so, Paul has yet to leave the eastern half of the Empire; Tertullus' statement is a gross, but standard, exaggeration.

¹⁰⁴² αἵρεσεως *haireseōs* lit. choosing, but with extended meanings such as *religious sect* and ultimately *heresy*. See 5:17n. *Sect* is a fortuitous choice for an English translation, as the word is used in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as a derogatory term for religious parties with which one disagrees. Αἵρεσις *hairesis* does not *necessarily* have a negative connotation—it is the usual GR word to use in describing “sects” such as the Pharisees and Sadducees themselves, as in 26:5—but it may and appears to do so here. Tertullus' choice of words would then be aimed at eliciting Felix' negative response. One of Luke's themes in Acts is that the Roman administrators who first encountered Christianity never saw any reason to suppress it. Tertullus, however, is here shown as trying to imply that it *should* be suppressed, and Paul punished for being one of its ringleaders.

¹⁰⁴³ This is the only place in the NT where Christians are referred to as “Nazarenes.” The term is occasionally used in later years to refer to some heterodox Jewish Christians. In modern times, there is a Church of the Nazarene, whose members are called Nazarenes.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Profanation of the Temple was not against Roman law *per se*, but the Romans supported the Jewish authorities (as they did others) in maintaining the sanctity of recognized holy places.

¹⁰⁴⁵ This would be the Sanhedrin's right. Purely internal matters were usually left to local authorities by the Romans.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Having characterized Paul as a criminal (spreading sedition, belonging to an illegal sect, profaning the Temple), Tertullus now turns on Lysias, whom he denounces both for using unnecessary violence and for exceeding his authority. Note, however, that vv. 6b–8a (from *and would have judged through to come unto thee*) are missing in the best GR MSS. Textual scholars disagree on whether they should be included, but the preponderance of evidence is in favor of omitting them.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Depending on whether vv. 6b–8a are included, this refers either to Lysias or to Paul.

⁹ And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

¹⁰ Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered,

Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself.¹⁰⁴⁸ ¹¹ Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. ¹² And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city. ¹³ Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. ¹⁴ But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy,¹⁰⁴⁹ so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.¹⁰⁵⁰ ¹⁵ And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. ¹⁶ And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. ¹⁷ Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation,¹⁰⁵¹ and offerings. ¹⁰⁵² ¹⁸ Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. ¹⁹ Who ought to have been here before thee,¹⁰⁵³ and object, if they had ought¹⁰⁵⁴ against me. ¹⁰⁵⁵ ²⁰ Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, ²¹ Except it be for this one voice,¹⁰⁵⁶ that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

²² And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way,¹⁰⁵⁷ he deferred them,¹⁰⁵⁸ and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost¹⁰⁵⁹ of your matter. ²³ And he commanded a centurion to keep¹⁰⁶⁰ Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Paul begins politely, but his flattery of Felix is far less offensively fulsome than Tertullus' had been.

¹⁰⁴⁹ αἵρεσιν *haireisin*, which should be translated *a sect* here to parallel the use of the same word in v. 5.

¹⁰⁵⁰ That is, Paul is a Jew, and Christianity is just a form of Judaism. Judaism was legal, and so, therefore, was Christianity.

¹⁰⁵¹ This is the only mention in Acts of Paul's main purpose in returning to Jerusalem, his collection for the temporal relief of the Jewish Saints.

¹⁰⁵² That is, those given to release the four Jewish Christians from their vows; see 21:23–24.

¹⁰⁵³ Roman law required plaintiffs personally to appear in court to argue their case. Paul is suggesting that the *real* plaintiffs are the Asian Jews who started the riot in the temple and who are not present.

¹⁰⁵⁴ IE anything at all. *Ought* is here a spelling variant of *ought*.

¹⁰⁵⁵ This is a sentence fragment, both in English and in Greek. It may be unintentional on Luke's part, but it does reflect the almost breathless style characteristic of Paul.

¹⁰⁵⁶ μίας ταύτης φωνῆς *mias tautēs phōnēs*, for which *this one voice* is accurate but awkward. The NRSV has *this one sentence*.

¹⁰⁵⁷ IE Christianity, the Way. As usual in Acts, the KJV prefers "*that way*" with an implied demonstrative to translate ἡ ὁδός *hē hodos* the Way.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Such was Felix' right. He could defer a case indefinitely if he chose to.

¹⁰⁵⁹ διαγνώσομαι *diagnōsomai* determine/decide (in a legal sense). The NRSV has "I will decide your case."

²⁴ And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla,¹⁰⁶¹ which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul,¹⁰⁶² and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. ²⁵ And as he reasoned of¹⁰⁶³ righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled,¹⁰⁶⁴ and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season,¹⁰⁶⁵ I will call for thee. ²⁶ He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him:¹⁰⁶⁶ wherefore he sent for him the oftener,¹⁰⁶⁷ and communed¹⁰⁶⁸ with him.

²⁷ But after two years Porcius Festus¹⁰⁶⁹ came into Felix' room:¹⁰⁷⁰ and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.¹⁰⁷¹

¹⁰⁶⁰ τηρεῖσθαι *tēreisthai* to keep, guard.

¹⁰⁶¹ The daughter of Claudius' friend Herod Agrippa I and great-granddaughter of Herod the Great. She left her husband Azizus of Emesa for Felix. According to Suetonius, Felix had also been married to a granddaughter of Marc Anthony and Cleopatra VII and to a third, unknown, woman who was also a princess.

¹⁰⁶² The Western text adds that Felix sent for Paul at Drusilla's request.

¹⁰⁶³ διαλεγομένου...περὶ *dialegomenou...peri* conversed regarding, discoursed on.

¹⁰⁶⁴ ἔμφοβος γενόμενος *emphobos genomenos* becoming terrified. Felix would be unable to live the lifestyle to which he was accustomed if he became a Christian; the thought that Paul's message might actually be true frightens him.

¹⁰⁶⁵ καιρὸν *kairon* the appropriate time for something.

¹⁰⁶⁶ That Felix should have been waiting for a bribe from Paul fits in perfectly from what we know of his character from other sources.

¹⁰⁶⁷ πυκνότερον *puknoteron*, for which *oftener* is a literal but misleading translation. *All the more frequently* would be better.

¹⁰⁶⁸ ὁμίλει *hōmilei* to associate with, converse with. The imperfect tense implies repeated actions. The verb is related to the root for the English word *homily*.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Very little is known of Porcius Festus, who was procurator from perhaps AD 59 or 60 to 62. Josephus characterizes him as honest and a peacemaker. He died in office. His behavior as described in Acts 25 and 26 is variously interpreted by commentators, some of whom see him as uncaring about justice in Paul's case while currying favor with the Jewish authorities, and others of whom see him as trying his best to sail in troubled waters. Luke himself is less interested in Festus' character than in Paul's history. God is arranging for Paul to travel to Rome to preach, and along the way Paul stands and defends his faith boldly before Roman governors and Jewish kings.

¹⁰⁷⁰ ἔλαβεν διάδοχον ὁ Φῆλιξ Πόρκιον Φῆστον *elaben diadochon ho Phēlix Porkion Phēston* Felix got a successor, Porcius Festus.

¹⁰⁷¹ Upon his return to Rome, Felix would be answerable for his conduct. Naturally, he would like the Jews not to make trouble by lodging formal complaints against him, and so he tries to win their friendship at the last minute by keeping Paul in custody. It did him no good. The Jews complained and it was only through the influence of his brother Pallas that he was saved.

Chapter 25

Paul Before Festus

¹ NOW when Festus was come into the province,¹⁰⁷² after three days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. ² Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed¹⁰⁷³ him against Paul, and besought¹⁰⁷⁴ him, ³ And desired favour against him,¹⁰⁷⁵ that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.¹⁰⁷⁶ ⁴ But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*.¹⁰⁷⁷ ⁵ Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able,¹⁰⁷⁸ go down with *me*, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness¹⁰⁷⁹ in him.¹⁰⁸⁰

⁶ And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought. ⁷ And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. ⁸ While he answered for himself,

¹⁰⁷² ἐπαρχεία *eparcheia* area of authority. The word carries much the same meaning as the modern LDS concept of *stewardship* and could refer (like the Latin *provincia*) either to an office or a region which one governed. By the first century, *provincia* had come to have a technical meaning referring to a number of formal administrative units within the Roman *imperium*, from which the modern definition of *province* as an administrative region within a country is derived. The KJV translation of *province* is unfortunate, because Judea was not itself a province in the geographical sense, but a part of the province of Syria.

¹⁰⁷³ ἐνεφάνισάν *enephanisan* lit. brought to light. The meaning here is *made a formal charge*.

¹⁰⁷⁴ παρεκάλουν *parekaloun* urged. This is in the imperfect tense, implying they did it repeatedly.

¹⁰⁷⁵ αἰτούμενοι χάριν κατ' αὐτοῦ *eitoumenoi charin kat' autou* asking a favor against him [Paul], which is difficult to turn into idiomatic English. Χάρις *charis* is, of course, the word translated as *grace* in contexts dealing with our salvation, from the root of which we derive Engl. “charity.”

¹⁰⁷⁶ Paul’s opponents have certainly lost no time in trying to turn Festus against Paul, banking on Festus’ desire to start things off well with the Jewish leaders at the beginning of his administration. Shortly after Festus’ death, they would similarly take advantage of the temporary interregnum before the new procurator arrived to arrange the execution of James, the brother of the Lord.

¹⁰⁷⁷ ἐαυτὸν δὲ μέλλειν ἐν τάχει ἐκπορεύεσθαι *heauton de mellein en tachei ekporeuesthai* himself to be about to head off shortly. As the italics indicated, the place to which he is to head off—Caesarea—is implied.

¹⁰⁷⁸ δυνατοὶ *dunatoi* the able, which may refer either to physical ability (as in the KJV) or to legal authorization (so NRSV, AB—F).

¹⁰⁷⁹ ἄτοπον *atopon* impropriety.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Although Festus is being cooperative, he is making it clear who is in charge. Yes, the Jews may lodge complaints against Paul, but they have to do it Festus’ way, not theirs.

Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar,¹⁰⁸¹ have I offended¹⁰⁸² any thing at all.⁹ But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure,¹⁰⁸³ answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?^{1084 10} Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged:¹⁰⁸⁵ to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.¹¹ For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar.^{1086 12} Then Festus, when he

¹⁰⁸¹ Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, best known simply as Nero, reigned from 54 to 68. He was only sixteen when he ascended and thirty when he died. His father was Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, of a leading Roman family, and his mother Agrippina the Younger, the sister of the emperor Caligula. Agrippina seems to have long plotted to make her son emperor. She married her uncle, the emperor Claudius, in 49; Claudius adopted Nero in 50; Nero was named Claudius' heir in 51 in preference to Claudius' own son Britannicus; and Nero married Claudius daughter Octavia in 53. Agrippina is generally believed to have poisoned Claudius in 54. Nero succeeded without difficulty; his only potential rival, Britannicus, was poisoned within the year. Under the tutelage of the philosopher Seneca (Gallio's brother; see 18:12n), Nero started his reign well but became increasingly self-indulgent as the years passed. His most notorious murder was that of his mother in 59. He was also insatiably star-struck and yearned to be an actor and musician. When a disastrous fire struck Rome in 64, he could not resist singing one of his own compositions on the sack of Troy while the fire blazed (hence "fiddling while Rome burns"). To dispel rumors that he had started the fire to clear land on which to build a magnificent new palace, he started the first official Roman persecution of the Christians, in the course of which both Peter and Paul are believed to have been killed. As his government collapsed, he tried unsuccessfully to flee but killed himself when his opponents caught up to him. His last words are reported to have been, "What an artist the world is losing!" Nero was the last emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. A brief civil war raged after his death during which four men wore the imperial crown; AD 68–69 is known as the "Year of the Four Emperors." The winner of the war was Vespasian, who had been besieging Jerusalem when Nero died. Vespasian's son Titus finished the siege and destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70.

¹⁰⁸² ἥμαρτον *hēmarton* lit. sinned. In this secular context, however, it means *violated the law*.

¹⁰⁸³ Just as Felix wanted to end his administration with the Jews' good will, so Festus wants to start out the same way. In Festus' case, however, the action is more reasonable, as he is new to the region and would like to start his administration on a positive note. The GR for "to do... a pleasure" is χάριν καταθέσθαι *charin katathesthai* (to do a favor). See v. 3n.

¹⁰⁸⁴ This is a reversal of Festus' earlier refusal to hear the case in Jerusalem. Luke does not explain why he changed his mind (Luke's focus is on the fact that this forces Paul to appeal to the Emperor). Perhaps he felt that it would be easier to find witnesses and get information on the case in Jerusalem, since he could obviously not handle it with the information at hand in Caesarea.

¹⁰⁸⁵ That is, the case has already passed out of the Sanhedrin's jurisdiction.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Little is known of the Roman citizens' right to appeal cases to the Emperor. Paul is here taking advantage of it, however, to avoid being returned to Jerusalem where zealots among his opponents would be likely to assassinate him. (Some commentators suggest that Paul was

had conferred with the council,¹⁰⁸⁷ answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.¹⁰⁸⁸

Agrippa II and Bernice Arrive in Caesaria

¹³ And after certain days king Agrippa¹⁰⁸⁹ and Bernice¹⁰⁹⁰ came unto Cæsarea to salute¹⁰⁹¹ Festus.¹⁰⁹² ¹⁴ And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: ¹⁵ About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, desiring *to have* judgment against him. ¹⁶ To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself¹⁰⁹³ concerning the crime laid against him. ¹⁷ Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow¹⁰⁹⁴ I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be

merely using this as an excuse: he appealed to Caesar because he knew it would get him to Rome, where he was destined to preach.)

¹⁰⁸⁷ Not the Sanhedrin, but his own Roman advisors.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Luke sees Festus' pronouncement as providential. Paul will now travel to Rome at the Emperor's expense. Although technically a prisoner, the conditions of his imprisonment are generally quite light and do not prevent him from spreading his Christian message as he travels. Nothing is known for certain, however, of the eventual outcome of his trial before Nero. Christian tradition states that he was released for a time before being arrested again and executed (2 Tim 4:16–17 may refer to this). Nor is it known whether Festus *had* to grant the appeal once made or not.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Marcus Julius Agrippa, best known as Herod Agrippa II. He was the son of Agrippa I (see 12:1n) and great-grandson of Herod the Great. He was 17 and being educated in Rome when his father died in 44. Claudius did not entirely trust him and he was not allowed to rule until 50, when he was given the territory of his uncle, Herod of Chalcis. In 53, he exchanged that for the former tetrarchy of Herod Philip. Nero gave him parts of Galilee and Perea in addition. Despite his family's reputation and (perhaps) his own personal immorality, he seems to have been a generally honest and capable ruler. He worked hard to prevent the outbreak of war in 66 and joined the Roman side after the rebellion began. He died in Rome in AD 93, the last of the Herods to reign as a king. Luke makes much of Paul's appearance before Agrippa; he is the first king to hear the Christian message from an authorized messenger; see Christ's prophecy in Luke 12:12. (Luke's Gospel records Jesus' appearance before Herod Antipas, but Herod Antipas was not technically a king, and Jesus said nothing in his presence; see Luke 23:6–12.)

¹⁰⁹⁰ Herod Agrippa II's sister and (alleged) incestuous lover. She had been the wife of Herod of Chalcis and came to live with her brother after her husband's death in AD 48. She also became the mistress of Vespasian's son, Titus, who might have married her had she not been a Jew. (Drusilla, Felix' wife, was another of Herod Agrippa II's sisters.)

¹⁰⁹¹ ἀσπασάμενοι *aspasamenoî* greet.

¹⁰⁹² As a Roman client king, Agrippa naturally needed to cultivate good relations with the local Roman administration.

¹⁰⁹³ τόπον τε ἀπολογίας λάβοι *topon te apologias laboi* lit. should receive place of [legal] defense. τόπος *topos* is the root of English words like *topography*, and the verb is in the rare optative mood. The overall sense of the phrase is *should have a chance to defend himself*.

¹⁰⁹⁴ JST “day following,” removing an archaism.

brought forth.¹⁸ Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:¹⁹ But had certain questions¹⁰⁹⁵ against him of their own superstition,¹⁰⁹⁶ and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.¹⁰⁹⁷ ²⁰ And because I doubted of such manner of questions,¹⁰⁹⁸ I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.²¹ But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing¹⁰⁹⁹ of Augustus,¹¹⁰⁰ I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cæsar.²² Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would¹¹⁰¹ also hear the man myself. To morrow,¹¹⁰² said he, thou shalt hear him.

²³ And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp,¹¹⁰³ and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains,¹¹⁰⁴ and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.²⁴ And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude¹¹⁰⁵ of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and *also* here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.²⁵ But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.²⁶ Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord.¹¹⁰⁶ Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee,

¹⁰⁹⁵ ζητήματα *zētēmata* points of disagreement (so NRSV).

¹⁰⁹⁶ δεισιδαιμονίας *deisidaimonias* lit. fear of the divine powers, which can either mean *piety, religion* (in a positive sense) or *superstition* (in a negative one). Festus doubtless is using it with a slight pejorative nuance here, which seems odd when addressing a Jew. It is possible that ἰδίας *idias* refers to Paul, not the Jews generally: *of his own superstition* not *their own*. (ἴδιος *idios* means *pertaining particularly to one's self* and is the root of words such as *idiosyncrasy* and *idiot*—originally *someone so self-contained that he does not participate in public affairs*, and, given the Greek emphasis on public life, therefore *a fool*).

¹⁰⁹⁷ Phrased as a Roman would phrase it who knew little about the Jews' religion or the resurrection.

¹⁰⁹⁸ ἀπορούμενος δὲ ἐγὼ τὴν περὶ τούτων ζήτησιν *aporoumenos de egō tēn peri toutōn zētēsīn*. The explicit presence of the pronoun is emphatic: I, having no idea at all how to handle such disputes....

¹⁰⁹⁹ διάγνωσιν *diagnōsin* decision, resolution. This is the root of the English *diagnosis*.

¹¹⁰⁰ Σεβαστοῦ *Sebastou* the revered one, the usual GR translation for the Latin *Augustus* (the venerable one). Originally a title given to the first Emperor by the Senate, it was conferred upon his successors as well and could be used interchangeably with *Caesar*, as here, to refer to the Roman monarch. One could think of it as roughly equivalent to the English *His Majesty*.

¹¹⁰¹ ἐβουλόμην *eboulomēn* I have been wanting. The use of the imperfect implies that Herod Agrippa II was already aware of and curious about Paul's case.

¹¹⁰² Note that this was a two-word phrase in 1611.

¹¹⁰³ φαντασίας *phantasias* display, show, pomp. The English *fantasy* has this word as its root.

¹¹⁰⁴ Ἱερεῖς *IE* military tribunes. See 21:31n.

¹¹⁰⁵ πλῆθος *plēthos* mass, crowd, throng (typical Lucan hyperbole).

¹¹⁰⁶ κυρίῳ *kuriō* lord, master.

O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.²⁷ For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.¹¹⁰⁷

Chapter 26

Paul Before Herod Agrippa II

¹ THEN Agrippa¹¹⁰⁸ said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand,¹¹⁰⁹ and answered for himself.¹¹¹⁰

² I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: ³ Especially *because I know* thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews:¹¹¹¹ wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

⁴ My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; ⁵ Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest¹¹¹² sect¹¹¹³ of our religion I lived a Pharisee. ⁶ And now I stand and am judged for the hope¹¹¹⁴ of the promise made of God unto our fathers: ⁷ Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly¹¹¹⁵ serving *God* day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.¹¹¹⁶ ⁸ Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you,¹¹¹⁷ that God should raise the dead?¹¹¹⁸

¹¹⁰⁷ Festus has by now repeatedly heard the charges against Paul, but he does not understand them, nor know how to make them intelligible to his master, Nero.

¹¹⁰⁸ Note that it is Herod Agrippa II who is Paul's audience here; the last of the extended speeches in Acts is not only a mixture of Paul's personal defense of himself with the proclamation of Christianity, but, fittingly, addressed to a secular Jewish king.

¹¹⁰⁹ *Stretched forth his hand* would be a less literal but more natural translation. This is the normal action of a Greek orator about to speak; whether or not Paul's chains interfered with the motion is not a point Luke addresses.

¹¹¹⁰ Paul's final defense is one of the most elegantly written speeches in Acts. As has been the case through the book, and as would be expected of a Hellenistic historian, Luke varies the literary style to match the setting. Note that, although it is nominally Paul's response to legal charges, Paul cannot refrain from turning it into an advocacy of Christianity.

¹¹¹¹ This is Paul's *captatio benevolentiae* (see 24:3n), as would be expected of a man in his position. Naturally Paul knows that Herod Agrippa II is, at the least, publicly a devout Jew and therefore, unlike Festus, can understand and appreciate Paul's background.

¹¹¹² ἀκριβεστάτην *akribestatēn* strictest. The term "Pharisee" covers, in fact, a broad spectrum of belief. Paul is characterizing himself as having been a Pharisee's Pharisee.

¹¹¹³ See 24:5n.

¹¹¹⁴ Note the presence of the word *hope* three times in vv. 6-7. Paul is hitting heavily on an important point. All Pharisees hope for the resurrection. Christians simply believe that the process of the resurrection has already started.

¹¹¹⁵ ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ *enekteneia* lit. in earnestness, earnestly.

¹¹¹⁶ *The Jews* is at the very end of the sentence, an unusual position for GR. It may be intended to be emphatic—the Jews, of all people, should not condemn someone for believing in the resurrection.

⁹ I verily thought with myself, that I ought¹¹¹⁹ to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*.¹¹²⁰ ¹¹ And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme;¹¹²¹ and being exceedingly mad against¹¹²² them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.¹¹²³

¹² Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, ¹³ At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. ¹⁴ And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue,¹¹²⁴ Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*¹¹²⁵ ¹⁵ And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. ¹⁶ But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; ¹⁷ Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, ¹⁸ To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that

¹¹¹⁷ It is not clear whom Luke intended to be the referent for “you” here. Is it Herod Agrippa II and Bernice? Jews generally?

¹¹¹⁸ Indeed, for even those Jews (like the Sadducees) who denied the resurrection, would they be willing to say that God *could* not do it? In any event, Paul’s rhetorical question is irrelevant. His Jewish opponents would not question that God *could* raise the dead, but rather whether or not in Jesus’ case he *had*.

¹¹¹⁹ δεῖν *dein* must. This is a very strong word, implying far more than a mere moral obligation. One is reminded of Luther’s, “Here I stand, I can do no other” (*Hier steh’ ich, ich kann nicht anders.*) Like many persecutors, Paul had been, in fact, driven by a sense of a divine impetus.

¹¹²⁰ It has been suggested that this means that Paul was actually a member of the Sanhedrin, but the expression may merely mean that he agreed with the decision.

¹¹²¹ ἡνάγκαζον βλασφημεῖν *ēnankazon blasphēmein* forcing [them] to blaspheme. The verb can be taken as a conative imperfect, that is, Paul was trying to force them to blaspheme but not necessarily succeeding. By *blaspheme*, of course, he means here denying Jesus as the Christ.

¹¹²² ἐμμαινόμενος *emmainomenos* angry/mad at.

¹¹²³ καὶ εἰς τὰς ἔξω πόλεις *kai eis tas exō poleis* even in outlying cities.

¹¹²⁴ 𐤀𐤒𐤃𐤕 Aramaic. This is the first time that the language by which Paul was addressed is specifically mentioned, but as the Aramaic version of the name *Saul* is found in all accounts of the vision, it is not a surprise.

¹¹²⁵ σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν *sklēron soi pros kentra laktizein* it is hard for you to kick the goads, a GR proverb. It is found in some MSS of 9:4, where it has probably been added by assimilation from here. It may be that the proverb was current in Aramaic-speaking circles as well as Greek ones, or Paul is adapting his wording of the vision to match his Hellenized audience. The reference is to cattle kicking out against the goads used to prod them forward; it would appear that Paul had been fighting the Spirit that was testifying to him of Christianity’s truth. σκληρόν *sklēron* may mean here *painful*, not *difficult*, hence the NRSV, *It hurts you to kick against the goads*. Note that Paul is here telescoping his entire conversion story, leaving out, for example, his baptism by Ananias.

they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

¹⁹ Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: ²⁰ But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa,¹¹²⁶ and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.¹¹²⁷ ²¹ For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. ²² Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: ²³ That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead,¹¹²⁸ and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

²⁴ And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself;¹¹²⁹ much learning doth make thee mad.¹¹³⁰ ²⁵ But he said, I am not mad, most noble¹¹³¹ Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.¹¹³² ²⁶ For the king knoweth¹¹³³ of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. ²⁸ Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.¹¹³⁴ ²⁹ And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether¹¹³⁵ such as I am, except these bonds.

¹¹²⁶ Luke may be mistaken here. Paul seems not to have done much preaching within Judea proper.

¹¹²⁷ ἄξια τῆς μετάνοιας ἔργα *axia tēs metanoias* lit. deeds worthy of repentance. ἄξιος *axios* has as its root meaning *worth as much as, of like value*. Our actions should be accurate reflections of our repentance. The NRSV translates this phrase, “deeds consistent with repentance.” *Meet* is an archaism for *appropriate*, hence Adam’s “help meet” in the KJV of Genesis 2:18, 20 is an appropriate or suitable helper, not a “helpmate.”

¹¹²⁸ That the Messiah should suffer and be the first to be resurrected are specifically Christian insights. There is no evidence that first century Jews had any such interpretation of passages such as Isaiah 53. Nonetheless, the point here is that Paul’s preaching is grounded in the works held sacred by the Jews, no matter how unorthodox his interpretation thereof may have been. The situation was different among the Nephites; see Mosiah 3:7–11, among other passages.

¹¹²⁹ μαίνη *mainē* you are crazy! (The verb is the root of the English *mania* and *maniac*.) The KJV’s four-word translation utterly fails to capture the force of the Luke’s GR. Festus *still* has no idea what Paul is talking about.

¹¹³⁰ Festus is obviously not a very studious man himself.

¹¹³¹ κράτιστε *kratiste*; see 23:26n. Unlike Felix, Festus was an aristocrat, and calling him “most noble” is not inappropriate.

¹¹³² ἀληθείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ῥήματα *alētheias kai sōphrosunēs rhēmata* lit. words of truth and moderation/discretion, something of a hendiadys. (σωφροσύνη *sōphrosunē* is a direct contrast with Festus’ μαίνη *mainē*.) Some modern translations capture the phrase elegantly as *the sober truth*.

¹¹³³ ἐπίσταται *epistatai* is an expert in, is well acquainted with.

¹¹³⁴ This phrase is beloved by preachers but notorious among translators. The (most likely) GR is ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι *en oligō me peitheis Christianon poiēsai*, which is unclear; the literal meaning is *In a little you are persuading me to do a*

³⁰ And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: ³¹ And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. ³² Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar. ¹¹³⁶

Chapter 27

Paul Departs for Italy

¹ AND when it was determined that we ¹¹³⁷ should sail into Italy, ¹¹³⁸ they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto *one* named Julius, ¹¹³⁹ a centurion of Augustus' band. ¹¹⁴⁰ ² And

Christian. It could mean *You are [trying to] persuade me to become a Christian in a little time*, or *You are a little ways off from persuading me to be a Christian*, the translation adopted by the KJV and AB—F, or even *Do you think it is so easy to persuade me to become a Christian?* There are also textual problems. Is the first verb *πείθεις* *peitheis* (you are persuading) or *πείθη* *peithē* (you have persuaded yourself)? Is the final infinitive *ποιῆσαι* *poiēsai* (to make) or *γενέσθαι* *genesthai* (to become)? And beyond all that, how are we to understand the tone of Herod Agrippa II's response? Is he being sarcastic? Is he being sincere? Is he being ironic? Is he trying to put Paul off politely with a mild joke? The general consensus is that the phrase means something like, *Do you think you can make me a Christian so quickly?* There is no agreement as to what Herod Agrippa II's tone was—amused, ironic or sarcastic. Herod Agrippa II underestimates the speed with which the Spirit can touch a heart—if nothing else, remember how speedy Paul's own conversion was.

¹¹³⁵ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ *en oligō kai en megalō* lit. in little and in great. It is clear that ἐν ὀλίγῳ *en oligō* is being picked up by Paul from what Herod Agrippa II says in the previous verse, but its overall sense is equally unclear. It may mean *quickly or slowly* (so NRSV).

¹¹³⁶ In other words, Festus botched it. He could not find anything wrong in Paul's conduct, but lacked the courage to follow his personal conviction that releasing Paul was the best thing to do, and now he is stuck with sending Paul to Rome for Nero to examine without any good reason to waste the Emperor's time.

¹¹³⁷ Although Paul is a prisoner being transported to Rome for a trial, he is allowed to bring an entourage with him, which includes, at the least, Luke. Luke does not tell us who paid the fare for Paul's companions, but some commentators speculate, somewhat implausibly, that they passed themselves off as Paul's slaves and therefore traveled at Imperial expense.

¹¹³⁸ Chapter 27 is given over to a long and vivid account of sea voyage ending in a shipwreck, a literary high point of Acts but relatively irrelevant to Luke's overall message. (Bruce calls it, "A small classic in its own right.") Although Luke claims to have been an eyewitness, his account is doubted by some modern commentators. Some of the details seem puzzling, the passage is riddled with nautical jargon that landlubber Luke would possibly not know, and shipwreck after a storm was so frequent a theme in ancient literature as to almost be a stereotype. (Even a modern reader would have little trouble listing books or stories or television programs that involve a shipwreck or plane crash.) Moreover, Luke nowhere else provides so detailed an itinerary. The general opinion, however, is that this is a valuable document recounting what was an all-too common occurrence when sailing on the ancient Mediterranean.

entering into a ship of Adramyttium,¹¹⁴¹ we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia;¹¹⁴² *one* Aristarchus,¹¹⁴³ a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.³ And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul,¹¹⁴⁴ and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends¹¹⁴⁵ to refresh himself.¹¹⁴⁶ ⁴ And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under¹¹⁴⁷ Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.¹¹⁴⁸ ⁵ And when we had sailed over¹¹⁴⁹ the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia,¹¹⁵⁰ we came to Myra,¹¹⁵¹ *a city* of Lycia.¹¹⁵² ⁶ And there the centurion

The relatively secular focus of this chapter has made allegorical and symbolic interpretations of it particularly popular.

¹¹³⁹ The Julius clan was among Rome's most important, particularly in the early Empire when its Caesarian branch provided Rome with its first Emperors. As a centurion, however, Julius is unlikely to have been a patrician but is more likely to have come from a plebian (or even slave) family that adopted the Julian name at some point. Note that all the centurions mentioned in the NT are portrayed in a favorable light, Julius not the least.

¹¹⁴⁰ σπείρης Σεβαστῆς *speirēs Sebastēs* Augustus' cohort, a cohort being a unit within the Roman army. See 10:1n. There is an Augustan cohort known to have been in Syria at about this time, or it may be a generic term for some sort of unit either with a special assignment or one having been especially honored.

¹¹⁴¹ The modern Edremit, a port on the northwest coast of Asia Minor in Mysia, opposite Lesbos.

¹¹⁴² IE hug the coast of Asia Minor. This first boat is a "coaster," relatively small and fragile and unwilling even in the best of times to sail out of sight of land.

¹¹⁴³ See 19:29n. The KJV's insertion of *one* as implied by the text is odd, as we have already encountered Aristarchus. Simply referring to him as "Aristarchus of Thessalonica in Macedonia" would suffice.

¹¹⁴⁴ φιλανθρώπως τε ὁ Ἰούλιος τῷ Παύλῳ χρησάμενος *philanthrōpōs te ho Ioulios tō Paulō chrēsamenos* and Julius, dealing benevolently with Paul... The adverb φιλανθρώπως *philanthrōpōs* is, of course, related to the English *philanthropy*, a love of humanity in general.

¹¹⁴⁵ τοὺς φίλους *tous philous* the friends, with no possessive pronoun. There is some speculation that the early "Christians" were called Christians by outsiders but "Friends" by themselves, as is the case with the Quakers in modern times, who call themselves "Friends" but are called "Quakers" by others.

¹¹⁴⁶ ἐπιμελείας τυχεῖν *epimeleias* to receive attention/care.

¹¹⁴⁷ ὑπεπλεύσαμεν *hupepleusamen* sailed under the lee of. That is, they used Cyprus to block the west and northwest winds that would have blown them off course.

¹¹⁴⁸ That is, the prevailing winds coming in largely from the west are impeding their westward progress.

¹¹⁴⁹ διαπλεύσαντες *diapleusantes* sailed across.

¹¹⁵⁰ The relatively open area of the Mediterranean west of Cyprus. The Western text states that this crossing took fifteen days; the distance involved is only about one hundred fifty miles (240 km); the journey from Caesarea to Sidon, just under half the distance, took only one day (v. 3). Under the circumstances, ten miles a day would be disappointing but not unreasonable.

¹¹⁵¹ The modern Dembre, Myra was a principal city of Lycia and an important stopping point for grain ships from Egypt to Rome. The St. Nicholas from whom Santa Claus is ultimately derived was a bishop in Myra.

found a ship of Alexandria¹¹⁵³ sailing into Italy;¹¹⁵⁴ and he put us therein.⁷ And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus,¹¹⁵⁵ the wind not suffering us,¹¹⁵⁶ we sailed under¹¹⁵⁷ Crete,¹¹⁵⁸ over against Salmone;¹¹⁵⁹ ⁸ And, hardly passing it,¹¹⁶⁰ came unto a place which is called The fair havens;¹¹⁶¹ nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.¹¹⁶²

A Storm at Sea; Paul is Shipwrecked

⁹ Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast¹¹⁶³ was now already past, Paul admonished *them*,¹⁰ And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading¹¹⁶⁴ and ship, but also of our lives.¹¹ Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.¹¹⁶⁵ ¹² And because the haven was not commodious to

¹¹⁵² A coastal region in southwest Asia Minor, bounded by Pamphilia, Pisidia, and Phrygia.

¹¹⁵³ See 6:9n.

¹¹⁵⁴ Doubtless a grain ship. Egypt was Rome's breadbasket; its relatively mild climate and reliable water supply made the banks of the Nile enormously fruitful, and the Roman population of more than one million easily outstripped what could be grown locally. Grain transportation from Egypt to Rome was a major industry in the early Empire. Note that even though this is a cargo ship, it still carries passengers.

¹¹⁵⁵ A peninsula at the southwest corner of Asia minor.

¹¹⁵⁶ μὴ προσεῶντος ἡμᾶς τοῦ ἀνέμου *mē proseōntos hēmas tou anemou* the wind not permitting us to proceed. They are still sailing into a western wind.

¹¹⁵⁷ See v. 4n.

¹¹⁵⁸ See 2:11n.

¹¹⁵⁹ The modern Cape Sidero on the northeast corner of Crete.

¹¹⁶⁰ μόλις τε παραλεγόμενοι *molis te paralegomenoi* sailing past it with difficulty.

¹¹⁶¹ A small bay near the center of Crete's southern shore. The bay still bears the modern Greek equivalent to the name Καλοὶ Λιμένα *Kaloi Limena* (Fair Havens), and a small island near its mouth is called St. Paul's Island. The name is not otherwise attested in antiquity, leading to some speculation that the modern site is different from the ancient one and gained its name because of its mention here. In any event, Fair Havens was unsuitable for a large ship to use for wintering.

¹¹⁶² A city on Crete's southern coast. The coastline turns sharply north just west of Lasea for a short stretch, meaning the ship would temporarily lose the protection of the island's lee against northwestern winds.

¹¹⁶³ The Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, one of the major feasts of the Jews. It is therefore late September or mid-October. The usual sailing season in the ancient Mediterranean was spring and summer. After the autumnal equinox, it became dangerous and was avoided, and after mid-November it became impossible. In point of fact, if Luke's chronological information elsewhere in this chapter and chapter 28 is accurate, it is *well* past Yom Kippur. Proceeding from Fair Havens this late would be very risky indeed.

¹¹⁶⁴ τοῦ φορτίου *tou phortiou* freight, cargo.

¹¹⁶⁵ One of Luke's most remarkable verses in Acts—he finds it surprising that the pagan centurion in charge of Paul accepts experienced sailors' advice instead of his Christian prisoner's! (For that matter, why does Luke write as if it were Julius' decision to make?)

winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also,¹¹⁶⁶ if by any means they might attain to Phenice,¹¹⁶⁷ and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

¹³ And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed close by Crete.¹⁴ But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind,¹¹⁶⁸ called Euroclydon.¹¹⁶⁹ ¹⁵ And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.¹¹⁷⁰ ¹⁶ And running under a certain island which is called Clauda,¹¹⁷¹ we had much work to come by the boat.¹¹⁷² ¹⁷ Which when they had taken up, they used helps,¹¹⁷³ undergirding the ship;¹¹⁷⁴ and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands,¹¹⁷⁵ strake sail,¹¹⁷⁶ and so were driven.¹⁸ And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next

¹¹⁶⁶ Luke almost makes it sound as if a vote were taken. We need not envision anything so formal; even if they had no formal voice in the matter, everybody on board would doubtless be talking about what should be done next and offering their opinions.

¹¹⁶⁷ Φοίνικα *Phoinika* Phoenix. This may be the modern Port Loutro. It is difficult to reconcile this identification, however, with Luke's description that it "lieth toward the south west and north west" (GR βλέποντα κατὰ λίβα καὶ κατὰ χῶρον *bleponta kata liba kai kata chōron* lit. looks towards the southwest and northwest winds), and so another site, on the west of the Muros peninsula east of which Port Loutro lies, is sometimes suggested to be the correct one.

¹¹⁶⁸ ἄνεμος τυφωνικός *anemos tymphōnikos* a tempestuous wind. In GR mythology, Τυφῶν *Tymphōn* (Typhon) was the god of winds. Nonetheless, the word is unrelated to the English *typhoon*, which comes from Cantonese (*taaifung* big wind).

¹¹⁶⁹ A name given to a northeastern wind. (At least one English translation renders the word "nor'easter.") The word is a composite of Greek (Εὐρος *euros*) and Latin (*aquilo*), words referring to an eastern/southeastern and northern wind, respectively.

¹¹⁷⁰ That is, they stopped trying to fight the wind and let it blow the ship where it would.

¹¹⁷¹ The reading preferred now is Καῦδα *Kauda* Kauda. This is the modern Gavdos, a small island about 25 miles (40 km) south of the western half of Crete.

¹¹⁷² ἰσχύσαμεν μόλις περικρατεῖς γενέσθαι τῆς σκάφης *ischusamen molis perikrateis geneshai tēs skaphēs* we were able, with difficulty, to bring the dinghy under control. The dinghy was a small boat usually towed by the large grain ship but brought on board if necessary. It was used in landing, pulling the ship's bow around, and similar tasks. The "we" here makes it sound as if Luke helped haul it on board himself.

¹¹⁷³ βοηθείαις *boētheiais* tackle, ropes and sails.

¹¹⁷⁴ IE cables were passed around the underside of the boat. The cables could take up some of the strain on the timbers making up the ship and give it a better chance of surviving. How this was done during the storm is unclear, nor are commentators in universal agreement that this is the procedure Luke was describing. Another possibility is that cables were laid along the deck from stem to stern to hold them together, in which case the "helps" would be trestles holding the cables off the deck.

¹¹⁷⁵ τὴν Σύρτιν *tēn Surtin* the Greater Syrtis, a bay now called the Gulf of Sidra on the north African coast between Cyrene and Carthage. The bay is shallow and has shifting sandbanks, making it dangerous to navigate under the best of circumstances.

¹¹⁷⁶ The meaning of the GR χαλάσαντες τὸ σκεῦος *chalasantes to skeuos* (loosening the gear) is disputed. The KJV adopts the suggestion *hailed in the sail*. Alternatives are that they

day they lightened the ship;^{1177 19} And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.²⁰ And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared,¹¹⁷⁸ and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

²¹ But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.^{1179 22} And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.²³ For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,²⁴ Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must¹¹⁸⁰ be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.²⁵ Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.²⁶ Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

²⁷ But when the fourteenth night was come,¹¹⁸¹ as we were driven up and down in Adria,¹¹⁸² about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;^{1183 28} And sounded,¹¹⁸⁴ and found *it* twenty fathoms:¹¹⁸⁵ and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms.²⁹ Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.³⁰ And as the shipmen¹¹⁸⁶ were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though¹¹⁸⁷ they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,^{1188 31} Paul said to the centurion and

reefed the sail (reduced its size by hauling it partway in), that they set the sail, lowered the main yard but set a storm sail, or even that they lowered a sea anchor.

¹¹⁷⁷ The grain carried by the ship is dumped overboard to lighten it. Not all the cargo was jettisoned at this point; see v. 38. The verb ἐποιοῦντο *epoiounto* (made [an ejection]) is an inceptive imperfect: *they started to make*. The phrase ἐκβολὴν ἐποιοῦντο *ekbolēn epoiounto* (they started to eject) is also found in the LXX of Jonah 1:5. The link may well be deliberate. Paul is acting as a sort of anti-Jonah in this narrative. Whereas Jonah endangered the other men on board ship because of his presence, the sailors and passengers on this ship will be saved because of Paul.

¹¹⁷⁸ The sailors are managing without the benefit of detailed charts, compass, sextants, and other modern navigational aids. They could only find their way by consulting the stars, sun, and landmarks along the coast. They are therefore hopelessly lost.

¹¹⁷⁹ Paul cannot resist an “I told you so.”

¹¹⁸⁰ δεῖ *dei* are destined to.

¹¹⁸¹ Fourteen days for a ship to drift across the Mediterranean from Gavdos to Malta with sail struck but driven by a storm are about right, if modern calculations can be trusted.

¹¹⁸² In modern times, the Adriatic is limited to the arm of the Mediterranean between Italy and the Baltic countries to its east. In antiquity, the entire Mediterranean south of what we now call the Adriatic was included.

¹¹⁸³ ὑπενόουν οἱ ναῦται προσάγειν τινὰ αὐτοῖς χώραν *hupenooun hoi nautai prosagein tina autois chōran* “the sailors became aware that land of some sort was coming towards them,” an interesting way to phrase it.

¹¹⁸⁴ βολίσαντες *bolisantes* taking a sounding. They dropped a weight overboard attached to a rope to see how deep the water was.

¹¹⁸⁵ ὀργυιὰς *orguias*, for which *fathom* is an excellent translation. Both refer to the length of an adult man’s outstretched arms, or about six feet (roughly 180 cm).

¹¹⁸⁶ ναυτῶν *nautōn* sailors.

¹¹⁸⁷ προφάσει *prophasei* on the pretext.

to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.³² Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.¹¹⁸⁹

³³ And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting,¹¹⁹⁰ having taken nothing.¹¹⁹¹

³⁴ Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat:¹¹⁹² for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.³⁵ And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.³⁶ Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.¹¹⁹³ ³⁷ And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.¹¹⁹⁴ ³⁸ And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

³⁹ And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek¹¹⁹⁵ with a shore,¹¹⁹⁶ into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.⁴⁰ And

¹¹⁸⁸ There is a chance that Paul misunderstood what the sailors were doing, and that they really were intending to lower anchors from the bow; it stretches one's credulity that the entire crew could fit into the dinghy, and that they seriously thought their chances were better in the dinghy than in the ship. The escape of sailors at the expense of passengers, however, was a common theme in literature, so Paul's concerns would not have been unreasonable even if it was not what the sailors were planning. Of course, if the sailors had panicked then they might well try something desperate and irrational. Luke's point here, of course, is that Julius has learned his lesson and will listen to Paul now.

¹¹⁸⁹ It would appear that the sailors were partway through the process of lowering the dinghy overboard.

¹¹⁹⁰ ἄσιτοι διατελεῖτε *asitoi diateleite* you are going foodless. This is not the usual expression translated *to fast* in the KJV NT.

¹¹⁹¹ This was probably not voluntary. The violent motion of the ship would have made food preparation difficult, and many of their provisions may have been lost or spoiled by the storm. Moreover, even experienced sailors can get seasick in rough weather.

¹¹⁹² μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς *metalabein trophēs* take [some] nourishment.

¹¹⁹³ Some commentators, under the influence of the wording, believe that Paul administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper here, which would be remarkable given the largely pagan nature of the crew and company on the ship. It is most likely that Paul simply encouraged them to eat. This scene can, however, be seen allegorically (as Bede does, for example): After enduring storms and vicissitudes in our lives, we can all eat of the "bread of life" and reach a safe shore.

¹¹⁹⁴ This seems like rather too many people to be on such a ship. Some scholars have suggested that it should be emended to seventy-six, as the two would differ by only one letter if written with Greek numerals (as, indeed, they do with Arabic numerals).

¹¹⁹⁵ κόλπον *kolpon* bay, inlet. We will find out later (28:1) that the land is the island of Malta. This bay is traditionally identified with St. Paul's Bay on Malta and most modern commentators see no reason to reject this identification, although there is a vocal minority who disagree. The word *creek* can still be used in British English to refer to an inlet that narrows as it extends landward. In American English, *creek* is used only for a stream of water between a brook and a river in size; and, of course, in Utah English the word is traditionally pronounced like *crick*.

when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands,¹¹⁹⁷ and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.⁴¹ And falling into a place where two seas met,¹¹⁹⁸ they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.⁴² And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.¹¹⁹⁹ But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast *themselves* first *into the sea*, and get to land:⁴⁴ And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

Chapter 28

Paul on Malta

¹ AND when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.¹²⁰⁰ And the barbarous people¹²⁰¹ shewed us no little kindness:¹²⁰² for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain,¹²⁰³ and because of the cold.³ And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper¹²⁰⁴ out of the heat,

¹¹⁹⁶ αἰγιαλὸν *aigialon* beach. St. Paul's Bay has nothing one could really call a beach. Luke may well be using the word in a more generic sense, or the shoreline may have changed in the last two thousand years.

¹¹⁹⁷ The rudders are long oars, usually lashed to the sides of the ship.

¹¹⁹⁸ τόπον διθάλασσον *topon dthalasson* a between-sea place. This could be something like a shoal or a sandbank, or possibly a strait between Malta and a small island offshore.

¹¹⁹⁹ If a prisoner escaped, the soldiers would themselves be executed for dereliction of duty. "Killed while trying to escape" was a convenient excuse in antiquity as well as in modern times.

¹²⁰⁰ IE Malta, an island south of Sicily, about 100 square miles (250 square kilometers) in size. The current population is largely Roman Catholic and speaks a Semitic language related to Arabic but written with the Latin alphabet.

¹²⁰¹ βάρβαροι *barbaroi* barbarians. The word comes from onomatopoeia; non-Greek speech sounded like a series of nonsense syllables (bar-bar-bar) to the Greeks. Although not the abode of savages, Malta has equally never been a center of high civilization and culture—but in Luke's day, the word "barbarian" merely means that someone is not Greek.

¹²⁰² Paul's company is most fortunate—victims of shipwreck have frequently been robbed and even killed after landing. Of course, his company was extremely large and included a number of Roman soldiers, so the Maltese natives would not have been very tempted to do anything rash.

¹²⁰³ τὸν ὑετὸν τὸν ἐφειστῶτα *ton hueton ton ephesiōta* falling, pouring rain. The participle is from the verb ἐφίστημι *ephistēmi*, whose root meaning is *coming up, approaching*. The NRSV has, "Since it had begun to rain."

¹²⁰⁴ ἔχιδνα *echidna* a poisonous snake. Echidna is also found in Greek myths as a sister to the gorgons; she was a beautiful woman down to the waste and a snake from the waist down. The spiny anteater—an Australian animal, one of the two species of mammal to lay eggs—bears the alternate name echnida because it, too, seems half-mammal and half-reptile. Critics point out

and fastened on his hand.⁴ And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance¹²⁰⁵ suffereth not to live.⁵ And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.¹²⁰⁶ ⁶ Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.¹²⁰⁷

⁷ In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island,¹²⁰⁸ whose name was Publius;¹²⁰⁹ who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.⁸ And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux:¹²¹⁰ to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.¹²¹¹ ⁹ So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:¹⁰ Who also honoured us with many honours;¹²¹² and when we departed, they laded *us* with¹²¹³ such things as were necessary.

Paul Reaches Rome

¹¹ And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.¹²¹⁴ ¹² And landing at Syracuse,¹²¹⁵ we tarried *there* three

that modern Malta has no poisonous snakes; although there may have been some in ancient Malta, the issue is not whether the snake *was* poisonous but whether or not Paul, his companions, and the natives *thought* it was poisonous.

¹²⁰⁵ δίκη *dikē* justice. It would be best to capitalize the word, as Dike/Justice was frequently worshipped as a goddess, and it is doubtless the goddess who is meant here. (We continue, of course, to have statues of Justice, blind to rank and with a fair balance in her hand, as a personification of the virtue.)

¹²⁰⁶ Mark 16:18—part of the “long ending” to Mark—contains a promise that the disciples would not be hurt by snake bite. Whatever the textual status of that verse, Paul’s experience tends to show that the promise was legitimate. See also Luke 10:19. LDS may profitably contrast Martin Harris’ experience, as recorded in HC 2:95.

¹²⁰⁷ One is reminded of Paul and Barnabas’ experience in 14:12.

¹²⁰⁸ τῷ πρώτῳ τῆς νήσου *tō prōtō tēs nēsou* the island’s headman. Malta was a part of the province of Sicily; this would either be the legate or representative of the governor of Sicily, or the most prominent of the natives.

¹²⁰⁹ A common Roman praenomen.

¹²¹⁰ δυσεντερία *dusenteriō* dysentery. The word literally means *bad guts*.

¹²¹¹ This is the last healing mentioned in Luke/Acts. One of the first was also a cure of someone from a fever (Luke 4:38–39).

¹²¹² A Semitism; *showered us with honors* would be a good colloquial translation. There is some disagreement among commentators whether or not the “honors” were material in nature. A few commentators suggest that Luke’s use of “we” here implies that, as a physician, he treated some of the natives, but that seems rather contrary to his point, which emphasizes Paul’s priesthood power.

¹²¹³ ἐπέθεντο *epethento* put on board.

¹²¹⁴ Διοσκούροις *Dioskourois* the Dioscouroi, Zeus’s boys. Twin brothers, known to the Greeks as Castor and Polydeuces and to the Romans and us as Castor and Pollux, born from the two eggs laid by Leda after being seduced by Zeus in the form of a swan. Helen of Troy and Clytemnestra also hatched from the eggs (Helen from the same egg as Polydeuces and

days.¹³ And from thence we fetched a compass,¹²¹⁶ and came to Rhegium.¹²¹⁷ and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli.¹²¹⁸ ¹⁴ Where we found brethren,¹²¹⁹ and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.¹⁵ And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum,¹²²⁰ and The three taverns.¹²²¹ whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.
¹⁶ And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard:¹²²² but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

Paul Preaches to the Roman Jews

¹⁷ And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men *and* brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.¹⁸ Who, when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, because there was no cause of death in me.¹⁹ But when the Jews spake against *it*, I was

Clytemnestra from Castor's egg). Gemini, the constellation of the zodiac, represents the Dioskouroi, with its two first-magnitude stars being called Castor and Pollux. The Dioskouroi were considered patrons of navigation by the ancients, probably because the twin flames of St. Elmo's fire seemed to represent the heavenly twins, and so it would be natural to find them as the ship's figurehead.

¹²¹⁵ The largest city and capital of Sicily, Rome's first province. It was Greek town, a Corinthian colony founded in 734 BC and conquered by the Romans in 212 BC during the First Punic War. Its defenses during the siege had been organized by the Greek scientist *par excellence* Archimedes, who was killed in the subsequent sack.

¹²¹⁶ One of the KJV's more delightful archaisms, this is in GR περιελθόντες *perielthontes* circling around or going along [the coast]. The reading preferred now on the basis of *lectio difficilior* (among others) is περιελόντες *perielontes* lit. taking [something] off/away. Those who adopt it, however, have to deal with the fact that no known meaning of the word really fits the context; it may be a technical nautical term meaning something like *weighed anchor* (so NRSV).

¹²¹⁷ Now called Reggio di Calabria, a town at the tip of the Italian toe.

¹²¹⁸ The modern Pozzuoli, a town in the Bay of Naples. Note that the journey from the Italian toe to the Bay of Naples only takes one day, now that they are sailing with the wind.

¹²¹⁹ As elsewhere, Luke does not tell us how Christianity first spread to a region, in this case Italy. Paul's epistle to the Romans was written some years before this, so he knew that he would not be establishing Christianity in a new area. Luke, however, will downplay the pre-Pauline Christian presence in Rome so that he can emphasize Paul's usual procedure of preaching first to Jews and then to Gentiles, and so that Acts can close with a reiteration of Luke's theme that the Jews collectively rejected Christianity, rather than being themselves rejected by God or the Church.

¹²²⁰ The Appian Forum was a town about 40 miles (65 km) south of Rome.

¹²²¹ Another town about 31 miles (50 km) south of Rome.

¹²²² The phrase "the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard" is missing in the better GR MSS. Even if the phrase is admitted, it is unclear who the "captain of the guard" (GR στρατοπεδάρχης *stratopedarchēs*) was to whom Paul and the other prisoners were entrusted.

constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought¹²²³ to accuse my nation of. ²⁰ For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.¹²²⁴ ²¹ And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee,¹²²⁵ neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. ²² But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect,¹²²⁶ we know that every where it is spoken against.¹²²⁷

²³ And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening. ²⁴ And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. ²⁵ And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, ²⁶ Saying,

**Go unto this people, and say,
Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand;
and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:
²⁷ For the heart of this people is waxed gross,
and their ears are dull of hearing,
and their eyes have they closed;
lest they should see with *their* eyes,
and hear with *their* ears,
and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted,
and I should heal them.**¹²²⁸

²⁸ Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it. ²⁹ And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.¹²²⁹

¹²²³ IE aught, anything.

¹²²⁴ Paul's actual imprisonment seems to be have been relatively light; the "chain" he speaks of may have been purely metaphorical.

¹²²⁵ Paul left for Rome after the end of the usual sailing season. Because he wintered in Malta, Paul would have arrived in Rome before any ships sailing the following year. The Jewish authorities would not have had time to send a letter before Paul left, and are unlikely to have attempted to sail at the same time he did. (One wonders whether Festus did this deliberately—sending Paul late in the season, so he could arrive early in Rome and have his case resolved before any delegation came from Judea to complain of Festus' handling of the affair.) Luke leaves unexplained how the Roman *Christians* knew that Paul was on his way.

¹²²⁶ See 24:5n.

¹²²⁷ A strange remark, as there were already Christians in Rome whom they could have contacted for information.

¹²²⁸ Isaiah 6:9–10 LXX. This passage is frequently cited in the NT to characterize the refusal of some Jews to hear the Christian message; see Luke 8:10.

¹²²⁹ V. 29 is missing from some key GR MSS. Textual scholars feel that it was added to ease a sudden transition between vv. 28 and 30.

Conclusion: The Gospel Preached Without Hindrance

³⁰ And Paul dwelt two whole years¹²³⁰ in his own hired house,¹²³¹ and received all that came in unto him,³¹ Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.¹²³²

¹²³⁰ Roughly 60/61 to 62/63.

¹²³¹ ἐν ἰδίῳ μισθώματι *en idiō mishthōmati* at his own expense.

¹²³² And so Acts ends, rather suddenly with no satisfactory conclusion. There is no consensus on why Luke brings matters to an abrupt halt here and fails to provide any kind of summary to his document, beyond that he is ending when Paul has triumphantly arrived in Rome and is spreading the message of Christianity there. Did he plan a third volume? Did he die before he could write any more? Was the book written before Nero heard Paul's appeal? The most likely explanation is that it was not long after Acts ends that Roman officialdom began to turn against Christianity. Luke has consistently shown Roman authority as being benignly uninterested in Christianity, and emphasizes that the earliest Romans who encountered the Church saw no reason to attack it. That theme, and his entire geographical orientation for his work, would both be undermined seriously if he recounted what happened next. Luke's final word is ἀκωλύτως *akōlutōs* unhindered. The rise of Christianity could not be stopped, and we could do no worse ourselves than to quote Joseph Smith: "The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done." (HC 4:540).