Contents - Acts and Romans in the New Testament Started 6/24/2023 last edit 11-2-2023

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Not finished. Search for \*\*\* and ??? and I might do some proofreading.

This started as my attempt to create something like a Table of Contents for books (New Testament at least) of the Bible, but it expanded beyond a list of contents. This document has the book, chapter and verse reference, my paraphrase or summary of those verses, and explanatory notes. This document should, in no way, replace your own reading of the Bible. You should read the Bible to get more of the original meaning and to get context. I am using this document as I make a shorter list of the topics or teaching for a set of verses.

References that I may use in this document are listed below.

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(ESV) ESV Study Bible 2007 Crossway Bibles

(QUEST) The Quest Study Bible 1983 Zondervan

If the text below does not have quote marks, then it is the thoughts from Greg Clements … I put this (glc) in other documents where I have a lot of quotes. I tried to reference the material I pulled from other sources (ESV, QUEST, etc.).

Some of the Bible studies I create are posted on [www.gpclements.com](http://www.gpclements.com/) .

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Acts

(Other titles you may see…Acts of the Apostles … or, Acts of the Holy Spirit)

(ESV…”Acts is unique among the NT writings, in that its main purpose is to record a selective history of the early church following the ressurrection of CHrist. It is the second part of a two-volume work, with the Gospel of Luke being the first volume…..Actss 1:1 explicitly refers back to Luke’s Gosspel.” “Some scholars date Acts c. A.D. 70” “Some scholars date Acts as ealy as A.D. 62, basing their view primarily on the abrupt ending of the book.”….Acts does not record Paul’s release or death.)

(QUEST … Author was Luke … written in the range of 63 to 70 A.D.)

Acts 1:1-5 Luke continues his message about Christianity to Theophilus, an unknown person. Jesus proved to his followers that he was alive after the crucifixion. He told them to stay in Jerusalem until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Ac 1:6 - 11 The disciples are not to be told the time when God’s kingdom would be restored to Israel. He tells them they will receive power from the Holy Spirit and will be his witnesses throughout the world. Jesus was lifted up to the sky. Angels tell the disciples Jesus will return in the same way that they saw him leave.

AC 1:12 - 26 The disciples, Mary and Jesus’ brothers, prayed together in unity. One day there were about 120 gathered together and Peter speaks concerning Judas and the group nominates two candidates to take his place. They prayed and then cast lots. Matthias was selected.

Ac 2:1 - 4 On Pentecost (50th day after Passover … glc..about 10 days after Jesus ascended to heaven) 0they were all together and tongues like fire appeared on each of them. They spoke in other languages as the Holy Spirit enabled them.

Ac 2:5 - 13 Devout Jews from many nations were in Jerusalem. Each heard the followers of Jesus speaking in their native language. They understood the message about the great deeds God had done. They were amazed, but some said the speakers were drunk.

Ac 2:14 - 36 Peter raised his voice so all could hear. He explained that what they heard was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 that God would pour out his spirit and people would prophesy and there would be wonders in the sky before the day of the Lord comes. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Peter explains that Jesus was attested to them through miraculous signs that God performed among them through Jesus. His death on the cross was a predetermined plan. God raised him. David proclaimed this in Psalm 16:8-11 …your holy one will not experience decay. Peter reminds them that David’s tomb is here today. David spoke about the resurrection of the Christ. God raised up Jesus and there are eyewitnesses here. Jesus is at God’s right hand (Psalm 110:1) and has poured out the Holy Spirit today. All Israel should know, without a doubt, that the Jesus they crucified has been made Lord and Christ by God.

Ac 2:37 - 41 The people were convicted and asked the disciples what they should do. Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Then they would receive the Holy Spirit. About 3,000 did this.

Ac 2:42 - 47 The followers of Jesus listened to the apostle’s teaching, had fellowship, and prayed. All were in awe. The apostles did many miracles. The group took care of the needs of the believers. They met every day in the temple courts and ate in houses, sharing food gladly. They praised God and had the goodwill of people in the city. More were saved every day.

Ac 3:1 - 10 Peter and John were going to the temple to pray. They encounter a lame man who is begging for money. Peter gets his attention and commands him to stand up and walk. Peter helps him stand up and the man walks and jumps around, praising God. The people recognize the man and are amazed at his healing.

Ac 3:11 - 26 The man keeps close to Peter and John. People gather around them in a covered walkway near the temple. Peter tells the people that they did not heal him. He explains to them that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob glorified Jesus, who the people had rejected, but God raised from the dead. Peter and John (and many others) witnessed the living Jesus after the crucifixion. Faith in Jesus has resulted in the healing of the lame man. The message of the prophets has been fulfilled in Jesus' life and death. Peter tells them to repent so their sins would be wiped out and that God would send the Messiah, Jesus. Jesus will remain in heaven until the proper time, which God declared through the prophets long ago. Moses told the people that a prophet like him would be raised up and that people should obey him. The prophet Samuel and others after him announced these days. Peter tells them they have heritage from the prophets and are in the covenant God made with their ancestors as he told Abraham that in his descendants all the p people of the Earth will be blessed. Peter tells them God raised up Jesus and sent him first to them, to bless them by turning each one from their iniquities.

Ac 4:1 - 4 The priests, the commander of the temple guard, and the Sadducees approached Peter and John. They were angry because they were teaching that Jesus had risen from the dead. (The Sadducees did not believe in any resurrection.) Peter and John were arrested and put into jail. Many people believed. The count of men was about 5,000.

Ac 4:5 - 12 On the next day the religious leaders met. Peter and John were brought in and were questioned about the healing of the lame man. The Holy Spirit gave words to Peter. He said that if they are being questioned about the good deed done to a sick man, all should know that by the name of Jesus Christ whom they crucified, but God raised from the dead, the sick man is now standing before you healthy. Peter quotes Psalm 118:22 that the stone that was rejected has become the cornerstone. Peter tells them there is salvation in no one else. There is no other name by which we must be saved.

Ac 4:13 - 22 The religious leaders were amazed at these uneducated me being so bold. They recognized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. The presence of the healed man stopped them from arguing against Peter and John. The religious leader privately discussed how to deal with Peter and John. They admitted the people had seen a miracle that they could not deny. They told Peter and John to stop speaking or teaching in the name of Jesus. Peter and John told them to decide if they should obey them or obey God, and they must speak about what they have seen. The religious leaders threatened them but released them without punishment because the people were praising God for the healing of the lame man who was over 40 years old.

Ac 4:23 - 31 Peter and John went to the believers in Jesus and reported on their meeting with the religious leaders. With one mind the group gave praises to God saying God is master of all, and creator of heaven and Earth and all that is in the Earth. They quote Psalm 2:1,2 that the nations plot foolish things and kings stand against the Lord and against his Christ. Herod, Pilate, Gentiles, and the people of Israel assembled against God’s holy servant, Jesus, who God anointed to do his work and fulfill God’s plan. The group asked God to pay attention to the threats Peter and John had received and give courage to the group to speak God’s message while miraculous signs are being done through the name of Jesus. After they prayed the meeting room was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God courageously.

Ac 4:32 - 37 The group had unity and held their possessions for the common good. The apostles preached about the resurrection of Jesus with great power. Great grace was on all of them and those who owned property sold them as needed and brought the money to the apostles so it could be distributed to those who had needs. Joseph, a Levite (from the tribe of priests) from Cyprus had been preached to by Barnabas. Joseph sold some land and brought the money to the apostles.

Ac 5:1 - 4 Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold property and brought a portion of the proceeds to the apostles. Peter confronts him for lying to the Holy Spirit in his action of keeping a portion of the money. (ESV In verse 3 the phrase “kept back” carries the meaning of doing this in a dishonest way. ) Ananias made a decision to lie to God. Be honest with God … and with people.

Ac 5:5 - 11 Ananias realized what he had done and he died on the spot, and was taken away and buried. People who learned of this incident had fear. Three hours later Sapphira comes in, not knowing Ananias has died. Peter asks her the amount they were paid for the land. Sapphira lies and says yes. Peter confronts her in her lie and she dies. She is taken out and buried beside Ananias. Great fear gripped the church (NET assembly of the people) and all who learned of the events.

Ac 5:12 - 16 The apostles did many miracles among the people. The followers of Jesus continued to meet in the covered walkway near the temple. (NET People were cautious about joining them ) The people held them in high honor. There was an increase in the number of believers, both men and women. The sick were carried out into the streets on cots so that even Peter’s shadow would fall on some of them. (QUEST Faith was active in the healings.) Many people from towns around Jerusalem brought the sick and demon-possessed and they were all healed.

Ac 5:17 - 26 The religious leaders were jealous of the popularity of the apostles. The apostles were arrested and put into jail. During the night an angel opened the prison doors and led the apostles out. The angel told them to stand in the temple courts and proclaim words of life to the people. The apostles started teaching the people at daybreak in the temple courts. Note that this is a more central area of the temple complex than the covered walkway where the believers previously met. The religious leaders sent a message to the jail to have the apostles brought to them. The officers reported to the leaders that the jail was locked and guards were at the doors but the apostles were not there. Someone came to the leaders and reported that the apostles were in the temple courts teaching the people. The temple guard brought the apostles to the leaders without using force as they were afraid the people might stone them.

Ac 5:27 - 42 The high priest confronted the apostles saying that the leaders told them not to teach in Jesus’ name, but Jerusalem is being filled with your teaching and you intend to make us guilty for his death. Peter and the apostles replied that they must obey God rather than people. Further, God raised Jesus from the dead after you seized him and killed him. God exalted Jesus to his right hand and his role is to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. The apostles are witnesses to these events. Also, the Holy Spirit, who is given to those who obey God, is a witness. The religious leaders became angry and wanted to execute them. But the respected Pharisee Gamaliel stood up, had the apostles sent outside the room, and instructed the council that they should be careful about their actions. If the apostles are wrong their movement will cease. But if their plan is from God the council will not be able to stop it and they may be found to be fighting against God. The council was convinced so they brought in the apostles, had them beaten, ordered them to not speak in the name of Jesus, and released them. The apostles left the council rejoicing that they were considered worthy to suffer for Jesus’ name. They did not stop teaching and proclaiming in the temple courts, and in houses, the good news that Jesus was the Christ. (NET Christ - Messiah - one who has been anointed)

Ac 6:1-7 The number of believers was growing. The widows of the Greek-speaking Jews were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. The apostles called a meeting of believers and said that seven men who have good reputations and are full of the Spirit and wisdom should be selected to distribute food while the apostles devoted themselves to prayer and preaching the word. Seven were chosen. The apostles prayed for them and placed their hands on them. The word of God spread, the number of believers in Jerusalem increased greatly, and a large group of priests became believers.

Ac 6:8 - 15 Stephen, one of the seven to distribute food, was performing miracles among the people. Men from the synagogue of freed slaves argued with Stephen but could not resist the wisdom and spirit of his words. They incited some men to claim that Stephen was blaspheming against Moses and God. They stirred up people and religious leaders who seized him and took him to the council. False witnesses accused Stephen of speaking against the temple and the law. Stephen remained calm.

Ac 7:1 - 29 The high priest asked Stephen if the accusations were true. Stephen gives a long speech that recounts God’s dealings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the movement of the clan to Egypt, the oppression of the clan in Egypt, Moses' rise to power in Egypt, and Moses' flight to Midian.

Ac 7:30 - 50 Stephen spoke about God calling Moses to return to Egypt, Moses leading the people out of Egypt, the people rejecting Moses' leadership in their hearts, the creation of an idol in the form of a calf, God’s turning away from the people who worshiped stars and idols, forty years of wandering in the wilderness. The people had the tabernacle and brought it into the land when Joshua led them. David found favor with God but Solomon was selected to build the temple, God’s house. Stephen told them that God does not live in a house and quotes Isaiah 66:1-2 that heaven is his throne, the Earth his footstool, and God has made all things.

Ac 7:51 - 53 Stephen tells the people they are stubborn and have unfaithful hearts and ears. He tells them they are resisting the Holy Spirit just as their ancestors did, and have become betrayers and murderers of the Righteous One (NET Jesus Christ). They have not obeyed the law given by angels.

Ac 7:54 - 60 The religious leaders were very angry with Stephen. In the Spirit, Stephen looked up and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Stephen told them his vision. The leaders covered their ears so they wouldn’t hear what they viewed as blasphemy and drove him out of the city. They stoned him. Stephen prayed for Jesus to receive his spirit and asked that Jesus would not hold this sin against them. Saul was there. Stephen died.

Ac 8:1 - 3 Persecution of believers begins in Jerusalem. All except the apostles scatter into Judea and Samaria. Stephen is buried and mourned by some devout people. Saul sought to destroy the church by seizing men and women and putting them in prison.

Ac 8:4 - 13 The believers who were scattered proclaimed the gospel. Philip (NET…deacon, not apostle) was in a city in Samaria preaching about Jesus the Christ. The people paid attention to his preaching as they saw and heard the miracles Philip performed. Unclean spirits shrieked as they left those they possessed. Many lame people were healed. There was great joy in the city. In this city, Simon the magician had been amazing the people and claimed to be great. Many people of all ages listened to Simon and said he had the power of God. They carefully listened to him because he had done amazing feats of magic with them for a long time. When the people believed the good news that Philip was preaching about the kingdom of God and Jesus men and women began to be baptized. Even Simon believed and was baptized. Simon followed Philip closely and was amazed at the true miracles and signs.

Ac 8:14 - 25 The apostles in Jerusalem learned that the people of Samaria had believed in Jesus, so they sent Peter and John to Samaria. Peter and John prayed that the people who believed would receive the Holy Spirit for the Spirit had not yet come down on these people. Peter and John placed their hands on the people and they received the Holy Spirit. Simon, the magician, saw this and offered Peter and John money so that he might have the power to give people the Holy Spirit. Peter rebuked him. God’s gift cannot be bought. Peter told him that his heart was not right before God and that he should repent and ask God to forgive his intentions. Peter recognized that Simon was envious and in bondage to sin. Simon asked Peter to pray for him…that his silver would not perish with him. Peter and John proclaimed the gospel in the city in Samaria and in many villages on their way back to Jerusalem.

Ac 8:26 - 40 An angel from God told Philip to travel on a road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza. This road is south of Jerusalem while Samaria is north of Jerusalem. On this road, Philip met an official, treasurer, of the queen of the Ethiopians. He had been worshipping in Jerusalem and was on his way home. He was reading the writings of Isaiah while riding in his chariot. The Holy Spirit told Philip to go up to the chariot. Philip heard the man reading Isaiah and asked him if he understood what he had read. The man said he needed guidance and invited Philip to join him in the chariot. The passage was Isaiah 53:7-8 that prophesies a man led to his death who stays silent. He dies in humiliation. The man asked Philip to give him understanding. Philip used this passage and other scripture to tell him about Jesus. As they came to water the man asked to be baptized. As they left the water the Spirit took Philip away. The man went away rejoicing. Philip found himself at Azotus, on the Mediterranean coast in southern Palestine. He preached the gospel as he traveled through the towns and came to Caesarea (also on the coast northwest of Samaria).

Ac 9:1 - 9 Saul got the authority to look for believers in Jesus in Damascus and bring them back to Jerusalem as prisoners. As he traveled to Damascus a bright light flashed around him and he heard a voice asking why Saul was persecuting him. The voice identified himself as Jesus. He told Saul to enter the city and that he would be told what he must do. The men traveling with Saul also heard the voice but did not see anyone. Saul could not see. He was led by the hand into Damascus and for three days he could not see and did not eat or drink.

Ac 9:10 - 19 The Lord told Ananias in a vision that he should find Saul for Saul has been praying and has seen a vision of you coming to him to heal him. Ananias was reluctant because he knew Saul came to Damascus to arrest believers. The Lord told Ananias that Saul is his chosen vessel to witness to Gentiles, kings, and Jews, and that Saul will be shown how much he must suffer for the sake of the Lord’s name. Ananias found Saul and told him the Lord Jesus, who appeared to him on the road, sent him to heal him and that Saul would be filled with the Holy Spirit. Saul was healed, baptized, ate, and was strengthened.

Ac 9:20 - 25 Saul stayed with believers in Damascus and immediately began to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God in the synagogues. The people were amazed as they knew he had been persecuting believers and had come to Damascus to arrest believers. Saul grew in his ability to witness and confounded the Jews by proving Jesus is the Christ. The Jews planned to kill Saul but Saul learned of their plans and escaped the city by being let down through the city wall in a basket.

Ac 9:26 - 31 In Jerusalem, Saul attempted to meet with the disciples but they were afraid Saul was just pretending to be a disciple. Barnabas took Saul to the apostles and explained he had seen a vision on the road to Damascus and had preached Jesus in Damascus. Saul stayed with the believers and spoke boldly in the city in the name of the Lord. He debated with Greek-speaking Jews and they sought to kill him. The believers brought Saul to Caesarea and sent him to Tarsus. The church in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria experienced peace and was strengthened. The church lived in the reverent fear of the Lord and in the guidance of the Holy Spirit and increased in numbers.

Ac 9:32 - 43 Peter traveled around the area. In Lydda, (glc about 25 miles NW of Jerusalem) he encountered Aeneas, who had been in bed 8 years because he was paralyzed. Peter announced to him that Jesus the Christ heals you, get up. Aeneas got up and the people of the city and the city of Sharon believed in the Lord. In Joppa (glc 15 miles further, on the Mediterranean coast) a believer named Tabitha had been living. She did good deeds for the people. While Peter was in Lydda, she became sick and died. The believers sent for Peter. When Peter arrived the people were mourning. Peter sent them outside the room and prayed. He commanded Tabitha to get up. She opened her eyes and sat up. Peter helped her get out of bed and presented her alive to the believers. Peter stayed in the town for many days.

Ac 10:1 - 8 A Roman centurion (leader of 100 soldiers), Cornelius, lived in Caesarea. He was a God-fearing man and prayed to God. He saw an angel in a vision who told him to send men to Joppa to summon Peter to come to his house. Cornelius sent devout men to Peter in Joppa (about a 40-mile trip).

Ac 10:9 - 16 Meanwhile, on the next day, Peter went to pray on the roof of the house where he was staying. In a vision, he saw animals on a sheet descending from heaven. A voice told Peter to kill and eat. Peter replied that he had never eaten ritually unclean food (that he saw on the sheet). The voice told him that what God has made clean, he must not consider unclean. This happened three times.

Ac 10:17 - 23a Peter thought about what he had seen. The men sent by Cornelious arrived at Simon’s house. The Holy Spirit told Peter that three men are looking for him and that he should go down and accompany them because the Holy Spirit had sent them. The men told Peter why they had come to him. Peter invited them into the house and showed them hospitality.

Ac 10:23b - 33 Peter and some other believers went with the messengers to Caesarea on the next day. They arrived on the next day. Cornelius had gathered his relatives and close friends. Peter refused Cornelious’ worship and told him he was a mere mortal. Peter told Cornelius that it was unlawful by Jewish law to associate with Gentiles. He also shared that God had told Peter that he should call no person unclean. Peter asked Cornelius why he had sent for him. Cornelius explained the vision and message he had received. Cornelius said they are gathered here to listen to what the Lord has commanded him to say.

Ac 10:34 - 43 Peter explained that he now understands that God does not show favoritism with people but that in all nations, the person who fears him and does what is right is welcomed. Peter recounted the message God sent to Israel of peace through Jesus Christ. He recounted John’s baptism ministry and that God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power. Jesus did good and by God’s power healed those oppressed by the devil. Peter and the believers with him were witnesses of Jesus’ works in Judea and Jerusalem. The people there killed Jesus, but God raised him on the third day. Jesus was seen by the witnesses God had chosen, who ate and drank with him. Jesus commanded them to preach to the people and warn them that he is the one appointed by God to judge the living and the dead. The prophets testify that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.

Ac 10:44 - 48 As Peter was speaking the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard Peter’s message and they spoke in tongues and praised God. The Jewish believers there with Peter were amazed that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit. Peter said that no one should prevent them from being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Peter stayed several days in Caesarea.

Ac 11:1 - 18 The believers living in Judea heard that the Gentiles had accepted the gospel. When Peter returned to Jerusalem the Jewish believers rebuked Peter for associating with Gentiles. Peter took time to explain how he saw the vision and a voice telling him that what God has made clean, you must not view as unclean. He told them that the Spirit told him to go with the messengers from Cornelius. He told them that he and six believers went to Cornelius’ house and that Cornelius told Peter he had seen an angel and had been told to summon Peter back to Caesarea. Peter told them that as he began to speak the Holy Spirit fell on them just as had happened to them at Pentecost. Peter remembered Jesus telling them that the disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Peter reasoned that if God gave the same gift as was given to the disciples that Peter should not hinder God’s work. The Jewish believers stopped their objections and praised God that God had granted repentance to the Gentiles.

Ac 11:19 - 26 The believers who were scattered by the persecution after Stephen’s death took the gospel to Jews in Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. Some men from Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch and spoke the gospel to the Greeks. God helped them and many believed. The news of this reached Jerusalem and the church sent Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas saw the grace of God there. He rejoiced and encouraged them to remain true to the Lord. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a significant number of people were brought to the Lord. Barnabas went to Tarsus to find Saul and bring him to Antioch. For a year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught many people. It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

Ac 11:27 - 30 Prophets from Jerusalem came to Antioch. One of them predicted by the Spirit that a severe famine would soon afflict the entire world. This happened during the reign of Claudius. (ESV Claudius reigned A.D. 41 to 54 … there were several famines…historians think this reference is to either A.D. 45,46 or A.D. 47) The disciples in Antioch decided to send financial aid to believers in Judea. Barnabas and Saul delivered this aid.

Ac 12:1 - 11 King Herod persecuted the church. He had James, John’s brother, executed. He learned this pleased the Jews and arrested Peter. During the feast of unleavened bread (glc I suppose this one year after Jesus was crucified.) Peter was guarded in prison The believers were praying for Peter. An angel appeared and light shone in the prison cell. He woke Peter and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists. The angel told Peter to get dressed and follow him. Peter thought he was seeing a vision. The iron gate opened by itself and they walked into the city where the angel left Peter. Peter now realized the Lord had sent an angel to rescue him from Herod and from the fate the Jewish people expected.

Ac 12:12 - 17 Peter went to the house of Mary, John Mark’s mother, where many believers were gathered to pray. Peter knocked on the door and a servant answered and recognized Peter’s voice. She ran into the house to tell others Peter was at the gate. They didn’t believe her. Peter kept on knocking and they opened the door and were amazed. Peter told how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. He instructed them to tell James (glc…Jesus’ brother) and the other believers. Then he went to another place.

Ac 12:18 - 19 In the morning there was distress among the soldiers about Peter. Herod had a search done for Peter and did not find him. He questioned the guards and had them executed. Herod went to Caesarea.

Ac 12:20 - 25 Herod had a disagreement with the people of Tyre and Sidon. Those cities asked for a resolution because they depended on Herod for food. Herod had an assembly, dressed in royal robes, and made a speech. The crowd shouted that Herod was a god. An angel afflicted Herod because he did not give glory to God and Herod died. The gospel continued to spread. Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem after their mission (Acts 11:29,30 famine relief money) along with John Mark. (glc…and then returned to Antioch … see Acts 13)

Ac 13:1 - 12 There were prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch. While they were ministering to God and fasting, the Holy Spirit told them to appoint Barnabas and Saul for the work they are called to do. The group fasted and prayed and sent Barnabas and Saul off on a missions trip to Cyprus. They proclaimed the gospel in synagogues across the island. In Paphos (glc…an important city) they encountered a Jewish false prophet and magician, Bar-Jesus, with the Roman proconsul. The proconsul wanted to hear the word of God from Barnabas and Saul but the magician opposed them and argued against the message. Saul (now to be known as Paul) was filled with the Holy Spirit and told the magician he was full of deceit, a son of the devil, an enemy of righteousness, and opposing the Lord. Paul also told him the Lord is against him and he will be blind for a time (glc…reminds me of Paul’s Damascus road experience). The magician needed people to lead him around. The proconsul saw this and believed after being amazed by the teaching about the Lord.

Ac 13:13 - 52 Paul and the group sailed to Perga (region of Lycia … today, southern Turkey). John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. In Pisidian Antioch (ESV 100 miles north of Perga) and preached in the synagogue. Paul addressed the Jews and Gentiles who feared God (ESV…but were not circumcised). Paul recounted the history of the Jews in Egypt, led out by God, forty years in the wilderness, destroyed nations in Canaan, given land as an inheritance … over a 450 year span of time. God gave them judges until Samuel led them as a prophet. The people asked for a king and Saul ruled them for forty years. Then God raised up David to be king. God testified that David was a man after his heart (1 Samuel 13:14 … followed God). David’s descendants came to be part of God’s plan to bring a savior, Jesus, to Israel. John the Baptist had a ministry of repentance to Israel but he told the people there was a more important and worthy person coming after him. Paul told the group that the message of salvation has been sent out because the people in Jerusalem and the religious leaders did not recognize Jesus (glc…as being from God). They fulfilled the OT prophets’ message by condemning him and asking Pilate to execute him. When this was done Jesus was placed in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead and for many days he appeared to his followers. These followers are now witnesses to the people. And, Paul is proclaiming the good news about God’s promises to Jewish ancestors that they have been fulfilled when Jesus was raised and verified to be God’s Son (ESV…as king). Jesus being raised from the dead agrees with Isaiah 55:3 and Psalm 16:10 that Jesus would not experience decay in the grave. David died and was buried and experienced decay. Paul tells them that through Jesus forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to them and that everyone who believes is justified in a way that the Law could not justify. Paul warns the people not to disbelieve (Habbak 1:5). After the synagogue service, people urged Paul and Barnabas to speak to them again on the next sabbath. Many Jews and God-fearing Gentiles followed Paul and Barnabas, who continued to speak to them to remain in the grace of God. On the next sabbath, most of the city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. The Jews became jealous and contradicted Paul and reviled him. Paul and Barnabas replied unswervingly that they were obligated to speak to the Jews first, but since they are rejecting the message of eternal life they are turning to the Gentiles. The Gentiles rejoiced and those who were appointed (glc…God knew who would believe) to eternal life believed. The word of the Lord spread in the region. But the Jews incited prominent people and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and threw them out of the city. Paul and Barnabas shook off dust from their feet and went to Iconium. The disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Ac 14:1 - 7 Paul and Barnabas speak in the synagogue in Iconium and many Jews and Gentiles believe in Jesus. The Jews who did not believe stirred up the Gentiles and spoke against the gospel message. Paul and Barnabas stayed in the city for a long time speaking the gospel. The Lord confirmed the message of grace with miraculous signs done by Paul and Barnabas. The people of the city were divided in their support for the gospel message. The unbelieving Gentiles and Jews made plans to stone Paul and Barnabas so they fled to Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding area and proclaimed the good news in those locations.

Ac 14:8 - 20 In Lystra, a man lame from birth, listened to Paul speak. Paul recognized that he had faith to be healed. Paul spoke loudly that he should get up on his feet and the man lept up and began to walk. The crowds shouted that the gods had arrived in human form. The priest of the temple of Zeus wanted to offer sacrifices of bulls to them. Barnabas and Paul learned of this, tore their clothes, and shouted to the crowd that they are just human like the people. They told the people to turn from worthless worship of their gods and worship the living God, who made the heaven, earth, sea, and all that is in them. Paul told them that in the past God allowed people to go their own way but did leave a witness to himself by doing good, giving rain, satisfying them with food, and giving joy to their hearts. Paul and Barnabas were barely able to stop the people from offering sacrifices to them. Jews from Antioch (NET…in Psidia) and Iconium came to Lystra and convinced the crowd to stone Paul. Paul, unconscious, was dragged out of the city and presumed to be dead. After the disciples gathered around Paul, Paul got up and went back into the city. On the next day, Paul and Barnabas left for Derbe.

Ac 14:21 - 28 They proclaimed the gospel in Derbe and many believed. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and (Psidian) Antioch and strengthened the souls of the believers, and encouraged them to continue in the faith. They told them that we must enter the kingdom of God through many persecutions. They appointed elders in various churches with prayer and fasting, and entrusted them to the protection of the Lord. Paul and Barnabas traveled through Psidia and Pamphylia, preached in Perga, and went to Attalia. Then they sailed back to Antioch as their work was completed. They gathered the church and reported all the things God had done with them, and that God had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. They spent considerable time with the disciples in Antioch.

Ac 15:1 - 21 Some men from Judea came to Antioch and taught the Gentile believers that they needed to be circumcised in order to be accepted by God. Paul and Barnabas argued against this teaching. The church in Antioch appointed Paul, Barnabas, and some others to meet with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem to discuss this disagreement. As Paul and Barnabas traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria they told believers about the conversion of Gentiles and this brought joy to the believers. In Jerusalem, they were received by the church, apostles, and elders, and reported all that God had done with them on their journeys. Some believers from the Pharisees stood up and said the Gentile believers must be circumcised. The apostles and elders had a long discussion about this matter. Peter stood up and told how God had directed him to preach to Gentiles (glc…in Caesarea), and that God bore witness to them by giving them the Holy Spirit in the same way God gave the spirit to the apostles. The Gentile hearers were cleansed by faith (glc…in Jesus). Peter chided them that they were putting God to the test by putting a burden (glc…of following the rituals and laws) on the Gentile believers that the Jews have not been able to follow. Peter stated that all people are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus. Then the group listened to Paul and Barnabas as they told of the miracles God did among the Gentiles through them. James (glc…brother of Jesus) summed up the discussion by saying that Peter’s experience with Gentiles was the action of God selecting a people for his name from among the Gentiles. Peter quotes Amos 9:11-12 where it is written that God will rebuild the tent of David so that Gentiles may seek God. James gave his conclusion that the Gentiles should not be subjected to extra difficulties. He suggested that a letter be written to them to tell them to abstain from things defiled by idols, from sexual immorality, from what has been strangled, and from blood. James noted that Moses has long been proclaimed in towns as his writings are read in synagogues every Sabbath. (ESV..James is desiring that the Gentile believers follow these requirements to promote fellowship with Jewish believers in the world.)

Ac 15:22 - 35 The apostles, elders, and the whole church in Jerusalem decided to send men, leaders, from among them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. This group carried a letter to the Gentile brothers and sisters (glc…believers) in Antioch that affirmed their support for Paul and Barnabas. The letter said the men from Jerusalem, Judas and Silas, would confirm the contents of the letter. The letter said that it seemed best to the Holy Spirit and them that the Gentiles should not have any burden placed on them (glc…circumcision) other than the rules that they abstain from meat offered to idols, from blood, from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. The letter concludes with a friendly encouragement that if they follow these rules they will do well. The messengers went to Antioch and met with the believers to deliver the letter. They read it aloud and the people rejoiced and were encouraged. Judas and Silas, who were prophets, encouraged the believers with a long speech. They spent some time in Antioch and then were sent off in peace to the leaders in Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch and proclaimed (with many others) the word of the Lord.

Ac 15:36 - 41 Paul told Barnabas they should return to the believers in the towns they had preached the gospel. Barnabas wanted to bring along John Mark but Paul did not want this since John Mark had left them early in the former trip. Paul and Barnabas disagreed strongly on this so Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus while Paul and Silas were committed by the church and went to the churches in Syria (glc…south of Antioch) and Cilicia (glc…NW of Antioch).

Ac 16:1 - 5 Paul traveled to Derbe, and then to Lystra, where he found Timothy. The believers in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy. Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him. The people of the region knew Timothy’s father was a Gentile so Paul circumcised Timothy. As they traveled through the towns they shared the decisions made in Jerusalem (Acts 15) concerning Gentile believers. The local churches were strengthened in faith and increased in numbers.

Ac 16:6 - 10 They traveled in Phrygia (glc…east of “Asia” mentioned below) and Galatia (glc…central part of today’s Turkey). The Holy Spirit prevented them from traveling in the province of Asia (glc…not the continent, a sizeable western region of what is now Turkey that includes Ephesus). They traveled in Mysia (glc … north of “Asia” region) and planned to go to Bithynia (glc…northeast of “Asia”) but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow this. They traveled through Mysia to the coastal city of Troas (glc…northwest side of today’s Turkey, on the Aegean Sea). Paul has a vision during the night of a Macedonian (glc…north of Greece, across the sea) man asking for help. The group immediately planned to go to Macedonia as they believed God was calling them to proclaim the good news to them. (glc…NOTE…In verse 10 the pronouns switch from “they’ to “we” to include Luke, the author of Acts, who has joined the group at this point in the journey)

Ac 16:11 - 15 The group reached Philippi, a major city of Macedonia and a Roman colony. On the Sabbath (glc…Saturday) they went outside the city looking to meet others at a place of prayer. They met a group of women and spoke with Lydia. This woman had a business in trading purple cloth and was from Thyatria, in what is now western Turkey (glc…less than 100 miles north of Ephesus). She and her household believed in Paul’s gospel message and were baptized. Then Lydia convinced Paul and his group to stay in her house.

Ac 16:16 - 24 On an occasion when the group went to the place of prayer they were met by a slave girl who had a spirit that allowed her to foretell the future. This girl made a lot of money for her owners by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and kept shouting that the group were servants of the Most High God, and that they were proclaiming how to receive salvation. She did this for many days and Paul became annoyed. in the name of Jesus, Paul commanded the fortune-telling spirit to leave her, and it did. The owners realized they would no longer profit from the girl so they seized Paul and Silas and presented them to the authorities. They claimed that Paul and Silas brought confusion to the city, were Jews, and were promoting customs that were not lawful for the city to accept or practice as people loyal to Rome. The crowd joined in the complaint against Paul and Silas. The magistrates tore clothes off Paul and Silas and had them beaten. After the severe beating, they were put in prison in an inner cell with their feet fastened in the stocks.

Ac 16:25 - 40 Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. The rest of the prisoners were listening (glc…and learning about God). A major earthquake occurred and the prison was shaken. The doors flew open and the prisoners’ bonds were released. The jailer woke up and saw the doors were open. He was about to kill himself (glc…he knew he would be punished because prisoners escaped ) but Paul shouted to him to not harm himself as they were all in their cells. The jailer brought in lights and fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas. He brought them outside and asked what he had to do to be saved. They told him he needed to believe in the Lord Jesus and that this would also lead to his household being saved. They spoke the gospel to the jailer and his household. The jailer washed their wounds. The jailer and his famly were baptized. The jailer brought Paul and Silas into his house and fed them. He rejoiced greatly that he had come to believe in God along with his household. In the morning, the magistrates sent officers with the message to release Paul and Silas. The jailer told Paul they could leave in peace. Paul told the officers that they had been beaten in public without a trial, even though they were Roman citizens. Paul said that they would not leave secretly but the magistrates must come and escort them out of the prison. The officers told the magistrates, who became frightened because they had mistreated Roman citizens. They came to the jail and apologized. They brought them out and asked them to leave the city. Paul and Silas went to Lydia’s house and encouraged the believers before they left the city.

(glc…some thoughts…The jailer’s household did not believe just because the jailer believed in Jesus. The household heard the gospel message directly and then believed. Salvation is personal decision. … Paul wanted the magistrates to show respect to them so the believers who remained in Phillipi would be held in better regard by the city after Paul and his group left the city.)

Ac 17:1 - 9 The group traveled to Thessalonica (glc…a little less than 100 miles southeast of Phillipi). For three Sabbath days, Paul spoke to the Jews in the synagogue. He used the Old Testament scriptures to explain that the Christ was to suffer and rise from the dead. He told them that Jesus is the Christ. (glc…note the verb “is” has the meaning that Jesus is alive.) Some believed and joined with Paul and Silas along with many God-fearing Greeks and some prominent women. The remaining Jews were jealous and gathered ruffians from the marketplace to form a mob and disturb the city. They went to Jason’s house to try to find Paul and Silas to bring them to the mob. (NET…perhaps the house was used as a meeting place by the Christians.) When they couldn’t find Paul and Silas they dragged Jason and some other believers to the city officials. The Jews accused the believers of stirring up trouble throughout the world and in the city. They accused Jason of hosting them, and said the believers were acting against Caesar by saying Jesus is a king. The crowd and city officials were confused (NET…because the charges were false). Jason and the other believers put up financial security and were released.

Ac 17:10 - 15 The believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea (glc…perhaps 40 miles southeast) that night. In Berea, they went to the Jewish synagogue. The Jews there were more receptive to the gospel message and examined the Old Testament scriptures carefully to see if the message they heard was true. Many of the Jews believed and many prominent Greek men and women. The Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul was proclaiming the gospel in Berea so they came to Berea and incited crowds. The believers sent Paul out of the town but Silas and Timothy remained in Berea. Some believers traveled with Paul to Athens (ESV…about 340 miles). Paul told them to tell Silas and Timothy to join Paul in Athens as soon as possible.

Ac 17:16 - 34 In Athens, Paul was greatly disturbed by seeing idols throughout the city. Paul addressed the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles in the synagogue and spoke out every day to the people in the marketplace. He had conversations with Epicurean (NET…they wanted freedom from annoyances and saw religion as evil.) and Stoic (NET…they stressed the goal of virtue, but difficult to attain, and emphasized responsibility for voluntary actions.) philosophers. They viewed Paul’s statements as foolish babble. They recognized he was speaking about gods new to their thinking. Paul was speaking about Jesus and his resurrection. They took Paul to the Areopagus (NET…a place but also an advisory council that dealt with religious matters and controlled visiting lecturers.) They asked for an explanation of Paul’s surprising teaching. The people in Athens spent their time discussing and listening to new ideas. Paul spoke to the people, noting that they were very religious and had objects of worship. Paul remarked that on one altar he read it was dedicated to an unknown god. Paul told them that the God who made the world and all in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in a temple built by people. He does not need to be served by people because he himself gives life and breath and everything to everyone. God made every nation of the human race from one man to inhabit the whole earth. He set times and fixed limits on where they would live so they would search for God and find him, though he is not far from each of us. In him, we live and do what we do. The poets in Athens speak that we are his offspring. Paul tells them that we should not think the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image made my people’s craft and imagination. God has overlooked this ignorance in the past but now commands all people everywhere to repent because he has set a day of judgment of the world in righteousness by a man he designated and provided proof to the world by raising him from the dead. Some scoffed when they heard about the resurrection from the dead but others agreed to listen to Paul speak more about this at another time. Paul left the Areopagus. Some people believed and joined Paul. These included Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, a woman named Damaris, and others.

Ac 18:1 - 11 Paul left Athens and went to Corinth (glc…less than 40 miles to the west). Paul met Aquila, a Jew, a native of Pontus (glc…NE of present-day Turkey, near the Black Sea). Aquila had left Italy with Priscilla because the Roman emperor Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul got to know them because he worked with them at making tents. Paul addressed both Jews and Greeks in the synagogue every Sabbath, attempting to persuade them to believe the message. Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia (glc…where Phillipi, Thessalonica, and Berea are located. Paul preached the word more to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. The Jews opposed him and rebuked him so Paul shook out his clothes to symbolically say he was done with them. He told them that they were responsible for their decision and that he was guiltless of their blood (glc…future judgment by God), and that he would now go to the Gentiles. Paul went to the house of Titius Justus, a Gentile who worshiped God, whose house was next to the synagogue. Crispus, the president of the synagogue, and his entire household, believed in the Lord. Many of the Corinthians who heard about it believed and were baptized. The Lord told Paul in a vision in the night to not be afraid, but to speak, because the Lord was with him and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you because the Lord had people in the city. Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months, teaching the word of God to the people.

Ac 18:12 - 17 The Jews attacked Paul and brought him before the judgment seat of the proconsul Gallio. They accused Paul by saying he is persuading people to worship God in a way contrary to the law. Gallio told the Jews that if this was a crime or close to a crime he would have accepted their complaint, but since it is a disagreement about Jewish law they should settle the matter themselves. Gallio told them he would not judge the matter and he had them forced away from the judgment seat. The Jews seized Sosthenes (see 1 Corinthians 1:1…with Paul), the president of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the judgment seat. Gallio ignored them.

Ac 18:18 - 23 Paul stayed many more days in Corinth, then said farewell to the believers and sailed to Syria with Priscilla and Aquila. Paul had his hair cut off at Cenchrea (glc…near Corinth) because he had made a vow. (NET…Paul reflected his pious dependence on God. ESV…probably means Paul had completed his vow…The vow was for seeking divine blessing for a task or for thanksgiving.) When they reached Ephesus, Paul left Priscilla and Aquila there but he went to the synagogue to address the Jews. They asked him to stay longer but Paul said farewell to them and added that he would come back to them if God wills this. He sailed from Ephesus to Caesarea and then went to Jerusalem to greet the church, and then went to Antioch. After he spent some time there, Paul went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia (glc..where he had traveled before) and strengthened all the disciples.

Ac 18:24 - 28 A Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria (glc..in Egypt) came to Ephesus. He was a good speaker and knew the Old Testament well. He had been taught the way of the Lord and spoke and taught accurately the facts about Jesus with great enthusiasm, even though he only knew the baptism of John. He began to speak fearlessly in the synagogue, but Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately. Apollos wanted to go to Achaia (where Corinth is located) and the believers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. In Achaia, he helped greatly those who had believed by grace as he refuted the Jews vigorously in public debate as he demonstrated from the Old Testament that the Christ was Jesus.

Ac 19:1 - 7 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions and came to Ephesus. He found some believers and asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. They told him that they had not heard that there is a Holy Spirit. Paul asked them about their baptism. They told him they had received John’s baptism (glc…for repentance). Paul told them that John baptized for repentance and told the people to believe the one who was to come after him (glc…who had a ministry after his ministry) that is, Jesus. They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and when Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about 12 men in the group. (glc…laying on of hands is not a requirement. When Peter spoke in the house of Cornelius, Acts 10, the people received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues while Peter was in the middle of his presentation.)

Ac 19:8 - 10 Paul spoke fearlessly in the synagogue for three months about the kingdom of God. (see the gospel of Luke) Some were stubborn, refused to believe, and reviled the Way in front of the people so Paul left and took the believers with him, speaking to them every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. He did this for two years so all who lived in the province of Asia (glc…western present-day Turkey), both Jews and Gentiles, heard the word of the Lord.

Ac 19:11 - 20 God was performing amazing miracles through Paul, so that even when pieces of cloth that Paul had touched were brought to the sick their diseases left them and evil spirits went out of them. Some Jewish exorcists who traveled in the region tried to use the name of Jesus over those who were possessed by evil spirits with the formula “I sternly warn you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.” Seven sons of the Jewish high priest, Sceva, were doing this. The evil spirit told them, “I know about Jesus and am acquainted with Paul, but who are you?” The man who was possessed by the evil spirit beat them all into submission. They fled that house naked and wounded. This event became known to all in Ephesus, both Jews and Gentiles. Fear came over them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was praised. Many who had believed in Jesus confessed their previous deeds. Large numbers of those who had practiced magic burned their books in the presence of everyone. The value of the books totaled over 50,000 silver coins (NET … the value of 50,000 days of labor). Through this, the word of the Lord continued to grow in power and prevail in the region.

Ac 19:21 - 41 After this, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem by way of Macedonia and Achaia (glc…Phillipi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth) Paul also wanted to go to Rome. Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia while he stayed in Asia (around Ephesus) for a while. Then a large disturbance took place concerning the Way (NET…concerning Christianity). A silversmith, Demetrius, had the business of making silver shrines of Artemis (NET…the temple for Artemis was near Ephesus. It was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.) that created a large business for the craftsmen. Demetrius gathered these craftsmen, and other workmen in similar trades, and reminded them that their way to earn a living comes from this business concerning Artemis. He reminded them that they saw and heard that Paul persuaded and convinced many people in Ephesus and the surrounding region that gods made by hands are not gods at all. He observed that their business might lose favor with the people, that the temple of Artemis might be regarded as nothing, and lose her greatness after now being worshipped in Asia and throughout the world. The craftsmen were enraged and shouted “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians” The city was in an uproar and the crowd drug Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were traveling with Paul, into the town theater. Paul wanted to enter the assembly but the disciples would not let him. Some of the authorities of the province who were friends of Paul sent him a message that urged him not to enter the theater. There was confusion in the theater with lots of shouting, but most of the crowd did not know why they were there. Some of the crowd thought the issue was about Alexander (glc…don’t know who he was) because the Jews pushed him to the front. He tried to get the crowd’s attention in order to make a defense. But when the crowd recognized he was a Jew the crowd resumed their shouting in unison, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” for about two hours. The city secretary quieted the crowd and reminded them that all know that the city of the Ephesians is the keeper of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image that fell from heaven.” (glc..the image was likely a large meteorite that fell near Ephesus.) He said these facts are well known and they should not be reckless. He noted that the men they brought to the theater were not temple robbers and did not blaspheme Artemis. He said that Demetrius and the craftsmen should bring charges against them to the courts and proconsuls. He said additional charges should be settled in a legal assembly and that the group was in danger of being charged with rioting since there was no cause to explain the disorderly gathering. He then dismissed the assembly.

Ac 20:1 - 12 After the disturbance ended, Paul sent for the disciples, encouraged them, said farewell, and left for Macedonia. After traveling through Macedonia and encouraging the believers he came to Greece (NET…region of Achaia… Athens, Corinth). He stayed there for three months. The Jews made a plot against Paul as he intended to sail to Syria so Paul decided to return via Macedonia. Paul was accompanied by Sopater from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia (glc…western region of present-day Turkey). The traveling companions had gone ahead and were waiting for Paul (glc..and Luke and others?...Luke uses “we”) at Troas (glc…port city on NW side of the province of Asia). Paul (glc…and Luke and others?) sailed from Philippi after Passover (glc…after Easter, March..April) and in five days came to Troas where they stayed for seven days. They gathered on Sunday to break bread (glc…church service) and Paul spoke until midnight because he planned to leave the next day. There were many lamps in the place where they met. A young man named Eutychus was sitting in a window. He started sleeping soundly as Paul was speaking. He fell down from the third story and was picked up dead. Paul went down and threw himself on the man, put his arms around him, and told the group to not be distressed because he was alive. Paul went back upstairs, broke bread, ate, and talked with the group until dawn before he left. The people took Eutychus home alive and were greatly comforted.

Ac 20:13 - 17 Luke and others went to the ship and sailed to Assos (NET…about 24 miles south of Troas) for Paul had arranged to meet them there after traveling by land. Paul came on board the ship and they sailed to Mitylene (NET…on an island in the Aegean Sea about 44 miles from Assos). Then they sailed and arrived off Chios (NET…an island) the next day. The next day they approached Samos (NET…an island) and the next day they arrived at Miletus (NET…a port 40 miles south of Ephesus). Paul decided to sail past Ephesus to spend little time in the province of Asia because he wanted to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost (glc…50 days after Passover..so about 43 days since they started from Phillipi). In Miletus, Paul sent a message to Ephesus, telling the elders of the church to come to him.

Ac 20:18 - 38 Paul spoke to the elders from Ephesus. He reminded them to think about how he lived among them in all his time in the province of Asia. He served the Lord with humility and tears, and with persecution due to the plots of the Jews. He did not hold back from preaching anything that would be helpful to them. He taught them publicly and in houses. He testified to Jews and Gentiles about repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus. He told them he was now compelled by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem even though he does not know what will happen to him there, except that the Holy Spirit warns him in town after town that imprisonment and persecution will be there. (glc…he expects more persecution in the city a the center of Judaism.) Paul does not put value on his life. He wants to finish his task and the ministry that he received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God’s grace. Paul tells them that he knows that none of them, to whom Paul proclaimed the kingdom, will see him again. Paul declares that he is innocent of the blood of all of them (glc…Paul has preached the gospel, it is their choice to accept or reject what they have heard.) Paul did not hold back from proclaiming the whole purpose of God. Paul warns them: watch out for yourselves and for the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, shepherd the church of God that was obtained with the blood of God’s Son. There will be fierce wolves who come in among you, not sparing the flock. Even from among their own group men will arise to teach perversions of the truth to draw disciples away after them. Be alert, remember that Paul did not stop warning them with tears night and day for three years. Paul tells them he is entrusting them to god and to the message of his grace. The message is able to build you up and give them an inheritance among all those who are sanctified (glc…who have faith in Jesus’ sacrifice for sin). Paul has not desired money or possessions. They can bear witness that he worked for his needs and those of his companions. He set them an example that we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” After Paul finished speaking the knelt down with all of them and prayed. They wept loudly and hugged and kissed Paul. They were especially saddened by Paul’s message that they would not see him again. They accompanied him to the ship.

Ac 21: 1 - 14 Paul (glc…and those traveling with him) reluctantly left the elders and went to the ship. They sailed to Cos (NET…island in the Aegean Sea), on the next day to Rhodes (NET…island SW of present-day Turkey), and then to Patara (NET…on the coast of SW Turkey, they have traveled about 185 miles now). They found a ship traveling to Phoenicia (NET… port on the Mediterranean, north of Palestine) and put out to sea. They sighted Cyprus (NET… large island south of Turkey) and sailed south of it. They sailed on to Syria and went to Tyre (NET…on the coast of Phoenicia; glc…perhaps 120 miles NW of Jerusalem) so the ship could unload its cargo. They stayed with disciples there for seven days. The disciples repeatedly told Paul through the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem. When the time came to leave, the disciples and their wives and children went with the group outside of the city. They all knelt on the beach and prayed and farewells were said. Paul and his group went onto the ship and the disciples and families went to their homes. The voyage continued from Tyre to Ptolemais (NET…about 30 miles south of Tyre). Paul's group greeted the disciples there and stayed with them for one day. The next day they came to Caesarea (NET…about 40 miles south of Ptolemais). They went to the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven (NET…deacon appointed in Jerusalem) and stayed with him. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. They were there several days and a prophet named Agabus (NET…see Acts 11:28) came down from Judea. He took Paul’s belt and tied his own hands and feet with it, and said, “The Holy Spirit says this: ‘This is the way the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man whose belt this is and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’ “ When the group heard this both Paul’s companions and the people there begged Paul to not go to Jerusalem. Paul told them they were weeping and breaking his heart. He was ready not only to be tied up, but to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. Paul could not be persuaded so they said only, ”The Lord’s will be done.”

Ac 21:15 - 40 The group made preparations and started towards Jerusalem. Some disciples from Caesarea traveled with them and brought them to stay at the house of Mnason of Cyprus, who had been a disciple for a long time. The group was welcomed gladly by the brothers in Jerusalem. The next day Paul and the group saw James and all the elders. Paul greeted them and then explained in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. They praised God after hearing this report. Then they told Paul that there were thousands of Jews who have believed, and are all ardent observers of the law. They have been told that you teach all Jews living among the Gentiles to abandon Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or follow Jewish customs. They will hear you are in Jerusalem. We suggest that you take the four men here with us who have taken a vow and purify yourself and them and pay their expenses so they may have their heads shaved. Then all will know there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you live in conformity with the law. However, regarding the Gentiles who have believed, we have written a letter, (glc…Acts 15) having decided that they should avoid meat that has been sacrificed to idols and blood and what has been strangled and sexual immorality. Paul took the men the next day, purified (NET…did the ritual cleansing) himself along with them, and went to the temple and gave notice of the completion of the days of purification, when the sacrifice would be offered for each of them. When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from the province of Asia who had seen Paul in the temple area stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this sanctuary! And, he has brought Greeks into the inner courts of the temple and made this holy place ritually unclean!” (They had seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and they assumed Paul had brought him into the inner temple courts.) The whole city was stirred up, and the people rushed together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple courts, and the doors were shut. While the crowd was trying to kill Paul the commanding Roman officer was told that Jerusalem was in an uproar. He took soldiers to the crowd. The Jews stopped beating Paul when they saw the soldiers. The commander arrested Paul and had him bound with two chains. He asked Paul who he was and what he had done. The crowd shouted their complaints so the commander was not able to determine the truth. He ordered Paul to be taken to the barracks. Paul had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violent crowd who were shouting complaints about Paul. Just outside the barracks, Paul spoke to the commander in Greek. The commander then knew Paul was not the Egyptian who started a rebellion and was the leader of 4,000 men hostile to Rome. Paul told him he was a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia and a citizen of this important city. Paul asked for permission to speak to the crowd and this was granted. Paul stood on the steps, got the crowd’s attention, and spoke to them in Aramaic (NET…the common language of Palestine).

Ac 22:1 -.21 Paul addressed the crowd as “Brothers and Sisters.” The crowd became quiet when they heard him speak in Aramaic. Paul gave his bio: a Jew, born in Tarsus, raised in Jerusalem, educated under Gamaliel according to the law of our ancestors, zealous for God like them, persecuted the Way to the point of death, put men and women in prison, as the High Priest and council of elders can testify about him. He received letters to the Jews in Damascus and was traveling to make arrests and bring prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished. As he traveled near Damascus around noon a very bright light flashed around him. Paul fell to the ground and heard a voice saying “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” Paul answered, “Who are you, Lord?” He said, “I am Jesus the Nazarene whom you are persecuting.” Paul’s traveling companions saw the light but did not understand the voice. Paul asked: “What I should do, Lord?” The Lord told him to get up and go to Damascus where he would be told what he had been assigned to do. He could not see so he was led by the hand of his companions to Damascus. Ananias, a devout Jew according to the law, who was well-spoken of by Jews in Damascus, came to Paul and said to him: “Brother Saul, regain your sight!” Paul looked up and saw him. Ananias said: “The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One (NET…Jesus Christ), and to hear a command from his mouth, because you will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. Get up and be baptized and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.” When Paul returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, he fell into a trance and saw the Lord saying to him, “Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly because they will not accept your testimony about me.” Paul replied that the Jews knew I imprisoned and beat your believers I found in synagogues, and when your witness Stephen was killed, I was standing nearby, approving, and guarding the coats of those who were killing him. Then Jesus told him to go because he was sending him far away to the Gentiles.

Ac 22:22 - 29 When Paul said this the crowd stopped listening to him and shouted that Paul should die. The crowd screamed, threw off their cloaks, and tossed dust into the air. The commanding officer ordered the soldiers to bring Paul into the barracks. He also told the soldiers to interrogate Paul by beating him with a lash so he could find out why the crowd was shouting at Paul in this way. After Paul had been stretched out for the lash, Paul asked the centurion near him if it was legal for them to lash a man who is a Roman citizen without a proper trial. The centurion reported that Paul was a Roman citizen to the commanding officer. The commanding officer asked Paul if he was a Roman citizen. Paul said, “Yes.” The commanding officer said he became a citizen by paying a large amount of money. Paul replied that he was born a citizen (NET…inherited citizenship from his family). Those who were about to interrogate Paul moved back and the commanding officer was frightened when he realized Paul was a Roman citizen and he had given the command to have him tied up.

Ac 22:30 - Ac 23:5 The next day, the commanding officer wanted to know why Paul was being accused by the Jews so he released Paul and ordered the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin (NET…highest legal body of the Jews) to assemble. The commander brought Paul to the Sanhedrin and the chief priests. Paul spoke directly to the group and told them he had lived his life with a clear conscience before God to this day. The high priest Ananias ordered those near Paul to hit him on the mouth. Paul told Ananias that God would strike him and called him a whitewashed wall (glc…having a good outward appearance but corrupt under the paint) and complained that Ananias acted as if he was judging him according to the law but he had ordered Paul to be struck in violation of the law. Those near Paul rebuked Paul by saying Paul should not insult God’s high priest. Paul replied that he did not realize Ananias was the high priest and quoted Exodus 22:28 which says you must not speak evil about a ruler of your people.

Ac 23:6 - 11 Paul noticed that both Sadducees and Pharisees were in the group. (glc…I suppose they wore distinctive robes) Paul shouted out: “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead!” This started an argument between the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the group was divided. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection, angels, or spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge all of these. There was a loud clamor (NET) and some experts in the law from the Pharisee group stood up and strongly protested: “We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” The arguing became tremendous and the commanding officer feared the group would tear Paul to pieces, so he ordered soldiers to take Paul away by force and bring him to the barracks. The next night, Jesus stood near Paul and said, “Have courage, for just as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”

Ac 23:12 - 24 In the morning, the Jews made plans and bound themselves with an oath to not eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul. More than 40 Jews formed this conspiracy. They went to the chief priests and elders and told them they had bound themselves with a solemn oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. They wanted the priests and elders and the Sanhedrin to request the commanding officer to bring Paul to them, as if they were going to determine his case by conducting a more thorough questioning of Paul. The 40 said they were ready to kill Paul before he came near to the place where the Sanhedrin and priests were located. A son of Paul’s sister heard about the ambush and entered the barracks and told Paul. Paul told one of the centurions to take the young man to the commanding officer so that he could give him a report. The centurion took him to the commanding officer and said Paul told him the young man has something to tell him. The commander took the young man to a private location and asked what he want to report to him. The young man told him of the Jews plan to request that Paul be brought to the Sanhedrin but that he should not be persuaded because more than forty of them are waiting to ambush Paul. He told them of the oath of fasting until they had killed Paul and were now waiting for the commander to agree to their request. The commander sent the young man away and told him not to tell anyone he had reported all this to the commander. The commander summoned two centurions (glc…each commanded 100 soldiers) and told them to prepare 200 soldiers to go to Caesarea (NET…about 65 miles away) along with 70 horsemen and 200 spearmen by nine o’clock that night. They also were to provide horses for Paul to ride so he could be brought safely to Felix, the governor.

Ac 23:25 - 35 The commander wrote a letter with these words: Claudius Lysias to His Excellency Governor Felix, greetings. The letter told how Paul had been seized by the Jews and was about to be killed when the commander had come with soldiers and rescued him because he learned he was a Roman citizen (glc…stretching the truth here). The commander reported that he wanted to know the charge the Jews had against Paul so he brought him to the Sanhedrin. He found that Paul was accused of controversial questions about their law but no charge deserved death or imprisonment. The commander reported he had been informed about a plot against Paul so he sent him at once to the governor and ordered the accusers to state their charges before the governor. The soldiers followed their orders and took Paul to Antipatris (NET…35 miles NW of Jerusalem, about halfway to Caesarea) during the night. The next day the horsemen continued with Paul but the soldiers returned to Jerusalem. When the horsemen reached Caesarea they delivered the letter to the governor and presented Paul. The governor read the letter and asked Paul what province he was from. When he learned he was from Cilicia he told Paul he would give him a hearing when his accusers arrived. Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod’s palace (NET…built by Herod the Great..the events here belong to A.D. 56-57).

Ac 24:1 - 9 After five days Ananias, some elders, and Tertullus, an attorney, came to Caesarea to present formal charges against Paul to the governor. Paul was brought to hear the charges. Tertullus began his presentation by commending and thanking Felix for a long time of peace in the land, and reforms made in the nation through Felix’s foresight. Tertullus then claimed he would not take up much of Felix’s time. He stated that the Jews came to know that Paul is a troublemaker who causes riots among Jews throughout the world, and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. Tertullus claimed that Paul tried to desecrate the temple so they arrested him. Tertullus said all this would be learned from Paul when he was examined (glc…perhaps Tertullus is suggesting a harsh interrogation of Paul). The Jews joined in the verbal attack on Paul.

Ac 24:10 - 23 Felix motioned to Paul that he should speak. Paul says that he is confident to make his defense to Felix because he recognizes Felix’s long term as a judge of the nation. Paul says Felix can learn for himself that Paul went to Jerusalem to worship 12 days ago. He did not argue with anyone and did not stir up the crowd in the temple or any synagogue or in the city. He stated that the Jews cannot prove their charges against Paul. Paul confessed that he worships the God of Jewish ancestors according to the Way (which the Jews call a sect), and that he believes according to the law and the writings of the prophets. Paul expresses his hope (and the hope of his accusers) in God that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and unrighteous. Paul says this motivates him to keep a clear conscience toward God and people. Paul describes that he returned to Jerusalem after several years to bring gifts for the poor and present offerings, which he was doing at the temple when his accusers found him in the temple, ritually purified (glc…not desecrating the temple) with no crowd or disturbance. There are Jews from the province of Asia, who should be here accusing Paul, if they have accusations. The accusers here should state the crime they found him guilty of when he was before the Sanhedrin, other than he shouted at the meeting: “I am on trial before you today concerning the resurrection of the dead.” (NET…Paul makes the case that this a religious dispute and not a civil matter, so the governor should ignore the accusation.)

Ac 24:22 - 27 Felix understood the facts concerning the Way (glc…Christianity) (NET…Felix knew more about Christianity than the Jews had told him.). He adjourned the hearing with the statement that he would decide Paul’s case when Lysias, the commanding officer came to Caesarea. He ordered a centurion to guard Paul but allowed Paul to have some freedom and to let Paul’s friends meet his needs. Some days later, Felix arrived with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish. He sent for Paul and listened to him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. While Paul was talking about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened and told Paul to go away until he was sent for again. Felix was hoping Paul would give him money so he sent for Paul often and talked with him. After two years, Festus succeeded Felix, and because he wanted to do the Jews a favor, he left Paul in prison.

Ac 25:1 - 12 Three days after Festus arrived in the province, he went to Jerusalem from Caesarea. The chief priests and important men of the Jews brought formal charges against Paul to Festus. They asked him to do them a favor regarding Paul. They urged Festus to transport Paul to Jerusalem so they could ambush him and kill him as he traveled. Festus replied that Paul was in Caesarea and that Festus planned to go to Caesarea soon. He said the leaders could go with him and if Paul has committed a crime they could bring charges against him. After eight to ten days the group went to Caesarea. The next day Festus sat on the judgment seat and ordered Paul to be brought to him. The Jews from Jerusalem stood around Paul and brought many serious charges that they could not prove. Paul defended himself by saying that he had not broken any laws of the Jews, the temple, or of Caesar. Festus wanted to do a favor for the Jews so he asked Paul if he was willing to be tried in Jerusalem. Paul replied that he was standing before Caesar’s judgment seat where he should be tried. He said that he had done nothing wrong to the Jews and that Festus knew this. Paul said that if he is in the wrong and deserves death he is not trying to escape death, but if their charges are not true then he should not be handed over to them. Paul said, “I appeal to Caesar!” Festus conferred with his council and then replied that Paul would go to Caesar.

Ac 25:13 - 27 After several days, King Agrippa (NET…son of Herod Agrippa I, Acts 12:1..ruled over parts of Palestine from 53 A.D….very loyal to Rome) and Bernice (NET…Agrippa’s widowed sister) came to Caesarea to visit Festus. During their stay of many days, Festus explained Paul’s case to get his opinion. Festus told Agrippa Felix had left Paul there as a prisoner. When Festus had been in Jerusalem the chief priests and elders of the Jews made a formal report about Paul and asked that Paul be condemned. Festus told them that Rome’s procedure was to have the accused meet the accusers in person and make a defense before the person is handed over to the accusers. After the Jews came to Caesarea Festus immediately had Paul brought before the judgment seat. The Jews did not charge Paul with evil deeds, but rather they brought up points of disagreement with Paul about their own religion, and about Jesus, who was dead but Paul claimed was alive. Festus did not know how to investigate the matter so he asked Paul if he was willing to go to Jerusalem for his trial on these charges. Paul then appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of Caesar. Festus ordered Paul to be kept under guard until he could send him to Caesar. Agrippa told Festus that he would like to hear Paul. Festus said that would happen the next day. On the next day, Agrippa and Bernice entered the audience hall with a great ceremony. Also present were senior military officers and prominent men of Caesarea. Festus gave the order for Paul to be brought in. Festus announced: “King Agrippa, and all you who are present here, you seen this man whom the entire Jewish people petitioned me here and in Jerusalem as they shouted loudly that he should die. I did find that his actions deserved a death sentence, and when he appealed to Caesar I decided to send him. But I don’t know what to write to Caesar about Paul so I have brought him before all of you, and especially before King Agrippa, so that after this preliminary hearing I may have something to write clearly to Caesar about the charges against Paul.”

Ac 26: 1 - 23 Agrippa gave Paul permission to speak. Paul gestured politely and began his defense. Paul said that he felt fortunate that he was able to make his defense before King Agrippa because Agrippa was familiar with the customs and controversial issues of the Jews. Paul asked for patience as Agrippa listened to him. He told him that the Jews knew the way he lived from the time he was a boy in Jerusalem, living among the Jews. They knew because they were aware, and could testify, that Paul lived as a Pharisee, the strictest party of the Jews. Paul said he was on trial now because of his hope in the promise God made to our ancestors, a promise the 12 tribes hope to attain as they earnestly serve God night and day. It is about this hope that the Jews are accusing him. Paul speaks politely to Agrippa, saying, “Your Majesty! Why do you and those gathered here think it is unbelievable that God raises the dead?” Paul explains that he was convinced that he must do things hostile to the name of Jesus the Nazarene. Paul told them he persecuted many of the saints (glc…Jesus’ followers) in Jerusalem. He locked many in prison using the authority he received from the chief priests, and he cast his vote against them when they were sentenced to death. He punished them often in synagogues and tried to force them to blaspheme (glc…renounce Jesus). He was so angry that he went to persecute them in foreign cities. Paul explained directly to Agrippa that on his way to Damascus, with the complete authority of the chief priests, at about noon, he saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around him and those traveling with him. They all fell to the ground, and Paul heard a voice in Aramaic ask him: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? You are hurting yourself by kicking against the goads (NET…goads were sharp sticks used to direct a draft animal…stubborn resistance). Paul said he asked, “Who are you, Lord?” And the Lord replied, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Get up, for I have appeared to you for this reason, to designate you in advance as a servant and witness to the things you have seen and to the things in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles, to whom I sending you to open their eyes so that they will turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.” Paul respectfully continued his defense before Agrippa and told him he obeyed the heavenly vision (NET..Paul says he is just obeying a heavenly vision) by declaring first in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and Judea, and to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds consistent with repentance. Paul said that for this reason the Jews, after they seized him in the temple courts, were trying to kill him. Paul told Agrippa that he has experienced help from God to this day and stands now testifying to both small and great, saying only what the prophets and Moses said was going to happen (ESV…see Luke 24:26,27; 45-48; Acts 2:24-37; Acts 3:17-26; 13:32-39): that the Christ (NET…Messiah) would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, to proclaim light both to the Jews and to the Gentiles.

Ac 26:24 - 32 As Paul was talking, Festus spoke loudly that Paul had lost his mind (NET…his enthusiasm has outrun better judgment) and that his great learning is driving him insane. Paul replied respectfully that he has not lost his mind, but that he is declaring true and rational words. Paul continues that Agrippa knows these things and he is speaking openly to him because Paul cannot believe that any of these things has escaped his notice because they were done in public, not in secret. Paul asked Agrippa if he believed the prophets, and immediately said that he knew Agrippa believed. Agrippa asked Paul if he was trying to persuade him to become a Christian in such a short time. Paul replied that he prays to God that in a short or a long time Agrippa and all who hear him today would become as Paul is, except for his chains. Agrippa, Festus, Bernice, and those sitting with them got up. As they were leaving they told each other that Paul was not doing anything that deserved death or imprisonment. Agrippa told Festus that Paul could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.

Ac 27:1 - 8 The Romans decided Paul would sail to Italy. (NET…Luke probably traveled with Paul) Paul and some other prisoners were put into the charge of a centurion, Julius. They boarded a ship from Adramyttium (NET…a port in Mysia on the west coast of Asia Minor) that had plans to sail to ports along the province of Asia (NET….from Caesarea). They were accompanied by Aristarchus who was from Thessalonica. The next day they reached Sidon (NET…75 miles north of Caesarea) and Julius was kind to Paul and let him go to his friends so they could give him supplies. Then they sailed along Cyprus so it would protect the ship from contrary winds. They sailed along the sea south of Cilicia and Pamphylia (NET… southern Asia Minor) and stopped at the port of Myra in Lycia (NET…southern Asia Minor…about 440 miles from Sidon on their journey…15 days). The centurion found a ship from Alexandria bound for Italy and put them on board. The winds were contrary and they sailed slowly to Cnidus (ESV…SW Asia Minor) and then near Crete (NET…Salmone is a point on the NE corner of Crete) to be protected from contrary winds. They had difficult sailing along the coast of Crete and came to Fair Havens near Lasea (NET…on the southern coast of Crete…60 miles from Salmone).

Ac 27:9 - 26 Much time has passed on the journey and the sea voyage was dangerous because it was past the fast (NET…Jewish Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, in October…late fall sometimes had dangerous winds). Paul advised the group that he saw disaster ahead for the ship and the people on the ship. The centurion was more convinced by the captain and ship’s owner than by what Paul said. The current harbor was not suitable to spend the winter so the group decided to put out to sea. They hoped to reach Phoenix, a harbor facing southwest and northwest (NET…about 30 miles west of the current port) and spend the winter there. A gentle south wind sprang up so they thought they could start sailing. They pulled up the anchor and sailed close to the coast of Crete. Soon a hurricane-force wind blew down from the island. The ship could not head into the wind so it was driven along with the wind. They came under the shelter of a small island called Cauda and got the ship’s rowboat under control. The crew lifted it on board and used ropes to undergird the ship. They feared they would run aground on (NET..on sandbars near) Syrtis so they lowered the sea anchor and were still driven along. The next day, as they were violently battered by the storm, they began to throw the cargo overboard. On the third day they threw some of the ship’s gear overboard. They did not see the sun or stars for many days and the violent storm continued to batter the ship, the group abandoned all hope of being saved. Since many aboard had no desire to eat, Paul stood up and told them they should have listened to him and not sailed from Crete. He then advised them to keep up their courage, for there will be no loss of life among you. He told them that last night an angel of the God to whom he belongs and whom he serves, came to him and told him not to be afraid, that he will stand before Caesar, and that God has graciously granted safety for all who are sailing with him. He told them to keep their courage because he has faith in God that it will be just as he was told, but the ship will run aground on some island.

Ac 27:27 - 38 During the fourteenth night, as they were driven across the Adriatic Sea (NET…they were between Malta and Crete), about midnight the sailors thought they were approaching land. They took soundings and found the water was twenty fathoms (NET…120 feet) deep and then a little later found it was 15 fathoms ( NET…90 feet) deep. They were afraid that the ship would run aground on a rocky coast so they threw out four anchors from the stern and wished for day to appear. The sailors tried to leave the ship by lowering the rowboat into the sea and pretending they were going to put out anchors from the bow. Paul told the centurion and soldiers that unless the sailors stayed with the ship, they could not be saved. The soldiers cut the ropes of the rowboat and let it drift away. Just before dawn, Paul urged all of them to take some food, saying, that for fourteen days they had been in suspense and had not eaten anything. He urged them to take some food as it would be important for their survival. He told them that not one of them would lose a hair from their head. Paul took bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. He broke it and began to eat. All of them were encouraged and took food themselves. There were 276 people on the ship. When they had eaten enough they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea.

Ac 27:39 - 44 When day came, they did not recognize the land but saw a bay with a beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. They released the anchors and loosened the linkage that bound the steering oars. They raised the foresail and steered toward the beach. But they encountered crosscurrents and the ship ran aground. The bow stuck fast and could not be moved. The stern was being broken up by the force of the waves. The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners so none would escape by swimming away. The centurion wanted to save Paul’s life so he prevented the soldiers from killing the prisoners. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. The rest were to follow, some on boards and some on pieces of the ship. In this way all were brought safely to land.

 Ac 28:1 – 10 They safely reached the shore and learned the Island was Malta (NET ...??? ). The local people helped them by building a fire for it was raining and cold. Paul gathered some brushwood and put it on the fire. A snake came out because of the heat and bit Paul’s hand. The local people saw this and told each other that Paul must be a murderer who has escaped form the sea but Justice has not allowed him to live. But Paul shook the snake into the fire and was not hurt. The local people expected Paul to swell up or drop dead. After a long time they saw Paul was alright and changed their minds and said Paul was a god. In the region there were fields that belonged to the chief official of the Island, Publius. He welcomed the group and showed hospitality for three days. Publius’ father was sick in bed, suffering from a fever and dysentery. Paul visited him, prayed, and placed his hands on him and he was healed. After this, many people on the island came and were healed. The people of the island gave them many honors and gave them supplies when they were ready to sail.

Ac 28:11 - 16 After three months they sailed on an Alexanderian ship that had spent the winter at Malta and had the “Heavenly Twins” (glc...Castor and Pollux, two bright stars of the Gemini constellation) on its bow. The ship put in at Syracuse (NET...??? ) for three days. Then the sip went to Rhegium (NET...??? ) for one day before sailing with the wind to Puteoli (NET... ??? ). There they found some believers who had them stay with them for seven days. After this they came to Rome. Believers from Rome came to the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns (NET... ??? ) to meet them. When Paul saw them he thanked God and was encouraged. When they entered Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with the soldier who guarded him.

Ac 28:17 - 31 After three days Paul called the local Jewish leaders together. He addressed them as “brothers,” and told them that he had done nothing against our people (glc...Jews) or the customs of the Jewish ancestors. He had been handed over as a prisoner to the Romans from Jerusalem. The Romans wanted to release Paul because there was no basis for a death sentence. But the Jews objected so Paul had to appeal to Caesar, not to bring charges against the Jews, his own people. Paul asked to see the Jewish leaders in Rome because he had been bound with a chain because of the hope of Israel (glc...Messiah ). The Jewish leaders told them that they had not received letters from Judea concerning Paul and the Jews from Judea have not said anything bad about Paul. They told Paul they would like to hear him speak, for they had heard that people everywhere speak against this sect (glc...Christianity). They set a day to meet with him and on that day many more Jews also came to see Paul. From morning until evening Paul explained things to them, testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus from both the law of Moses and the prophets. Some were convinced by what Paul said, but others refused to believe. They began to leave without agreeing among themselves, after Paul made his last statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah when he said, ‘Go to this people and say, “You will keep on hearing , but will never understand, and you will keep on looking, but you will never perceive. For the heart of this people has become dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have closed their eyes, so that they would not see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.” ‘ Paul told them that salvation from God has been sent to the Gentiles who will listen! Paul lived there two years in his own rented quarters and welcomed all who came to him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ with complete boldness and without restriction.

End of Acts

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Romans

(ESV…There is widespread acceptance that Paul wrote the book of Romans. The letter to the Romans was likely written while Paul was in Corinth on his third missionary journey around 57 A.D. “The theme of Roamns is the revelation of God’s judging and saving righteousness in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the cross of Christ, God judges sin and y et at the same time manifests his saving mercy.”)

(QUEST … “Paul wrote about the grace of God both from experience and education.” “Romans was probably written in A.D. 57 to believers - most of them Gentile- in the capital cit of the Roman empire.”)

Rom Chp 1: 1 – 7 Paul, called himself a slave (NET … OT Jewish concept of this slave is a position of honor and privilege…see Joshua 14:7; Psalm 89:3; 2 Samuel 7:5,8; 2 Kings 10:10….servants, slaves, of the Lord ) of Christ Jesus, who was called to be an apostle (glc...special messenger ), and set apart for the gospel of God. (glc...see Acts chapters 9, 22, 26). God promised this gospel before Jesus came to Earth through the Old Testament prophets, about his Son who in earthly terms descended from David, who was appointed the Son-of-God-in-power according to the Holy Spirit by being resurrected from the dead, who is Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we have received God’s favor and apostleship to lead Gentiles into obedience of faith on behalf of Jesus’ name. You who are reading this are also among them, called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all loved by God in Rome, called to be saints (glc...set apart for God) : Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Rom 1:8 – 17 Paul thanked God through Jesus Christ for all who received this letter, because their faith was known and proclaimed throughout the world. Paul served God by preaching the gospel of his Son. God is Paul’s witness that he continually remembers them and asks in his prayers that perhaps he may be able to visit them according to the will of God. Paul longs to see them so that he may impart some spiritual gift to strengthen them and that he and them may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. Paul wanted the brothers and sisters to know that he had often intended to come to them, but was prevented before this letter was written so that he might have some fruit (glc...new believers, spiritual growth of believers) among them just as he has had among other Gentiles. Paul had an obligation to Greeks and barbarians, and to the wise and the foolish. Paul was eager to preach the gospel to those (glc...believers and non-believers) in Rome. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God’s power for salvation to all who believe, both Jews and Greeks (NET…those who are not Jews). The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel by faith, as it is written “The righteous will live by faith.” (NET...Habbakuk 2:4 )

 Rom 1:18 - 23 God’s anger is revealed from heaven as he opposes the ungodliness and unrighteousness of those who put down the truth by using their unrighteousness because what we can know about God has been made plain by God. Since the creation of the world God’s eternal power and divine nature, which cannot be seen directly have been in evidence to all by seeing what he has made. People have no excuse because even though they knew God, they did not glorify or thank God, but created their own thinking and ideas, which led to futility, and their inner being was darkened as it lacked good sense. They claimed to have wisdom but they became fools and even replaced the glory of the immortal God with images resembling mortal, weak, humans, or birds or animals, or reptiles.

Rom 1:24 - 32 Because the people refused to honor God, he let them proceed with the desires of their hearts to be impure and to dishonor their bodies among each other. They put away the truth about God and replaced it with a lie. They worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen (glc…Acknowledge this is so.). Because the people had this way of thinking about God, he released them into their dishonorable passions. Their women replaced natural sexual relations (glc..with men) for unnatural ones, and also the men abandoned natural (glc..sexual) relations with women and burned with intense desire for other men. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their bodies the due consequences for their misguided actions. Since they did not think it right to acknowledge God, God let their depraved minds direct them into what should not be done. They are full of every kind of unrighteousness (glc..behavior contrary to God’s ways), wickedness, covetousness, and malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and hostility. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of many kinds of evil, not obeying parents, without common sense, not keeping promises and agreements, heartless, and ruthless (glc…mean). They are aware and familiar with God’s righteous decree that people who continually have these activities deserve to die, but they continue to do them and also approve of those who have those activities.

Rom 2:1 - 16 You have no defense when you judge someone else. The reason for which you judge someone else condemns you, because you do the same things. God judges those who do those things in accordance with truth (glc…God is truth). Do you think you will escape God’s judgment when you judge those who do those things and yet you do those things also. Do you have disregard for the wealth of God’s kindness, forbearance, and patience and yet are unaware that God’s kindness leads you to repentance? Because of your hard, stubborn, thinking and your lack of heart-felt repentance, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God’s righteous judgment is revealed! He will render each one according to his works (glc…that flow from his level of faith): eternal life to those who continue in good works to seek glory and honor and immortality, but wrath and anger to those who continue in selfish ambition and do not obey the truth but pursue unrighteousness. All who do evil will have affliction and distress, Jews first and then Gentiles, but glory and honor and peace will come to all who do good, Jews first and then Gentiles. There is no partiality with God. All who have sinned apart from the law (glc…Gentiles) will also perish apart from the law, and all who have sinned under the law (glc…Jews) will be judged by the law. It is not those who hear the law who are righteous before God, but those who do the law will be declared righteous. When the Gentiles, who do not know the law, do the things required by the law (glc…the 10 commandments include having no god instead of the true God), these who do not have the Jewish law are a law to themselves. They show that the work of the law is written in their hearts, as their conscience bears witness and their conflicting thoughts judge or excuse them, on the day when God will judge the secrets of human hearts according to my gospel message through Christ Jesus.

Rom 2:17 - 25 Do you claim to be a Jew and rely on the (NET… Mosaic ) law, boast of your relationship to God, say you know his will, approve the superior things as you are guided by the law, believe you are a guide to the blind and a light to those in darkness, say you educate the senseless and teach little children, because you have in the law the main aspects of knowledge and truth. Do you teach others but don’t teach yourself? Do you preach against stealing but steal? Do you tell others not to commit adultery but do you commit adultery? Do you detest idols, but do you rob temples? Do you boast in the law but dishonor God by violating the law!? It is written, “the name of God is being blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.” (Isaiah 52:5) Circumcision has value if you practice the law, but if you violate the law your circumcision has become uncircumcision. If the uncircumcised man obeys the righteous requirements of the law his uncircumcision will be regarded as circumcision. The physically uncircumcised man, by obeying the law, will judge you to be the violator of the law, even though you have the scripture and the sign of circumcision! A person is not a Jew who only has the outward sign of circumcision. A person is a Jew if they have the inward circumcision of the heart by the Spirit and not by the scripture. Those who have an inward circumcision receive praise from God and not just from people.

Rom 3:1 - 8 Does the Jew have a spiritual advantage? What is the value of circumcision? There are many advantages. The Jews were given God’s word. Some Jews were not faithful but their unfaithfulness does not cancel God’s faithfulness. Let God be shown to be true, and every person shown to be a liar as it is written in Psalm 51:4 “so that you will be justified in your words and will prevail when you are judged.” What is the conclusion if our unrighteousness shows clearly the righteousness of God? God is not unrighteous when he inflicts wrath. God is the judge of the world. If my lie causes the truth of God to grow God’s glory, why am I actually judged as a sinner? Some slander believers by claiming that we say, “Let us do evil so that good may come of it.” Their condemnation is deserved.

Rom 3:9 - 30 We are not better off than they. Jews and Gentiles are both under sin as written in Psalm 14:1-3, “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away; together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, not even one.” And it is written in Psalm 5:9 and 140:3, ”Their throats are open graves; they deceive with their tongues; the poison of asps is under their lips.” Psalm 10:7 “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” Isaia 59:7-8 “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery are in their paths, and the way of peace they have not known.” Psalm 143:2 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” The law speaks to those who have a connection to the law, so all mouths may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. No one is judged to be righteous before him by works done in the law, for the law brings knowledge of sin. But now, the righteousness of God has been revealed separate from the law (but it is attested to by the law and the prophets). The righteousness of God is revealed through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ for all who believe in him. There is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But all are declared righteous freely by his grace through the redemption provided by Christ Jesus. God publicly displayed him as he shed his blood as the mercy seat that is accessible through faith. This was a demonstration of his righteousness because God had delayed judgment over the sins previously committed. This was also a demonstration of his righteousness in the present time, so that he would be righteous and the justifier of the one who lives because of Jesus’ faithfulness. What human can boast? None can boast by works. Only by faith can one have confidence. A person is declared righteous by his faith apart from the works of the law. God is God of Jews and Gentiles! God is one and he will justify both the circumcised and uncircumcised through faith. Do we render the law inoperative through faith? No! We uphold the law.

Rom 4:1 - 25 The earthly forefather of the Jews, Abraham, had experience with this matter. If Abraham was considered righteous by works, he can boast in that before men but not before God. The scriptures say “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6) When someone works, their pay is not given because of grace but because they earned the pay. But to the one who does not work, but believes in the one (???God or direct reference to Jesus???) who declares the ungodly righteous, his faith is credited as righteousness. Even David speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness separate from works in Psalm 32:1,2 , “Blessed (NET…happy) are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the one against whom the Lord will never count sin.” Is this blessedness for those of the circumcision or also for the uncircumcision? Was Abraham circumcised at the time, or not? He was not circumcised but uncircumcised! He received the sign of circumcision as a sign of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was not circumcised physically so that he would be the spiritual father of all who believe but have never been circumcised, so those believers could also have righteousness credited to them. Abraham is also the father of the circumcised, who go beyond circumcision and walk in Abraham’s example of the faith he had when he was not circumcised. The promise to Abraham and to his descendants that he would inherit the world was not completed through the law, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. If they become heirs through the law, faith is of no effect and the promise to Abraham is inoperative. The law brings wrath, for where there is no law there is no violation. Thus, it is by faith so that it may be by grace, which results that God’s promise may be certain to all descendants - not just Jews, but also to those who have the faith of Abraham, who is the spiritual father of all (Genesis 17:5 “I have made you the father of many nations.”) Abraham is our father in the presence of God whom Abraham believed - the God who makes the dead alive and summons the things that do not exist now as though they do exist. Beyond hope, Abraham believed in hope and that resulted in him being “the father of many nations” ( Genesis 17:5) according to the declaration “so will your descendants be.” (Genesis 15:5) While he was not weak in faith, Abraham considered that his own body was dead for descendants because he was about 100 years old and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. He did not have unbelief about God’s promise but was strengthened in faith and gave glory to God. Abraham was fully convinced that God was fully able to do what he promised. So really it was credited to Abraham as righteousness. The scripture “it was credited to him” (Genesis 15:6) was written for Abraham and for us, to whom it will be credited, who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. Jesus was given over for crucifixion because of our sins and was raised for the sake of our justification.

Rom 5:1 - 11 Because we have become righteous in God’s eyes by faith in Jesus, we have pace and acceptance with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have been given access into the grace in which we stand, and we exult and boast in the hope of God’s glory. In addition, we also rejoice in sufferings, since suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character leads to hope. Hope does not disappoint, because God’s love has been abundantly put in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. We were helpless and at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. It is unusual that one would die for a righteous person, but it might happen that one would choose to die for a good person. But God showed forth his love for us when Christ died for us when we were still sinners. Now we will certainly be saved from God’s wrath because we have been declared righteous by Jesus’ blood. Think of this, while we were enemies of God we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, so, much more will we be saved by his life since we have been reconciled. Beyond this, we exult and boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained this reconciliation.

Rom 5:12 - 21 Sin entered the world through the decision of one man (glc…Adam) and because of sin death came to all people because all sinned - for before the law was given to people, sin was in the world, but there is no keeping track of sin when there is no law. Even so, there are consequences, and death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who did not sin in the same way that Adam sinned. Adam was a type of the coming one (glc…one person’s …Adam’s … action had widespread consequences; one person’s action …Jesus sacrifice…has widespread consequences). But God’s gracious gift is not like the sin. Man died as a result of the sin of one man, but even more did the grace of God and the gift of redemption of the one man Jesus Christ multiply the gift to many! The gift is not like the one who sinned. Judgment from one sin led to condemnation, but the gracious gift from the many sins led to justification. For the sin of the one man caused death to reign, but much more will those who received the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ! So the conclusion is that condemnation for all people resulted from one sin, but one righteous act made available righteousness and life for all people. Through the sin of the one man (glc…Adam) many became sinners, and, the obedience of one man (glc…Jesus) results in many becoming righteous. The law was brought in so that the sin’s accounting would increase, but where sin grew, grace multiplied even more, so even though sin reigned in death, even more will grace reign through righteousness to eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom 6:1 - 14 What is the conclusion? Should we keep sinning so that grace may increase? No! Those who died to sin should not live in sin. Don’t you know that those who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? We have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may live a new life. We have become united with him in the likeness of his death and we will certainly be united in the likeness of his resurrection. Those who have become united with Jesus in the likeness of his death will certainly be united in the likeness of his resurrection. Our old man was crucified with him so that the body of sin would no longer dominate us, so we would no longer be a slave to sin. Someone who has died has been freed from sin. If we died with Christ, we believe that we will live with him. We know that Christ has been raised from the dead and will never die again; death no longer has control over him. He died to sin once for all and the life he lives, he lives to God. You also should consider yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. As a consequence do not let sin have control in your hortal body and don’t obey its desires. Do not use your body for sin as a tool for unrighteousness. Present yourselves to God as those who are raised from the death of sin and use your body as a tool for righteousness. Sin will not control you, because you are not controlled by law but by grace.

Rom 6:15 - 23 What does this mean? Should we sin because we are not controlled by law but controlled by grace? No! If you present yourselves as obedient slaves, you are slaves of what you obey. Obedience to sin results in death but there is a type of obedience that leads to righteousness. Thanks be to God that in the past you were slaves to sin but you sincerely obeyed the teaching entrusted to you. Having been freed from sin, you are now slaves to righteousness. Paul spoke in human terms because his readers were weak in the flesh. In the past, you presented your body as slaves to impurity and lawlessness leading to more sin. Now, present your body as slaves to righteousness that leads to sanctification. When you were controlled by sin you were free from righteousness. What benefit can you name from the past actions you are now ashamed of? The end result of those things is death. But now, you are freed from sin and enslaved to God and that leads to sanctification with the end result of eternal life. The end result of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 7:1 - 12 Paul reminds those fellow Christians who know the Jewish law that the law has authority over a person when the person is living. A married woman is bound by law to her husband while the husband is living, but if he dies, she is released from the law of the marriage. If she has sex with another man while her husband is living she is an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from the law of marriage, and if she has sex with another man she is not an adulteress (glc…but she should not have sexual relations outside of a marriage). As fellow Christians you have died to the Jewish law through the body of Christ, so that you could be in relation to Jesus who was raised from the dead, to bear fruit to God. Before we knew Christ, the sinful desires, aroused by the law, were active in our bodies to bear fruit to death. But since we have now been released from the law, because we have died to what used to control us, we may serve in the new life of the Spirit and not under the old written law. What is the conclusion? The law is not sin! But, I would not be aware of sin except through the law. I would not have known what it means to desire something belonging to someone else fi the law had not said, “Do not covet.” Sin seized the opportunity through the law and produced all kinds of wrong desires in me. Apart from the law, sin is dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but with the coming of the law, sin became alive and I died. So I found that the very law that was intended to bring life to me brought death! Sin seized the opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through the law I died. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good.

Rom 7:13 - 25 Did that which is good become death to me? Absolutely not! But sin, so that it would be apparent as sin, produced death in me through what is good, so that by the commandment sin would develop as completely sinful. We know that the law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual and sold in slavery to sin. I don’t know what I am doing. I do not do what I want, but rather, I do what I hate. If I do what I don’t want, I agree that the law is good. It is no longer me doing it, but sin that lives in me. I know that nothing good lives in my flesh. I want to do good but I cannot do it on my own. I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want! If I do what I do not want, it is not me doing it, but sin that lives in me. I find the law that when I want to do good, evil is alongside me. I delight in the law of God in my inner self. But I see a law of sin in my body waging war against the law of my inner self and making me captive to the law of sin in my body. I am a wretched man! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! I serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Rom 8:1 - 11 Those who are in Christ Jesus are not condemned. The law of the life-giving Spirit in Christ Jesus overcomes and sets you free from the OT law of sin and death. God did what the OT law could not do because the OT law was weakened by the flesh. God condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. The righteous requirement of the OT law is fulfilled in us if we walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. Those who are directed by the flesh have their expectations influenced by the things of the flesh, but those who are directed by the Spirit have their expectations shaped by the things of the Spirit. The way of thinking of the flesh is death, but the way of thinking of the Spirit is life and peace because the way of thinking of the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law, and in fact, it is not able to submit. People living in the flesh cannot please God. But as a Christian, the Spirit of God lives in you and you are not living in the flesh but in the Spirit. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ. But if Christ lives in you, your body can be considered dead because of sin, but alive in the Spirit because of Jesus’ righteousness. If the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you, God, who raised Christ from the dead will also make your earthly bodies alive by his Spirit who lives in you.

Rom 8:12 - 25 Because of this, brothers and sisters, we have no obligation to the flesh to live according to the principles of the flesh (because if you chose that way you will die), but when you live by the Spirit and don’t let the deeds of the body control you, you will live. Those who obey and follow the Spirit of God are children of God. You did not get a spirit of slavery and fear when you believed in Jesus. You were adopted by God and received the Spirit of God that allows you, and directs you, to cry “Abba, Father.” The Spirit testifies to our spirit that we are God’s children. As a child of God you are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ - if indeed we suffer with him (glc…keep faith in Jesus and identify with Jesus even though the world persecutes us) so that we may be glorified with him. The sufferings Christians have now are insignificant compared to the glory in heaven that will be shown to us who believe in Jesus. The creation looks forward to the revelation and revealing of the sons of God. The creation was held back and restricted by God for a time but will be restored and freed from the law of decay and experience the glorious freedom that God’s children will experience. (glc…the universe now is governed by the physical law that the disorder of the universe increases with time). We know that creation is distressed and has troubles now. And we also groan inside ourselves as we have the first fruits of the Spirit and look forward to our adoption and redemption of our bodies. Our hope and faith in Jesus saved us. Something that is with us and seen is not hope because it is with us and not an expectation. But as Christians, we hope for what we can’t see and live with endurance on Earth.

Rom 8:26 - 31 We don’t see things in the future clearly and don’t know how to pray, but the Spirit helps our weakness and intercedes with God for us with words that can’t be expressed. God searches our hearts and knows the inner thoughts of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes in alignment with God’s will for those set apart for God (glc…Christians). All events and circumstances result in good (glc…the ultimate, eternal good) for those who have faith and love God, for those who are called and invited into his purpose, because God knew us before we existed and predestined (glc…planned and decided) those people to be shaped into the image and pattern of his Son (glc…Jesus), so that his Son would be the firstborn in the group of many brothers and sisters. And those God predestined, God invited, and those he invited he justified (glc…through Jesus’ sacrifice) and those he justified, he also glorified (glc..we have a spiritual position in heaven even while we are living on Earth).

Rom 8:31 - 39 What is our conclusion about these matters? God is for us so none can be effectively against us. Think about how God gave up his Son to be the sacrifice for sin for all of us. God will also give us all things, along with Jesus. Who can condemn God’s chosen people? God does the justification. Christ died (and was raised!), is at the right hand of God, and intercedes for us. No one, and nothing, can separate us from the love of Christ. This includes trouble, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and the sword. As it is written in Psalm 44:22, “For your sake we encounter death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ In all that comes against us, we have the final and complete victory through God who loved us. Be convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor heavenly rulers, or things around us now, nor things to come in the future, nor earthly powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything in creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 9:1 - 18 Paul assures his readers that he is telling the truth in Christ, for his inner conscience assures him in the Holy Spirit and he has great sorrow and concern in his heart. Paul would even be willing to be cut off from Christ and be accursed for the sake of the Jews, who are his countrymen. The Jews have had special treatment from God in having access to adoption as sons, seeing God’s glory, having the covenants, the law, temple worship, and God’s promises. The Jews have had the patriarchs and descended from them, on his human side, came Christ, who is God over all and blessed forever! This is true. God’s word has not failed. Not all of the human descendants from Israel are true Israelites and not all children are Abraham’s descendants as it is written in Genesis 21:12, “through Isaac will your descendants be counted.” It is not the children brought forth by a purely human decision who are children of God. The children brought forth through God’s promise are counted as descendants. The promise to Abraham is recorded in Genesis 18:10,14 “About a year from now I will return and Sarah will have a son.” And further, when Rebekah had conceived the ancestor Isaac - before Isaac fathered Jacob and Esau and before they had done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose in his decision would stand by his calling and not by works - Rebekah was told in Genesis 25:23, “The older will serve the younger.” and confirmed in Malachi 1:2,3 “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” (ESV…loved refers to Jacob’s selection in the line of ancestors to Jews while hated refers to Esau not being selected to be in this line, hated here is not animosity.) What is the conclusion? Is God unjust? Absolutely not! God told Moses in Exodus 33:19 “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” This means that the mercy of God does not depend on human desire or works, but on God who shows mercy. It is recorded in the scripture of Exodus 9:16 regarding Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may demonstrate my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.” Realize that God has mercy on whom he chooses to have mercy and he hardens whom he chooses to harden. (glc…all can choose to have faith in Jesus and receive God’s mercy, but if they reject Jesus their decision can become entrenched.)

Romans 9:19 - 33 Some may make the argument that God should not find fault with humans because they cannot resist his will. But what right does a human have to talk back to God? “Does what is molded say to the molder, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ “ (Isaiah 29:16;45:9) The potter has the right to make from the same lump of clay a vessel for special use and another vessel for common use. God is willing to demonstrate his wrath and make his power known by enduring with much patience the objects of wrath prepared for destruction. (glc…All can escape destruction by putting their faith in Jesus’ sacrifice for sins.) God is willing to reveal the wealth of his glory on the objects of mercy that he has prepared beforehand for glory - even Christians, whom he has called from both Jews and Gentiles. It is written in Hosea 2:23, “I will call those who were not my people, ‘My people,’ and I will call her who was unloved, ‘My beloved.;’” and in Hosea 1:10, “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’ “ A paraphrase of Isaiah 10:22-23 cries out on behalf of Israel, “Though the number of the children of Israel are as the sand of the sea, only the remnant will be saved, for the Lord will execute his sentence on the earth completely and quickly.” Isaiah predicted this in Isaiah 1:9, “If the Lord of Heaven’s Armies had not left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have resembled Gomorrah.” This all leads us to say that the Gentiles did not strive after righteousness but obtained righteousness by faith, but Israel sought after a law of righteousness and did not attain it. They failed because they sought righteousness on the basis of works, as if that were possible, rather than by faith. Read what Isaiah says in Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14, “Look, I am laying in Zion a stone that will cause people to stumble and a rock that will make them fall, yet the one who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

Romans 10:1 - 13 Paul tells his fellow Christians that his desire and prayer to God for his fellow Israelites is that they be saved. Paul knows that they are zealous for God, but their enthusiasm is not in line with the truth. The Jewish people are ignoring the righteousness from God (glc…Jesus) and are seeking to have their own righteousness as they refuse to submit to God’s righteousness. Christ is the end (glc…conclusion of God’s plan) of the law, with the result that everyone who believes in Jesus can have righteousness. Moses wrote about the righteousness from the law in Leviticus 18:5, “The one who does these things will live by them.” But righteousness from faith in Jesus is described in Deuteronomy 9:4 and 30:12, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” in order to bring Christ down to Earth. Do not quote Deuteronomy 30:13, “Who will descend into the abyss?” in order to bring Christ up from the dead. Listen to Deuteronomy 30:14, “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart,” in the word of faith that Paul preaches, because if you speak, using your faith, with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead (ESV…this belief includes an understanding of Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins to make us acceptable to God after we accept this sacrifice), you will be saved from your sins. Having belief in your heart brings righteousness and speaking with your mouth gives evidence of the faith inside you and shows you have salvation. The scripture says in Isaiah 28:16, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” There is no spiritual distinction between Jews and Gentiles, for the one Lord is Lord of all, and richly blesses all who put their faith in him. Read Joel 2:32, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 10:14 - 21 How are people to call on the name of the Lord when they have not believed in him? How are people to believe in him if they have not heard of him? How are people to hear if no one preaches to them? And how are the preachers to preach if they are not sent? Read Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15, “How timely is the arrival of those who proclaim the good news.” But some have not obeyed the good news, for Isaiah 53:1 records, “Lord, who has believed our report?” So, faith comes from what people hear, and what they hear comes through the word of Christ that is preached to them. Paul asks, ‘Have they not heard?’ Yes, they have. Read Psalm 19:4 (glc…and Psalm 19:1,2 about the witness of the universe to God) “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” Paul asks again, ‘Didn’t Israel understand?’ Read what Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 32:21, “I will make you jealous by those who are not a nation; with a senseless nation I will provoke you to anger.” And Isaiah wrote boldly in Isaiah 65:1, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I became well known to those who did not ask for me.” And Isaiah wrote about Israel in Isaiah 65:2, “All day long I held out my hands to this disobedient and stubborn people!”

Romans 11:1 - 12 Paul vigorously proclaimed that God has not rejected his people, Israel. Paul gives his heritage: Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject the people whom he foreknew. Think about the OT passage that describes how Elijah brought accusations against Israel in 1 Kings 19:10,14, Lord, “they have killed your prophets; they have demolished your altars; I alone am left, and they are seeking my life!” God replied to Elijah (1 Kings 19:18) “I have kept for myself 7,000 people who have not bent the knee to Baal.” Something similar is at work now. There is a remnant chosen by grace. Since it is by grace, it is not by works, otherwise it would not be freely given. See what has happened. Israel failed to get what they diligently sought, but the elect got it. The others were hardened as written in Deuteronomy 29:4 and Isaiah 29:10, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, to this very day.” And David wrote in Psalm 69:22,23, “Let their table become a snare and trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; let their eyes be darkened so that they may not see, and make their backs bend continually.” Paul proclaims that the Jews have not stumbled into a situation they can’t recover from. The error of the Jews has brought salvation to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous. If their error brings riches for the world and their defeat means riches for the Gentiles, their full restoration will bring many more riches.

Romans 11:13 - 36 Paul is writing to Gentiles. He is an apostle to Gentiles and puts a spotlight on his ministry to perhaps provoke some Jews to jealousy and bring some of them to salvation. Their rejection by God has brought reconciliation to the world so their acceptance will be life from the dead. When the first fruits of the dough offered is holy, then all the dough is holy, and if the root of the plant is holy, then the branches are holy. Some of the branches of the olive tree, Israel, were broken off and the Gentiles, as a wild olive shoot, were grafted in and participated in the nourishment of the olive root. Don’t boast over the original branches. If you boast remember that the original root of the plant supports you. You may say that the original branches were broken off so you could be grafted in. That is true. They were broken off due to their unbelief in Jesus, but you are grafted in by your faith. Don’t think too highly of your position, but have a reverent fear of God! If God did not spare the natural branches, he might not spare you. Take note of the kindness and harshness of God - harshness towards unbelieving Jews, but kindness towards you if you continue in his kindness; or else you will be cut off. And the Jews - if they do not continue in their unbelief- will be grafted in, for God is able to do this. If you were cut off from your nature of a wild olive tree and grafted in to a contrary way of belief, a cultivated olive tree, it will be even easier for the natural branches to be grafted back into their own olive tree. My fellow Christians, don’t be ignorant of this mystery so that you don’t become conceited: A partial hardening has taken place to Israel until the full number of Gentiles have come into God’s family. All Israel will be saved as it is written in Isaiah 59:20,21; Isaiah 27:9; Jeremiah 31:33-34, “ “The Deliverer will come out of Zion; he will remove ungodliness from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” The Jews are enemies of the gospel for the sake of the Gentiles, but they are dearly loved by God for the sake of their ancestors and are still selected by God. The gifts and call of God cannot be changed. The Gentiles used to be disobedient to God, but now have received mercy as a result of being disobedient. God has judged all people as disobedient and has now decided to show mercy on all people. The depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God are magnificent. His judgments and his ways are beyond ordinary human understanding. As is written in Isaiah 40:13 and Job 41:11, “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?

Or who has first given to God that God needs to repay him?” From him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever! Amen.

Romans 12:1 - 8 Paul exhorted the Christians (men and women) to think about the mercies of God, to use their bodies as a living, holy, and pleasing sacrifice to God, since as children of God that is our reasonable service. Don’t let the world shape your life, but rather, be shaped by the renewing of your mind, so that you may think in line with God and be able to discover and approve God’s will which is good, well-pleasing, and perfect. Paul received God’s grace and can say to all Christians to not think too highly of themselves, but rather think of themselves with sober discernment, as God has given each of you a measure of faith. One body has many members, and they serve different purposes, so also, Christians are one body in Christ, and individually, in the body, we belong to one another. We have different gifts according to the grace given to us. Those who have the gift of prophecy must use the gift in proportion to their faith. Those who have the gift of service must serve; those who have the gift of teaching must teach; those who have the gift of exhortation must exhort; those who have the gift of contributing must do this faithfully; those who have the gift of mercy must show mercy with cheerfulness.

Romans 12: 9 - 21 Love for others must be sincere and have no ulterior motives. Be repulsed from what is evil, and draw close and hold on to what is good. Have devotion to one another with love that is shared and be enthused to show honor to one another. Have spiritual enthusiasm and serve the Lord. Celebrate hope, endure suffering, never stop praying. Help meet the needs of Christians and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who give you trouble and do not curse them. Celebrate with those who are celebrating and weep with those who weep. Live in cooperation and peace with one another; do not be too proud but have connections with those whom society deems to have less value. Do not think too highly of yourself. Do not give evil to those who bring evil to you; think about what is good for all people. Do what you can to live at peace with all people. Do not take revenge but let God deliver his wrath as it is written about the Lord in Deuteronomy 32:35, “vengeance is mine, I will repay.” Follow what is written in Proverbs 25:21-22, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing this you will be heaping burning coals on his head.” Do not let evil have victory over you but let good have victory over evil.

Rom 13:1 - 7 Obey the governing authorities. God has appointed and brought into existence the authorities. If you resist these authorities you are resisting the ordinance of God and will incur judgment. The rulers bring fear to those who have bad conduct but not for good conduct. Do you want to not fear authorities? Do good and you will be commendened because it is God’s servant for your benefit. But be afraid if you are a wrong-doer because government has a sword for a reason. Government is God’s servant to give punishment on the wrong-doer. Therefore be in subjection because of the wrath of authorities and because of your conscience. Pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants whose job it is to govern. Pay all people what is owed; taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

Rom 13:8 - 14 Don’t owe anyone anything, except to love each other, for the person who loves his neighbor has followed the law. The commandments written in Exodus 20:13-15,17;Deuteronomy 5:17-19,21 tell us, “Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet.” These and other commandments are summed up in Leviticus 19:18, “Love y our neighbor as yourself.” Actions done in love bring to wrong to a neighbor. So, love is the fulfillment of the law. Do this because we are aware that it is the time for use to awake from sleep, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed in Jesus. The night is moving closer to dawn; the day is near. So, we must put aside the works of darkness, and put on the weapons of light. Live decently as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. Rather, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no opportunity for the flesh to arouse its desires.

Rom 14:1 - 12 Be caring for the one whose faith is weak, and don’t argue about different opinions. Some people believe they can eat everything, but a weak person may only eat vegetables (glc…to avoid unkonowingly eating meat offered in idol worship). The person who eats everything must not look down on the one who does not, and the one who abstains must not jedge the one who eats all things, for God has accepted him. You have no authority to pass judgment on another’s servant. This person will stand or fall in front of his own master. And he will stand, for the Lord has the ability to make him stand. One person treats one day as holier than the other days, and another person treats them all alike. Each person must have decided the matter in his own mind. The one who treats the day as special does it for the Lord. The person who eats, eats for the Lord as he gives thanks to God, and the person who abstains does this for the Lord, and he gives thanks to God. Be aware that no person lives for himself and no person dies for himself. When we live, we live for the Lord; if we die, we die for the Lord. So we are the Lord’s whether we live or die. Christ died and returned to life so he would be the Lord of both the dead and the living. If you eat vegetables only, why do you judge your fellow Christians? If you eat everything, why do you look down on your fellow Christian? We will all stand before the judgment seat of God. Read what is written in Isaiah 45:23, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me, and every tongue will give praise to God.” Therefore, each person will give an account of himself to God.

Rom 14:13 - 23 Therefore, don’t make a final judgment on other Christians, but do what you can to not place an obstacle or trap in front of another Christian. Paul knew and was convinced in his faith that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean to the person who thinks it is unclean. If a Christian is distressed because of what you eat, you are not showing love to them. Do not destroy a fellow Christian by what you eat. Do not let what you think is good be regarded as evil by someone else. The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The one who serves Christ in this way pleases God and will be approved by people. Therefore, put your efforts towards those things that promote peace and the improvement of fellow Christians. Do not fight against God’s work because of food choices. Everything is clean, but you are in the wrong if your food choices cause others to have problems with their faith. Keep your faith choices between yourself and God. It will be good for you if you do not bring judgment on yourself by what you approve. But the person who has doubts when he eats is condemned, because he is not eating from faith, and whatever is not from faith is sin.

Romans 15:1 - 6 Those who are strong in their faith should be lenient with the failings of those weak in their faith, and not just please themselves. All should please their neighbor for their good to help him improve. Even Christ did not please himself, but as it was written in Psalm 69:9, “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.” Everything written in past times was written to instruct us, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the scriptures we may have hope. May the God of perseverance and comfort give you unity with each other in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may glorify God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with one voice.

Rom 15:7 - 13 Accept one another, just as Christ accepted you, to God’s glory. Listen to my message; Christ became a servant of the circumcised people following God’s truth to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs of the Jews, and consequently, the Gentiles give glory to God for his mercy. Read what is written in Psalm 18:49 “ Because of this I will confess you among the Gentiles, and I will sing praises to your name.” And read Deuteronomy 32:43 “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.” And read Psalm 117:1 “Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him.” And read Isaia 11:10 “The root of Jesse will come, and the one who rises to rule over the Gentiles, in him will the Gentiles hope.” May the God of hope fill you will all joy and peace as you continue to believe in him, so that you have abundant hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Rom 15:14 - 21 Paul was fully convinced the the brother and sisters he is writing to are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to teach one another. But, he wrote boldly on some points to remind them, because of the grace given to him by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. Paul served the gospel of God like a priest, so the Gentiles would be sanctified by the Holy Spirit and thus be an acceptable offering. Paul boasted in Christ Jesus about the things that pertain to God. Paul did not dare to speak of anything except what Christ had accomplished through him with the goal that the Gentiles would obey God. Paul‘s words and deeds were done in the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul preached the complete gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum (glc…current country is Albania, east of Italy). Paul’s approach to ministry was to preach in regions where people had not heard about Christ. He didn’t want to have his ministry based or grow out of, the ministry of others. Read Isaiah 52:15: “Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.”

Rom 15:22 – 32 Paul’s ministry in these regions had led to Paul not coming to Rome earlier. At the time of this writing Paul is ready to move on. He has wanted to come to them for many years. His plan is to visit them, and enjoy fellowshipping with them, on his way to do ministry in Spain (ESV…Spain was under the control of Rome. There is no evidence in the New Testament that Paul visited Spain, but there is some small amount of historical evidence that Paul made it to Spain, perhaps after being released from prison in Rome, after Acts 28:30,31.) Paul is now on his way to Jerusalem to bring financial help to Christians. Believers in Macedonia and Achaia (glc…Greece) were pleased to make a financial contribution for the poor among the Christians living in Jerusalem. They were happy to do this contribution and in fact they had a debt to the Jerusalem Christians. (glc…Macedonia and Achaia had received spiritual blessings due to the efforts of Christians in Jerusalem.) Gentiles who have shared in spiritual blessings are obligated to share in material ways. After Paul has completed this mission to Jerusalem he plans to go to Spain by way of Rome. He is confident that he will come to them in the fullness of Christ’s blessing. Paul urges the brothers and sisters to fervently support Paul in prayer to God through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Holy Spirit. Paul asks for prayer that he would be rescued from those who don’t obey God in Judea and that his ministry in Jerusalem would be acceptable to the Christians. Paul prays that it would be God’s will that he comes to Rome in joy and be refreshed by their fellowship. Paul prays for the blessing of God’s peace to be with all of them. Let it be so.

Rom 16:1 - 16 Paul endorses the Christian woman, Phoebe, who is serving the church in Cenchrea (ESV … Phoebe could have brought this letter from Paul to Rome. Cenchrea is a port town about 6 miles east of Corinth). Paul expects the Christians in Rome to welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of Christians and give her any help she needs. Phoebe had helped Paul and many others. (glc…Women were involved in Christian ministry.) Paul sends greetings to Prisca and Aquila (see Acts 18:2,18,26; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19 Prisca nd Priscilla are the same person) who are also spreading the gospel of Jesus. They risked their own lives to help Paul. All the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Paul sends greetings

-to the church that meets in their house.

-to Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the region of Asia (glc…northern Turkey)..

-to Mary, who worked very hard for the Romans

-to Andronicus and Junia, his countrymen or relatives and fellow prisioners. They were well known to the apostles and were believers in Jesus before Paul

-to Ampliatus, Paul’s dear Christian friend

-to Urbanus, a fellow Christian worker, and Paul’s good friend Stachys

-to Apelles, who is approved in Christ

-to the household of Aristobulus

-to Herodion, Paul’s countryman or relative

-to the Christians in the household of Narcissus

-to Tryphena and Tryphosa, who also work for the Lord

-to Paul’s dear friend Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord

-to Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother who behaved as a mother to Paul

-to Asynritus, phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermes, and the Christians with them

-to Philologus and JUlia, Nereus and his sister, and olympus, and all the Christians who are with them

Greet one another with a holy kiss. (glc…chaste, showing affection)

All the churches of Christ greet you. (glc…the churches had concern and love for each other)

Rom 16:17 - 23 Paul urged the Christians in Rome to be alert for those who produce dissensions and obstacles contrary to the teaching brought by Paul (glc contrary to the faith). Avoid these people. They do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but rather they serve their own appetites. They use smooth talk and flattery to deceive the thinking of the naive. The obedience of the Christians in Rome was known to all and Paul could rejoice about them. Paul wanted them to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under their feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Timothy, Paul’s fellow worker, greeted them; as did Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, Paul’s fellow countrymen or relatives. Tertius wrote this letter and greeted them in the Lord. Gaius, who hosted Paul, and the whole church, greeted them. Erastus, the city treasurer, and their fellow Christian Quartus greeted them.

Rom 16:24 - 27 To him who has all ability to strengthen you according to Paul’s message and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, in line with the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages, but is now revealed, and through the prophetic scriptures has been made known to all the nations, following the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith - to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever! Amen.