

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

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(WORDS IN **BOLD** AND UNDERLINED ARE THE ANSWERS
TO THE BLANKS ON THE ACTS STUDY GUIDES)

ACTS 1

The book of Acts was written by Luke to a man named Theophilus. Luke had written to him before and had told him about the things that Jesus did and taught. This earlier writing is called the book of Luke. Jesus died at a place called **Calvary**. Jesus died by being **crucified**. Three days after His death, Jesus was **risen** from the dead. After Jesus was resurrected from the dead, He showed Himself to many people and proved that He was alive. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told His apostles not to depart from **Jerusalem**. They were to wait there so they could be baptized with the Holy Spirit. This event would take place in Acts 2. Jesus told the apostles that they would receive miraculous **power** when the **Holy Spirit** came upon them. After the apostles received this miraculous power, they would witness for Christ in Jerusalem. Then they would take the Gospel message to **Judea** and **Samaria**. Finally, they would preach about Christ to all the **earth**. After Jesus told them these things He ascended into heaven. Then the apostles went back to Jerusalem as Jesus had told them to do. When they returned to Jerusalem the apostles went up into the **upper room**. There were only **eleven** apostles at this time. Jesus had originally chosen **twelve** apostles. The name of the man who betrayed Jesus was **Judas Iscariot**. Notice that his name is not listed with the other apostles in Acts 1:13. The reason why Judas Iscariot's name is not listed in Acts 1:13 is because he was dead at this time. After betraying Jesus, Judas was sorry for what he had done and he went and **hanged** himself. The apostle Peter talks about Judas and what happened to his body after he hanged himself. Peter then says that they should chose another man to become an apostle and replace Judas. Peter said that the man chosen must be a disciple of Jesus who had been with them from the start of Jesus' ministry. Two men were proposed as good candidates to take Judas' place with the apostles. Two things were done before Judas' replacement was chosen. First, they **prayed** and asked the Lord to help them make the decision. Then, they cast **lots**. The man who replaced Judas as an apostle was named **Matthias**.

ACTS 2

When Chapter 2 begins it is the Day of Pentecost. Pentecost was a special religious day for the Jewish people. The twelve apostles were still waiting in Jerusalem as Jesus had told them to do. The sudden sound from heaven was like a rushing mighty **wind**. And the twelve apostles were all filled with the **Holy Spirit** and began to speak with other **tongues**. This is where the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit. They received special power to speak in tongues. To speak with other tongues means that the apostles were able to speak other languages that they had never learned before. We know this is true because of what we will learn in Acts 2:7,8. Because it was the Day of Pentecost, there were many Jews from all over the world staying in Jerusalem. Since many of them were from different countries, most of them did not speak the same language. Many of the Jews heard the sound of the rushing wind and they all came together where the apostles were. The apostles, who were all **Galileans**, amazed the Jews because the words the apostles spoke were heard by each Jew in his own **language**. There was a good reason why God gave the apostles this miraculous ability to speak in languages that they had never learned before. Now the apostles would be able to teach all of these people about the wonderful works of God. Peter now begins speaking to the crowd of people. He tells them that what has just happened was spoken of by the prophet **Joel**. This prophet said that God would pour out His Spirit on all kinds of people in the **last days**. Peter then speaks to the crowd about **Jesus**. These people knew that Jesus had performed many miracles through God's power, yet they had him put to **death**. But God **raised** Him up from the dead. Then Peter talks about **David** and what he had written about Jesus. David knew that Christ's **soul** would not be left in Hades and His **flesh** would not see corruption. This simply means that when Jesus died his physical body would not deteriorate in the tomb because God would put Jesus' soul back into His body and cause Him to come back to life. By being raised from the dead, Jesus was **exalted** to the right hand of God. Jesus was exalted, or glorified, by being given power and authority. God has made Jesus both **Lord** and **Christ**. Peter is saying that Jesus is the

Supreme Ruler and that He is the Savior. There is no one above Him because Jesus is the Son of God! But what had these people done to the Lord Jesus Christ? They had crucified Him! When they heard this they were **cut to the heart** and asked Peter and the apostles what they should do. These Jews were cut to the heart, which means that they were very sorry about what they had done. They regretted that they had killed Jesus. Peter told them that they should **repent** and be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the **remission** of sins. If they did this they would receive the non-miraculous **gift** of the Holy Spirit. Peter knows that these people now believe that Jesus is both Lord and Christ because they were sorry that they had crucified Him. But being sorry was not enough. Peter tells them what they must do. First, they must repent, or turn away from sinful living. They must give up their old life of sin and change to live a life for God. They must also be baptized, completely immersed in water, to actually be forgiven of their sins. This is how they could be saved! For a person to be saved today, he or she also must believe, repent, confess (see Romans 10:9,10) and be baptized. About **three thousand** souls believed what Peter had said and were baptized. After they were converted to Christ, they continued **steadfastly**. That is, they were faithful to God and to His church. They had changed their lives and committed themselves to the Lord. They worshipped Him properly and served Him with their fellow Christians daily. The people praised God and the Lord **added** to the **church** daily those who were being saved.

ACTS 3

In chapter 2 the church began and grew quickly. Thousands were taught about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Many of them believed, repented, confessed Christ, and were baptized to have their sins forgiven. Peter and John are going to the **temple** in Jerusalem at 3 P.M. There was a certain man who was **lame** (or crippled) since the day he was born. Everyday someone would carry him to the gate of the temple called **Beautiful** so he could ask **alms**. When he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he asked them to give him some money. Peter told the crippled man that he didn't have any **silver** or **gold**, but he would give him what he did have. He then commanded the crippled man to get up and **walk**. After Peter said this, he helped the man to his feet. A miracle was performed immediately. The crippled man had been healed! The man then went into the temple with Peter and John and was seen walking, **leaping**, and **praising God**. He was so happy and thankful that he had been healed! The people who saw him were filled with **wonder** and **amazement**. It was hard for them to believe that the man who had been crippled all his life was now able to walk. It was a miracle! Peter now begins preaching to the people in the region of the temple called Solomon's **porch**. He tells the people that they shouldn't be amazed at this miracle. Peter didn't perform it by his own power but by the power of God. He then begins speaking about Jesus, just like he did on the Day of Pentecost in chapter 2. Peter tells the people that they had killed Jesus and that God had raised Him from the dead. The apostles were **witnesses** of this. Peter says that God **foretold** by His **prophets** that Jesus would die. These prophecies had been **fulfilled** by Jesus. Peter then tells the people that they must **repent** and be **converted** so their sins would be forgiven. If we compare this verse with Acts 2:38, we can learn that baptism is included in the process of being converted. Peter then quotes **Moses**. He had written about a great Prophet who God would use to teach His people, and those who would not listen to this Prophet or obey Him would be utterly **destroyed**. This Prophet that Moses wrote about is Jesus Christ! If we don't obey Him, we too will be destroyed!

ACTS 4

The Jewish leaders were greatly **disturbed** that Peter and John **taught** the people and **preached** to them. Peter and John were teaching the people about Jesus' resurrection from the dead. They also taught that all who ever lived would one day be raised from the dead. The Jewish leaders arrested them and put them in **custody**. Even though Peter and John had been arrested, many people **heard** the word of God and **believed**. Those who believed also repented, confessed Christ, and were baptized to have their sins forgiven. We know this because these believers are now counted with those who were converted on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:41. There are over 5,000 of them in all and each one did the same thing to have their sins forgiven. Peter and John are in custody over night and on the next day, the Jewish leaders ask them a question about the miracle they had performed earlier in Acts 3:6,7. The Jewish leaders wanted to know by what **power** or by what **name** the lame man had been made to walk. Peter tells them it was by the name of **Jesus Christ**. Jesus was the one they had crucified and God had raised from the dead. The Jewish leaders had rejected Jesus, but Jesus was very

important in God's plan to save man. The Jewish leaders were amazed when they saw the **boldness** of Peter and John in the way they spoke about Jesus. The Jewish leaders really didn't know what they should do to Peter and John. They had arrested the two apostles because they didn't like them teaching about Jesus and converting large numbers of Jews. But, they really couldn't punish Peter and John because they hadn't done anything wrong. In fact, they had done a good deed by healing a crippled man! The Jewish leaders decide to **threaten** them with punishment if they keep teaching about Jesus. They hope that this will scare them and that their teachings will **spread** no further among the people. Peter and John are then released. They meet together with the other disciples and tell them about the threats that the Jewish leaders had made. They all pray together that the Lord will give them boldness to continue to **speak** the word of God and not be afraid because of the threats. God answers their prayer! They are given the strength to continue speaking boldly. Those who believed were of **one heart** and **one soul**. Everyone had **all things in common**. This simply means that they all loved each other and cared about the needs of one other. They were all willing to share their money and possessions, and they brought these things to the apostles. The apostles were in charge of distributing to the needy and they made sure that everyone's physical needs were met. One man who sold his land and gave the money to the apostles was named **Barnabas**.

ACTS 5

A possession is sold by **Ananias** and **Sapphira**. They agree to keep part of the money they made and give the rest to the apostles. The possession they had sold was their **land**. They appeared to be doing a good deed by giving money to the apostles so the needy could be helped, but Peter said that **Satan** had filled their hearts and that they had **lied** to the **Holy Spirit**. When Ananias brought the money to the apostles, he said that he was giving all the money he had received when he sold the land. But, this was a lie! He and his wife had secretly decided to keep some of the money for themselves. There was nothing wrong with wanting to keep some of the money. But, it was very wrong to lie! After Peter told Ananias that he had lied to God, Ananias **fell down** and **breathed his last**. After Ananias died, his body was buried. His wife, Sapphira, wasn't with him when he died, and she didn't know that he was dead. She came to the apostles and also lied about the money like her husband had. She also died and was buried! Because of what happened to Ananias and Sapphira, great fear came upon the church. But this didn't stop the Lord's church from growing! **Believers** were increasingly **added to the Lord**, multitudes of both men and women. Many people were believing, repenting, confessing Christ, and being baptized! The Jewish leaders then put the apostles in the common **prison**. They did this because they were angry that the apostles kept preaching about Jesus even though they had been told to stop back in chapter 4. Later that night, an angel frees the apostles and tells them to go back to the temple and keep preaching! The next day, the officers can't figure out how the apostles escaped. The apostles are then found teaching in the temple and they are brought before the council. The high priest asks them, "Did we not strictly **command** you not to teach in this name?" Peter then says, "We ought to **obey God** rather than men." The apostles knew that Jesus had been crucified and resurrected. Because of this, humans could have their sins forgiven. They were not going to stop preaching even though some didn't like it! They were doing what God wanted them to do! This made the leaders **furious** and they plan to **kill** them. One of the leaders named **Gamaliel** stood up and spoke. He tells the council to just leave the apostles alone. He believes that if the message they are preaching is false, then it will die out soon. But, if they are preaching the truth, then their teaching could not be stopped anyway since it would be from God. The Jewish leaders agree, but they still **beat** the apostles and command them to quit preaching about Jesus. After leaving the council, the apostles **rejoice** that they were able to **suffer** shame for Christ. They continue teaching and preaching about Jesus **daily** in the temple and in every house.

ACTS 6

When the number of **disciples** was **multiplying**, there arose a **complaint** against the **Hebrews** by the **Hellenists** because their **widows** were **neglected** in the daily distribution. In Acts 4:35, we learned that the apostles were in charge of distributing goods to those disciples who were in need. But now in chapter 6, the church has grown larger and a problem has developed between the Hebrew and Hellenist disciples. Both groups of disciples were Jews, but the Hellenists were those who had adopted Greek customs. The Hellenists complained because their widows were not receiving the daily goods that they needed. The twelve apostles told the disciples that they did

not want to leave **the word of God** and **serve tables**. They told the brethren to choose **seven men** whom they could appoint to take care of the daily distribution. These men had to have a **good reputation** and be full of the **Holy Spirit** and **wisdom**. The apostles wanted to spend their time continually in **prayer** and to the **ministry** of the word. The disciples liked the apostles' idea. The seven men they chose were named Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas. The apostles prayed and laid their hands on these men in order to give them miraculous power. The problem has now been solved and the church continues to grow. In fact, many of the priests even obeyed the gospel and became disciples! One of the seven men who had been chosen to help with the daily distribution was named **Stephen**. Stephen performed miracles among the people, but there were some who tried **disputing** with him. However, they were not able to **resist** the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then, they made up a lie about Stephen and secretly told others to spread it around. The people, the elders, and the scribes became so stirred up that they seized Stephen and brought him before the council. They also set up **false witnesses** who lied and said that Stephen never stopped speaking **blasphemous words** against Moses and God. The Jewish leaders in the council listened to what the false witnesses had to say, and they looked at Stephen and noticed that his face looked like the face of an **angel**.

ACTS 7

Stephen is still before the council when chapter 7 begins. Some false witnesses have accused him of speaking blasphemous words against Moses and God. The high priest asks him if these things are true, and he is now given a chance to answer. Stephen speaks to the council from verses 2 through 53 and defends his innocence. Stephen begins by speaking about father **Abraham**. God told Abraham to leave his home and go where God would direct him. Abraham obeyed, and God made several promises to him. God promises that Abraham's descendants will be oppressed for 400 years by another nation, but afterwards, they will receive their own special land. God gave Abraham the covenant of **circumcision**. One of Abraham's sons was named **Isaac**. One of Isaac's sons was named **Jacob**. Jacob's sons were sometimes called the **twelve patriarchs**. The son that Jacob loved the most was named **Joseph**. His brothers were jealous of him, and they sold him as a slave into **Egypt**. Joseph had some difficult times there. But, God was with him, and he eventually became an important leader in Egypt. Joseph was later reunited with his family when there was a severe famine and many people came to Egypt to buy food. After Joseph's relatives moved to Egypt, they were treated well. But, when a new king came to power, he oppressed them as God had promised would happen. About this time, **Moses** was born and was well pleasing to God. Moses was a Hebrew boy, but due to some unusual circumstances, Pharaoh's daughter, an Egyptian, brought him up. Because of this, Moses was not treated as a slave like the other Hebrews, and he also received an excellent education. When Moses was 40 years old, he decided to visit his Hebrew brethren, the **children of Israel**. He saw that the Egyptians were mistreating them. When he thought no one was looking, Moses killed one of the Egyptians who was beating a Hebrew. But, others found out what Moses had done, and he left the country for fear of his life. God appeared to Moses in the wilderness of **Mount Sinai**. When Moses was 80 years old, God spoke to him from a burning bush and told him to return to Egypt. God wanted to free the Hebrew people from their slavery, and Moses was the man who would accomplish the task with God's help. God gave Moses the power to perform many **wonders and signs** which harmed the Egyptians and destroyed Egypt. After these plagues, the Egyptians finally let the Hebrews go. Moses then led the people through the Red Sea on dry ground and they traveled to Mount Sinai. God then made the children of Israel His special people by making a covenant with them. He made laws for them to live by and they agreed to follow them. However, it wasn't long before they started breaking them. First, they made a golden calf as an idol and worshipped it. They also disobeyed God in other matters, and they were severely punished. Instead of leaving Mount Sinai and being able to go directly to the land God had promised Abraham they would have, they first had to wander around in the wilderness for 40 years until all those who were disobedient had died! Before the years of wandering in the wilderness, God had given Moses instructions as to how to build the **tabernacle**. Moses did not get to enter the promised land, but the tabernacle was brought with **Joshua** when he led the children of Israel into the land. From the time of Joshua until the days of **David**, God drove out the sinful people who lived in the land and gave it to the children of Israel to fulfill the promise He had made to Abraham. David had asked God for permission to build Him a temple, but God wanted **Solomon**, one of David's sons, to do it instead. Stephen keeps speaking, and he says some harsh, yet true, things to the council. Stephen calls

them **stiff-necked** and uncircumcised in heart and ears! That is, the men of the council also resisted the Holy Spirit and disobeyed God, just like their ancestors had done! But what exactly had they done wrong? Stephen says that their ancestors had persecuted the **prophets** who foretold of the coming of the **Just One**. The words “Just One” refer to Jesus, and Stephen says that these men were the **betrayers** and **murderers** of Christ! When the council heard what Stephen said, they were **cut to the heart** and they **gnashed their teeth** at him. The council was so angry that they took Stephen outside the city and **stoned** him. Those who were throwing the stones, laid their outer garments at the feet of a young man named **Saul**.

ACTS 8

After Stephen was killed, he was buried by godly men, and a **great persecution** arose against the church. The disciples were all **scattered**. One man who was strongly against the church was named **Saul**. He tried to destroy the church by dragging off disciples to **prison**. Those who left Jerusalem to escape Saul’s persecution went everywhere **preaching the word**. One man who left Jerusalem was named **Philip**. He went down to **Samaria** and **preached Christ**. The multitudes listened to Philip and were joyful because he performed many great miracles. He cast out unclean spirits and healed many who were unable to walk. A certain man named **Simon** practiced sorcery in Samaria. When the people **believed** Philip as he preached about the kingdom of God and about Jesus, many were **baptized**. Even Simon the sorcerer believed and was baptized for the forgiveness of his sins. When the apostles, who were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent **Peter** and **John** to them. Peter and John came to Samaria to lay hands on the new disciples that they might receive the miraculous power of the **Holy Spirit**. Simon offered **money** to the apostles if they would give him the power to be able to lay his hands on others and give them the Holy Spirit. This idea upset Peter, and he said that Simon’s heart wasn’t right in God’s sight. Peter told Simon to **repent** and **pray** to God to be **forgiven** of this sin. After an angel spoke to Philip, he left Samaria and ran to a man who was a **eunuch** from Ethiopia. The man was riding in his chariot and was reading from the book of **Isaiah**. The eunuch didn’t understand what he was reading, so Philip explained it to him. He preached about Jesus to the eunuch and told him what he must do to be saved. As they rode in the chariot, the eunuch said, “See, here is **water**.” The eunuch believed in Christ and wanted to be baptized to have his sins forgiven! The eunuch then confessed that he believed that **Jesus Christ** is **the Son of God**. After stopping the chariot, both men then went down into the water, and Philip baptized the eunuch. The eunuch went on his way rejoicing because his sins had been washed away!

ACTS 9

The man named **Saul** is still breathing **threats** and **murder** against the disciples of the Lord. He went to the high priest to get permission to go to **Damascus** and arrest those who were disciples of Jesus. But, as Saul came near Damascus, suddenly a bright **light** shone around him from heaven. He fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you **persecuting** Me?” Jesus was talking to Saul, and Saul was both scared and amazed. He asked the Lord what he should do. Jesus commands him to go into the city, and Saul does this. The bright light has caused him to be **without sight**. There was a certain disciple named **Ananias** who was told by God to go to Saul and restore his sight. Saul had been **praying**. Ananias obeyed God by laying his hands on Saul to heal his sight, and then Saul arose and was **baptized** to have his sins washed away. After his conversion, Saul immediately **preached the Christ**, that He is **the Son of God**. Now after many days were past, the Jews **plotted to kill him**. They wanted to kill Saul because of his bold preaching and his ability to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. These Jews were not able to effectively argue against Saul’s preaching, and they grew tired of this. Saul escaped from those who wanted to kill him because the disciples secretly let him down through the wall in a **large basket**. Saul then goes to Jerusalem and tries to join the disciples there. At first, they were afraid of him and did not believe that he was a genuine follower of Christ. They thought it was a trick! But, Barnabas helps convince them that Saul really is a true disciple and that he is there to help them, not harm them. Since Saul was no longer persecuting the disciples, the church had **peace** and was **edified** and the number of disciples **multiplied**. While traveling, **Peter** found and healed a certain man named **Aeneas** who had been **paralyzed**. This miracle caused many at Lydda and Sharon to turn to the Lord and become disciples. At Joppa, there was a woman named **Tabitha** who was known for doing good works

for others. Tabitha died and the disciples went and got Peter. He brought her back to life! Many people heard about this miracle, and they believed on the Lord.

ACTS 10

There was a man named **Cornelius**, a **centurion**, who was a **devout man** and one who **feared God** and **prayed to God always**. A centurion was a military commander who was in charge of 100 soldiers. Cornelius was a centurion and also a very godly man. An angel speaks to Cornelius in a **vision** and tells him to send for Simon whose surname is **Peter**. Cornelius immediately obeys and sends some men to go get Peter. Before the men find him, Peter sees a vision in which heaven opened up and an object like a **great sheet** was lowered down to earth. In the great sheet were all kinds of **four-footed animals** and other creatures. A voice said to him, “Rise, Peter; **kill and eat**.” Peter said that he would not do this since he had never eaten anything that was common or **unclean**. Peter wondered what the vision meant. About that time, the men from Cornelius found Peter, and the Holy Spirit told him to go with them. Peter did go with the men. Cornelius fell down at his feet and **worshiped him**. Peter told him to **stand up** for he too was just a man. Peter understood that only God is worthy of being worshiped! Peter also now understood what the vision had meant. Peter was a Jew, and the Jews considered anyone who was not a Jew to be a Gentile or “unclean.” Before this day, all of the disciples had only been preaching to the Jewish people. But God wanted the gospel of Jesus Christ to be preached to all people, not just the Jews, and this is what Peter learned through the vision! Peter then begins teaching these Gentiles. Peter said, “In truth I perceive that God shows **no partiality**. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works **righteousness** is accepted by Him.” Peter then begins preaching about **Jesus Christ** for **He is Lord of all**. Peter tells Cornelius and his family and friends that Jesus went about **doing good** and **healing** many people. But, in spite of His good works, Jesus had been brutally **killed**. Then He was **raised up** from the dead by God on the third day. Then the **Holy Spirit** fell upon those who heard the word. These Gentiles had been baptized with the Holy Spirit just like the apostles had been on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. They spoke in tongues and praised God. Peter then commanded them to be **baptized**.

ACTS 11

Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the **Gentiles** had also received the word of God. And when **Peter** came up to **Jerusalem**, those of the circumcision (the Jewish disciples) **contended** with him. They wanted to know why Peter had preached to the Gentiles, who they considered to be unclean. Peter then explains to the Jewish disciples everything that had happened (please refer to Acts 10:9-48). When the Jewish disciples heard Peter’s explanation, they stopped contending with him and they **glorified God**, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles **repentance to life**.” These Jewish disciples believed what Peter told them about the vision he saw and how the Holy Spirit had miraculously fallen upon Cornelius and his family and friends when Peter preached to them about Jesus. These Jewish disciples now understood that God wanted all people, not just the Jews, to be taught about Jesus Christ. They now realized that salvation is for all people who will obey God! Because of the **persecution** that arose over Stephen, there were many who were **scattered** who went about **preaching the word** as they traveled. The Lord was with those who were preaching about Jesus Christ and a great number of people **believed** and **turned to the Lord**. These people were taught about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and they believed in Him. They then turned to the Lord by repenting of their sins, confessing their belief in Christ, and being baptized in order to be cleansed of sin and added to the church. The news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem and they sent out **Barnabas** to go as far as **Antioch**. Barnabas came to these people and was glad to see that they had obeyed the gospel, and he **encouraged them** that they should **continue with the Lord**. Barnabas then traveled to Tarsus to find **Saul**. When he found him, they went to Antioch and **assembled** with the church and **taught** a great many people for a whole year. At Antioch, the **disciples** began to be called **Christians**. The word “Christian” means “a follower of Jesus Christ.” Barnabas and Saul stayed here for a year to worship with these Christians and teach them how important it is to remain faithful to the Lord after becoming a Christian. During this time, a man named **Agabus** came to Antioch from Jerusalem. Agabus was a prophet, and he foretold, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that there was going to be a **great famine**. The Christians at Antioch decided to send money to Judea to be used to buy food during the famine. Barnabas and Saul took the money to the Christians in Judea.

ACTS 12

Now about that time **Herod** the king stretched out his hand to **harass** some from **the church**. King Herod **killed James**, the brother of John, with a sword and then proceeded to seize **Peter** also. Many of the Jews hated the church and this is why they were pleased when Herod killed James. Herod arrested Peter and planned to kill him soon also. In the meantime, Peter was kept in **prison**, but the church offered constant **prayer** to God for him. Herod kept Peter in prison very securely. Peter was in chains and was personally guarded by two soldiers. Herod didn't want Peter to escape, but this is exactly what would happen! Peter is awakened by an **angel** who frees him from his chains. The angel tells Peter exactly what to do, and Peter obeys him. Peter is not sure if the things done by the angel were real or not, and he thought he might be **seeing a vision**. Peter continued to follow the angel and they eventually came to the iron gate that leads to the city. This gate opened for them all by itself! Peter was now free! After Peter realized that he had not seen a vision but had actually been led out of prison by an angel, he went to the **house of Mary**. He then **knocked at the door** of the gate. When the door was finally opened, everyone was **astonished** to see Peter standing there. Peter explains what had happened and then leaves to go to another place. The next morning, Herod searched for Peter and also **examined the guards**. After questioning them, he had them **put to death** for failing to keep Peter from escaping. King Herod had been angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, but they came to him and tried to make peace. Herod was willing to make peace with them. So on a set day Herod, dressed in **royal apparel**, sat on his **throne** and gave a speech to them. The people wanted to please Herod, so they shouted, "**The voice of a god** and not of a man!" Herod knew this wasn't true, but he did not **give glory to God**. As a result, an angel killed King Herod. He was eaten by worms and died. As these events were happening, **the word of God grew** and multiplied.

ACTS 13

After returning to Antioch, **Barnabas** and **Saul** were chosen by the **Holy Spirit** to do a special work. This special work was traveling from city to city preaching about Jesus Christ and persuading people to obey the gospel to become Christians and be cleansed of sin. In one city, they met a **sorcerer** who was a false prophet. This sorcerer tried to prevent Saul and Barnabas from converting Sergius Paulus. Then Saul, who is also called **Paul**, said to the sorcerer, "You shall be **blind**, not seeing the sun for a time." After Paul temporarily blinded the man by the power of God, Sergius Paulus **believed** and was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. Paul and Barnabas continued to travel and preach everywhere they went. In a synagogue, Paul spoke about the Israelites and the time they spent as slaves in **Egypt**. He also talked about the forty years they spent in the **wilderness**. After that, God destroyed the nations living in the land of **Canaan** and gave it to the Israelites. Paul then said that God had given the Israelites **judges** for a period of time and then they asked for a **king**. Eventually, God fulfilled the promise He had made to Abraham, and He raised up for Israel a **Savior** named **Jesus**. Paul then speaks about Jesus' crucifixion and how God brought Him back to life! He then urges the people to believe in Christ and obey the gospel so they could have the **forgiveness of sins**. On the next Saturday, almost the **whole city** came together to **hear the word of God**. Paul's preaching the week before had caused many people to want to hear the gospel, but some of the Jews saw the multitudes and were **filled with envy**. These Jews opposed the things Paul spoke because they were jealous! Then Paul and Barnabas grew **bold** and told the Jews that they would preach to the Gentiles since the Jews had judged themselves unworthy of **everlasting life**. The Gentiles heard the gospel and gladly obeyed it, and the word of the Lord continued being **spread** throughout all the region. Paul and Barnabas had to leave this area due to problems the Jews had stirred up. But this didn't stop them! They went elsewhere and continued preaching and teaching about Jesus Christ and the salvation that is possible only through Him!

ACTS 14

Paul and Barnabas came to Iconium and **spoke** in the synagogue. A great multitude of Jews and Greeks **believed** after hearing them proclaim the gospel boldly. The Lord bore **witness** to the word of His grace by granting **signs and wonders** to be done by the hands of Paul and Barnabas. Some of the people of this city believed the apostles, but others were against them. Eventually, a violent attempt was made to abuse and **stone**

them. However, Paul and Barnabas became aware of the plan to kill them, and they fled to Lystra where they continued to preach the gospel. In Lystra, they saw a man who was a **cripple**. From the day he had been born, he had **never walked**. Paul healed the man by commanding him to “**Stand up** straight on your feet!” And he **leaped** and **walked**. When the people saw this, they praised Paul and Barnabas and thought that they were gods! The crowd was so excited that they intended to offer sacrifices to them. However, before the multitude offered sacrifices to them, Paul and Barnabas cried out to them saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? **We also are men** with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should **turn** from these **useless things** to **the living God**.” They explained that they were not gods, but that the one true God had done much good for all men, and that He expected them to turn from their idolatry. With these words, they were barely able to restrain the multitude from sacrificing to them. Then some of the Jews who were against Paul and Barnabas came from other cities and persuaded the multitudes to act violently against Paul. They **stoned Paul** and dragged him out of the city supposing him to be dead, but he wasn’t! He got up when the disciples gathered around him, and they soon left for Derbe. And when Paul and Barnabas had **preached the gospel** to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia. They traveled through these cities again to strengthen the souls of the disciples, **exhorting** them to continue in the faith. They told the people that before going to heaven many **tribulations** would have to be endured. When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch in Syria, they **reported** on this missionary journey and told **all that God had done** through them.

ACTS 15

Certain men came from Judea and taught that unless a man was **circumcised** according to the custom of **Moses**, then he could not be **saved**. Paul and Barnabas disagreed with this teaching and had a **dispute** with them. It was decided that Paul, Barnabas, and certain others should go up to **Jerusalem** to the apostles and elders to discuss this issue. In Jerusalem, some of the Pharisees who believed in Christ said that circumcision was **necessary** and that Gentiles should be commanded to **keep the law of Moses**. While the matter was being discussed, Peter said that God had wanted the **Gentiles** to **hear** the word of the gospel and **believe**. God had made no distinction between the Jews and Gentiles, and Peter asked the men, “**Why do you test God?**” These men were testing God by trying to force the Gentiles to submit to the Old Testament law, but God had never intended for them to do such! Peter then states that it would not be through obedience to the Old Testament that the Gentiles would be saved, but rather they would be saved through the **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter also said that this is the same way that all Christians would be saved! James then speaks up and says that the words of **the prophets** were in agreement with what Peter had spoken. In the past it had been foretold that the Gentiles would seek the Lord. Therefore, it was decided that the Gentiles did not have to obey the law of Moses to be saved. Those in this meeting then decided that they should **write to them**, the Gentile Christians, and tell them to **abstain** from several things, including things offered to idols and sexual immorality. After the letter was written, several men left Jerusalem, gathered the multitude together in Antioch, and then **delivered the letter**. The Gentiles **rejoiced** over its **encouragement**. After some time, Paul and Barnabas decided that they wanted to **go back and visit** the brethren in every city in which they had preached, in order to see how they were doing. There was a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas as to whether or not they should take John Mark with them on their journey. They couldn’t come to an agreement, so Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed to Cyprus. Paul took Silas with him and went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

ACTS 16

When Paul and Silas traveled to Lystra they visited with a certain disciple named **Timothy**. He was **well spoken of** by the brethren in that area. The apostle **Paul** wanted to take Timothy with them on their journey, so he took him and **circumcised** him. Paul did this because the Jews would want nothing to do with an uncircumcised man. As a result, it would have been difficult for Timothy to preach to the Jews. As they preached the gospel in the area, the churches were strengthened in the faith, and **increased in number** daily. At this time the Holy Spirit forbid them to preach in Asia. Paul then had a vision from God that called them to preach the gospel in Macedonia. When they came to **Philippi**, the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, they went out to the **riverside** where **prayer** was customarily made. It is here that they met a seller of purple named **Lydia**. She and her household heard the things spoken by Paul and obeyed the gospel by being **baptized** for the

forgiveness of their sins. In Philippi there was a certain **slave girl** who was **possessed**. She kept following them and saying, “These men are the **servants** of the Most High God who proclaim to us **the way of salvation**.” Paul eventually grew tired of this and commanded the spirit to come out of her. But this angered the slave owners who had been using her to make money by fortune-telling. So, the owners then drag Paul and Silas to the authorities. The authorities have them severely beaten and thrown into **prison**. While in prison, Paul and Silas are **praying** and **singing** to God in spite of the persecution they had suffered! At midnight there was a great **earthquake**. All the prison doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed. The keeper of the prison woke up and thought that all of the prisoners had escaped. He knew he would be executed for this so he decided to kill himself. However, before he did, Paul called out to him and told him not to harm himself since no one had left. He then fell down trembling before Paul and Silas and asked, “**What must I do** to be **saved**?” They told him that he must **believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that this command included baptism because he and all his family were baptized that very hour. Then the jailer rejoiced because he had believed in God by obeying Him. He was full of joy because his sins had been washed away! When it was day, Paul and Silas are released from prison. They visit the brethren to encourage them, and then they depart.

ACTS 17

After arriving in Thessalonica, Paul went to a Jewish synagogue and **reasoned with them** from **the Scriptures**. He explained that **Jesus** was the Christ and that He had been crucified and resurrected from the dead. Some were **persuaded** by the things that were spoken. But, there were others who did not believe and became **envious**. They took some of the **evil men** from the marketplace and gathered a **mob**. They set the city in an uproar and attacked the house of **Jason** in hopes of finding Paul and Silas. The Jews did not find them, so they took Jason and some of the brethren to the rulers and explained how they had been breaking the law by saying that there was **another king** besides Caesar, named Jesus. Because of the danger, the brethren immediately send Paul and Silas away by night to **Berea**. When they arrived, they went into the **synagogue** to preach the gospel. These people were more **fair-minded** than those in Thessalonica, in that they **received the word** with all readiness, and **searched** the Scriptures **daily** to find out whether or not the things Paul and Silas were teaching them were true. Many who heard the gospel in Berea **believed**. They became Christians by obeying the gospel. However, they soon had to send Paul away because the Jews from Thessalonica came there and stirred up trouble. Paul went to Athens and saw that it was a city given over to **idols**. In the synagogue, Paul encountered some philosophers who were interested in his preaching on Jesus and **the resurrection**. They requested to hear him teach on these things and Paul was happy to do so. After mentioning that the people of Athens were very religious, Paul taught them about the true God. He told them that the God who had created all things and sustains all things was not made out of gold or silver or stone. Paul knew they should understand this since they believed that humans are **the offspring of God**, and thus, it would be impossible for an idol created by a man to actually create humans. After Paul explained that their idols could not possibly be the true and living God, he tells them that God now commands all men to **repent**. This was important because someday God would **judge the world** for the way in which each one had lived their life. After preaching this lesson, Paul soon departed from Athens and went to Corinth.

ACTS 18

In Corinth, Paul met a man named **Aquila** and his wife, **Priscilla**. They were **tentmakers**. Paul stayed and worked with them since he was also a tentmaker. In the synagogue on every Sabbath, Paul **reasoned** and **persuaded** both Jews and Greeks. After Silas and Timothy joined him, Paul **testified** to the Jews that **Jesus is the Christ**. Paul convinced some to obey the gospel in order to have their sins forgiven. But, there were others who opposed Paul and the message he was preaching about Jesus. Paul said to those who opposed him, “Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the **Gentiles**.” Paul had done his best to teach them the truth so they could obey it and be saved. But, they were not interested, so Paul would now spend his time teaching the Gentiles. After Paul converted **Crispus**, the ruler of the synagogue, many of the Corinthians also became Christians. After **hearing** the gospel, they **believed** it and were **baptized**. The Jews who opposed Paul rose up against him and brought him to the **judgment seat**. However, the proconsul was not interested in the charges that the Jews had made against Paul. He told them to take care of these matters

themselves. He did not want to be a judge of such things that concerned questions about the law of Moses. Some time after this, Paul left Corinth and traveled to several places including Jerusalem and Antioch in Syria. And when he had spent some time there, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, **strengthening** all the disciples. Now a certain Jew named **Apollos**, born at Alexandria, an **eloquent** man and **mighty** in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in **the way of the Lord**; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to **speak boldly** in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they **took him aside** and **explained** to him the way of God **more accurately**. Even though Apollos was an educated man, he still had much to learn, like all of us do. He had a good attitude and was willing to be corrected when necessary. We should all work to have this same attitude.

ACTS 19

When Paul came to Ephesus he found some **disciples** and asked them, “Did you receive the **Holy Spirit** when you believed?” Paul wanted to know if any apostle had laid hands on these men and given them miraculous ability through the power of the Holy Spirit. They said that they had not even heard anything about a Holy Spirit. Paul then said to them, “Into what then were you **baptized**?” And they said, “Into **John’s baptism**.” Paul then explained that John’s baptism was a baptism of **repentance** and that they should **believe** on Him who would come after John, that is **Christ Jesus**. When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had **laid hands on them**, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with **tongues** and **prophesied**. Paul then went into the synagogue and taught about the church for several months, but there were some who were **hardened** and did not believe, but they **spoke evil** of the church. God worked **unusual miracles** through Paul. For example, if the sick were touched by certain pieces of cloth that Paul had touched, then they would be healed! Some of the **Jewish exorcists** tried to cast out evil spirits by using Jesus’ name. However, this was a bad idea since they did not have the power from God to do this. Instead of driving out the evil spirit, they were attacked and wounded. This incident became known to those living in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was **magnified**. Many of those who had practiced **magic** brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. So the word of the Lord **grew mightily** and **prevailed**. Then a great commotion arose that was caused by a man named **Demetrius** who was a **silversmith**. He called the other craftsmen together and started a riot. They were against Paul because his preaching of the gospel was hurting their business. They made idols for a living, and Paul taught the people that they should worship the true God and not some idol made by man. The commotion that was caused by these men was significant, but no one was injured. The city clerk finally broke the riot up by stating that it was an unlawful assembly and that Demetrius should take Paul to court if he had anything against him.

ACTS 20

After the uproar had ceased, Paul met with the disciples and then departed. Now when he had gone through the region of Macedonia and **encouraged them**, he came to Greece. After three months he continued traveling and eventually came to Troas. Now on the **first day of the week**, when the **disciples** came together to **break bread**, Paul spoke to them until midnight. The disciples had come together to partake of the Lord’s Supper. They were gathered in a third story room and a certain young man named **Eutychus** was sinking into a **deep sleep**. He was sitting in a window and as Paul continued speaking, he **fell** out. They believe the young man is dead but Paul assured them that **his life is in him**. Paul and his companions continue their evangelistic journey and eventually come to Miletus. Paul then sent to **Ephesus** and **called for the elders** of the church. Paul speaks to these elders and they know that he has been **serving the Lord** with all **humility**, with many **tears** and **trials** which had resulted from the Jews who were against him. Paul had not kept anything back from these men that was helpful, but rather he had taught all that they must show **repentance** toward God and **faith** toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul knew that he would not see these men anymore and he said, “Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to **declare** the **whole counsel of God**. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to **shepherd** the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” Paul then warned them that “savage wolves” would come in among them and not spare the flock. That is, Paul knows that after he leaves there will be men rising up

in the church who would speak false things and mislead the disciples. Paul wants these elders to be ready for this, and he instructs them to be watchful. Paul then commends them to **God** and to **the word** of His grace which is able to build them up and give them an eternal inheritance. Paul then prayed with them, and they all wept freely. Finally, they accompany him to the ship.

ACTS 21

After leaving Miletus by ship, Paul and his companions eventually came to Tyre where the ship's cargo was to be unloaded. They found some **disciples** there and stayed for a week. It appears that the Holy Spirit revealed to these disciples that some bad things would happen to Paul in Jerusalem. These brethren warned Paul not to go there. After leaving Tyre and making one other stop, the group came to Caesarea, and entered the house of **Philip** the **evangelist**. While they were staying at Philip's house, a prophet named **Agabus** came down from Judea. He took **Paul's belt** and bound his own hands and feet with it. He then prophesied that Paul would be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem, and that he would be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. Now when the Christians heard these things, they all pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be **bound**, but also to **die** at **Jerusalem** for the name of the Lord Jesus." When the disciples saw that they could not convince Paul not to go to Jerusalem, they stopped pleading with him and said, "**The will of the Lord** be done." Then Paul and his companions went to Jerusalem, and Luke wrote that "the brethren **received us gladly**." While in Jerusalem, they visited **James**, and all the **elders** were present. Paul then told them in detail the things which **God** had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they **glorified the Lord**. Then they spoke to Paul about the many **Jews** who had become Christians and how they were all **zealous for the law**. This was a problem though since they had heard that Paul had been teaching the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake the law of Moses and its customs. To solve the problem, Paul was purified with some men according to the law of Moses, and they went to the temple to make offerings. The Jews from Asia saw Paul, laid hands on him, and dragged him out of the temple. Now as they were **seeking to kill him**, news came to the **commander** of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an **uproar**. When the Jews saw the soldiers coming, they stopped beating Paul. Paul was then bound by the soldiers, and the commander ordered him to be taken to the barracks. Before Paul is led to the barracks, he gets permission from the commander to speak to the mob. He stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. They became quiet, and Paul spoke to them in the Hebrew language.

ACTS 22

Paul began speaking to the people by saying, "Brethren and fathers, hear my **defense** before you now. I am indeed a **Jew**, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was **zealous toward God** as you are all today. I **persecuted the way** to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women." Paul then told the crowd what had happened to him one day as he was traveling toward **Damascus**. At about noon, **a great light** from heaven shone around him and he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you **persecuting Me**?" Paul then asked who was speaking to him, and the voice said, "I am **Jesus of Nazareth**, whom you are persecuting." Paul then asked, "**What shall I do Lord**?" The Lord told him to arise and go into Damascus. A man named **Ananias** came to Paul and spoke to him. He said that Paul would be God's **witness** to all men of what he had seen and heard on the road to Damascus. He then asked Paul, "**Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins**." After Paul was baptized for the forgiveness of his sins, he went back to Jerusalem and fell into a **trance**. He spoke with God in the trance, and God told him to leave Jerusalem. God said that He would send Paul far away to the **Gentiles**. When the crowd heard Paul say the word "Gentiles," they became angry and cried out against him. They interrupted his defense and didn't want to hear any more! The commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks so that he could be examined under **scourging**. As they bound Paul, he asked the centurion if it was lawful to scourge a man who was a **Roman** and not condemned. Paul was telling them that he was a Roman citizen, and according to the law, they had no right to bind or scourge him. When the commander learned of this, he became afraid because they had bound him against the law. The next

day the commander brought Paul before the chief priests and council because he wanted to learn why the Jews were accusing Paul.

ACTS 23

After being brought before the council, Paul said, “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. Paul was telling these men that he had always done what he thought was the right thing to do. Earlier in his life, Paul thought that it was right to persecute Christians. But now that he believed that Jesus was the Christ, he knew that it was right to preach the gospel and make disciples. The high priest named Ananias did not like what Paul was saying so he had Paul struck in the mouth. As Paul continued speaking before the council, he realized that some of them were Sadducees and the others were Pharisees. He then spoke up and said, “I am a Pharisee; the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!” And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the two groups; and the assembly was divided. Paul’s words caused the council to be divided because the Pharisees believe in angels, spirits, and the resurrection, but the Sadducees do not. Paul knew this and is using his past and his knowledge to his advantage. The Pharisees now say that they have nothing against Paul and they start arguing with the Sadducees. The soldiers then take Paul back to the barracks for his own safety. The next day, some of the Jews joined together and made an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. There were more than forty Jews who formed this conspiracy. Their plan was to have the commander bring Paul to the council again. They would then ambush Paul on the way to the council and kill him.

However, Paul’s sister’s son heard of their ambush. He went and told Paul and also the commander. The commander then called for two centurions and told them to properly prepare to bring Paul safely to Felix at night. The commander then wrote a letter to governor Felix. The letter explained how Paul had been seized by the Jews and how he had been rescued by the soldiers before the mob killed him. The letter also told that Paul had been brought before the Jewish council to determine what he was accused of. The commander then wrote in the letter that Paul was being accused concerning questions of the Jewish law, but that Paul had not been charged with anything deserving of death or chains. The soldiers safely brought Paul to governor Felix as they had been commanded. The governor read the letter that the commander had written him. Felix then told Paul that his case would be heard when the accusers had come. He then commanded Paul to be kept in Herod’s headquarters.

ACTS 24

After Paul was kept in Herod’s headquarters for five days, Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain attorney named Tertullus. They presented evidence to governor Felix against Paul. Tertullus said that Paul was a plague and that he was always stirring up trouble among the Jews throughout the world. Tertullus also said that Paul even tried to profane the temple. Then he explained that the Jews had seized Paul and were going to judge him according to their own law, but commander Lysias had taken Paul away from them by force. The Jews who were present stated their agreement with what Tertullus was saying. Paul was then given a chance to defend himself before governor Felix. Paul explained that he had went up to Jerusalem to worship. He did not go to Jerusalem to dispute with anyone or to stir up the Jews. Paul also said that the Jews could not prove the charges they were bringing against him. Paul then stated that he worshipped the true God and that he has continued believing all the things which are written in the law and the prophets. Paul had a hope in God, and he believed that there would be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. Because of this belief, Paul did his best to always live with a good conscience. Paul continued to defend himself and to claim that he was innocent of the charges the Jews brought against him. Felix decided that he would wait to make his decision on this case until Lysias came. In the meantime, Paul would be kept as a prisoner with some amount of freedom; he would be allowed to see visitors. After many days, Felix, and his wife Drusilla, sent for Paul. They wanted to hear him preach about Jesus Christ. As Paul reasoned with them about righteousness and about self-control and about the judgment to come, Felix became afraid. Paul’s words about these things disturbed Felix so much that he sent Paul away and said that he would talk to him again at a better time. After two years, Festus became governor and replaced Felix. Felix decided to do the Jews a favor, so he left Paul bound.

ACTS 25

After coming to the province, **Festus** went up to Jerusalem. The high priest and the chief men of the **Jews** told Festus about **Paul**. They wanted Festus to summon Paul to Jerusalem – while they **lay in ambush** to kill him. Festus did not grant the Jews the favor they requested. Instead, he would travel to Caesarea and hear Paul’s case there. On the day after his arrival in Caesarea, Festus sat on **the judgment seat** and had Paul brought before him. The Jews then made many **serious complaints** against Paul, which **they could not prove**. Paul defended himself and continued to claim that he was innocent. Paul said that he had done nothing wrong against Caesar or against the Jews. Paul then said, “If I am an **offender**, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to **dying**; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. **I appeal to Caesar.**” Festus is willing to send Paul to Caesar, but he does not send him there immediately. At a later date, **King Agrippa** and **Bernice** came to Caesarea to greet Festus. After some time, Festus began telling Agrippa about Paul and the circumstances of his case. Festus explained that the charges the Jews had brought against Paul were not what he had expected. The Jews had brought up some **questions** about Paul concerning their own religion and about a man named **Jesus**, who had **died**, whom Paul claimed was **alive**. Agrippa then told Festus that he would like to hear Paul speak for himself about these matters. Festus said that he would be able to hear Paul the next day. When the next day had come, King Agrippa and Bernice came to the auditorium with much pageantry. Festus had arranged for all of the commanders and prominent men of the city to be there also. Finally, Paul was brought in to the auditorium. Festus then announced that this Paul was the man whom the Jews said was no longer fit to live. However, Festus said that he didn’t believe that Paul had done anything deserving of death. But, since Paul had appealed to Caesar, Festus must first decide what he should write to the emperor concerning Paul. Festus said that he had brought Paul out before King Agrippa and before the leaders of the city, so that after the **examination** had taken place, then he might have **something to write**. Festus then said that it seemed unreasonable to him to send a prisoner and not to **specify the charges** against him. Festus hoped that Agrippa would be able to help him in this regard.

ACTS 26

As this chapter begins, Paul is now standing before Festus and King Agrippa. The king tells him that he could now speak and defend himself. Paul is happy to do this, and he responds by saying, “I beg you to **hear me patiently**.” Paul explains that the Jews have known him from his beginning, even when he lived as a **Pharisee**. He also says that he is being **judged** for the hope of the promise that God had made to the fathers. Basically, Paul is saying that the Jews are against him because he believes in the resurrection from the dead. Paul then asks the question, “Why should it be thought incredible by you that **God raises the dead**?” Paul then begins speaking of his past, and he admits that he used to do many things that were **contrary** to the name of **Jesus**. He used to put many of the **saints** in **prison**. He **punished them** often and compelled them to **blaspheme**. Paul used to be so angry against the Christians that he even **persecuted** them to foreign cities. Paul then explained to King Agrippa and Festus what had caused him to change from being a persecutor of Christianity to becoming a Christian. It all started while he was traveling to **Damascus** and he saw a **light from heaven** that was brighter than the sun. Paul again told the details of his conversion to Christ as he had done earlier for the Jewish mob back in Acts 22. He then told King Agrippa that he was **not disobedient** to the **heavenly vision**. Paul repented of his sins, was baptized, and became a Christian, and he immediately starting preaching to others that they should **repent** and **do works** befitting repentance. Festus then interrupted Paul and told him that he was going crazy, but Paul denied this and said that he had been speaking the words of **truth and reason**. Agrippa realized that Paul wasn’t crazy, and in fact, he said to Paul, “You **almost persuade** me to **become a Christian**.” After Paul finished speaking, some of the leaders talked among themselves and admitted that Paul wasn’t doing anything that he should be killed or put in prison for. However, since Paul had appealed to Caesar, they did not set him free.

ACTS 27

Since Paul had appealed to Caesar, he must travel to the city of Rome. It was decided that they would **sail** to **Italy**. **Paul** and some other **prisoners** were delivered over to a centurion named **Julius**. Julius treated Paul well

throughout the journey. After leaving Caesarea they traveled first to Sidon and then to Myra. After many days, and with much difficulty, they eventually came to a place called Fair Havens. During this part of the year, due to strong winds, sailing was now becoming very **dangerous**. Paul predicted that their voyage would **end with disaster** and much loss if they continued sailing under these conditions. But, Julius did not listen to Paul. Instead he took the advice of the helmsman and the owner of the ship, and they set sail for Phoenix, a harbor of Crete. At first, the south wind blew in a helpful way for them, but not long after, a tempestuous **head wind** arose. This prevented the ship from continuing to sail towards Phoenix, and instead of fighting the wind, they let the ship be driven off course. Since the ship was being tossed around because of the violent waves, they wisely **lightened the ship** by throwing some things overboard. After enduring the rough waters for many days, those on board began to give up all **hope** that they would be **saved**. Paul urged them all to take heart by telling them that there would be **no loss of life**, but only of the ship. Paul was confident of this fact because an angel from God had told him so. After two weeks of being driven up and down the sea, the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some **land**. No one had eaten during these difficult days at sea, so Paul urged them to eat. Then he took bread and **gave thanks to God** in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he **began to eat**. Then they were all **encouraged**, and also ate **food** themselves. They decide that they will try to run the ship onto the beach. But, instead they end up getting it stuck on the reef where it starts to come apart due to the rough waves. Julius commanded that those who could **swim** should **jump overboard** first and get to land, and the rest should hold on to pieces of debris and float to land. And so it was that they **all escaped safely** to land.

ACTS 28

After Paul, the other prisoners, and the soldiers safely escaped the ruined ship, they learned that the island they had landed on was called Malta. They met the **natives** of the island and were treated kindly. The natives welcomed them out of the rain and cold by kindling a fire for them. Paul helped by gathering sticks, but as he placed them on the fire a deadly **viper** fastened on his hand. The natives saw this and said to each other, “No doubt this man is a **murderer**, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet **justice** does not allow to live.” But Paul shook the viper off and **suffered no harm**. The natives expected Paul to swell up or die suddenly, but after a long time they started thinking that he was a **god** since no harm had come to him. In that region there was a man of authority named Publius who generously provided for the necessities of those who had been shipwrecked. Publius’ father was sick with a **fever** and dysentery. Paul met with the man and **prayed** for him, laid his hands on him, and **healed him**. Afterward Paul also healed others who were brought to him. The natives honored those who had been shipwrecked and gave them necessities for their journey. After three months the group left the island on a different ship and continued their journey toward Rome. When Paul saw other Christians in several of the areas they traveled through, he **thanked God** and **took courage**. When they finally reached Rome, the prisoners were delivered to the captain of the guard. However, Paul was allowed to live alone with only a soldier guarding him. Paul met with the Jews in that area and told them that although he had done nothing wrong, he was still delivered as a **prisoner** into the hands of the Romans. He went on to explain that the Romans had wanted to release him since he was innocent but the Jews in Jerusalem had spoken against this. Thus, Paul had decided that the best thing for him to do was to **appeal to Caesar** for his own protection. These Jews knew nothing about Paul’s situation but desired to learn about Christ. On a certain day many came to Paul at his lodging and he explained and solemnly **testified** of the **kingdom of God**. He taught them about Jesus from the Old Testament Scriptures and **some were persuaded** by the things which he spoke, but **some disbelieved**. Paul dwelt two years in Rome and preached with confidence to all who visited him.